



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

Summer is at its height; thundershowers are in the forecast. Change is in the air. My trip to Birmingham, England to lead an annual three-day sesshin was joyful and fruitful. Josen came with me and served as Tenzo (cook). Chris Gyoshin Mooney Sensei, his wife Iona and the local crew, were great hosts. Doing the sesshin in late spring instead of mid-winter was a great relief; we didn't spend most of sesshin fighting the bone-crunching cold. I hope we can have our sesshin regularly at this season. After sesshin we visited Barcelona for few days, what a beautiful city, people and great food!

I also found myself in Houston, Texas for the annual meeting of the American Zen Teachers Association in mid-June. Hot and humid! The Houston Zen Center sangha and their abbot, Gaelyn Godwin, offered wonderful hospitality. The last day together was truly remarkable, there was an in-depth exploration of the recent events inside of Rinzaï-Ji and temples associated with Joshu Sasaki Roshi. This felt very similar to the exploration of the troubles at the Zen Studies Society centered around Eido Shimano Roshi a few years back. I left both of these annual meetings with a positive feeling that real change was in the air for these centers and AZTA as an organization, but as everyone knows change comes slowly. There was some movement towards the AZTA becoming a professional organization. If this change came about, AZTA could promote and oversee strong ethical standards by its members and the organizations associated with them. In my mind, these actions are sorely needed and long overdue on a national stage. However, again change comes slowly,



Summer Sesshin Participants

and I'm not holding my breath. I think it may become necessary to support a new pan-Buddhist national professional organization that will fulfill this need.

Summer Sesshin attendance at the end of June was a little light, but the practice was strong and inspiring. Rev. Daitetsu Hull gave a well-received Dharma Talk the second day of sesshin on Kyogen's "Man Up A Tree." I've included a transcription of my last teisho at this sesshin which examines Torei Zenji's preference for the Bodhisattva Vows. The all-important Dai-Tenzo (Chief Cook) post was shared by several participants, principally Emily HoU Ross, Steve Ganko Hanson, Tom Shodo DeGroot and Dee Seishun Endelman. Perhaps dividing this post is worth consideration. The other posts of Jiki (time keeper), Shika (host-manager), Densu (Chant leader), Inji (abbot assistant) and Jisha (tea server) were also shared, as most everyone from Seattle could not attend sesshin full-time. Nearly all the full-time participants were from out-of-town, which feels a little strange, but our sangha is mature enough that it all worked despite these challenges. On the last day of sesshin Rev. Kanjin Cederman renewed his

Bodhisattva Vows, receiving a brown Rakusu from me to signify his significant training over decades.

On this note, I'm strongly considering offering brown Rakus to all Chobo-Ji students who have done forty or more weeklong sesshins, which represents decades of Zen practice. Lay Dharma Brothers and Sisters who have practiced this long are de facto leaders and I feel should be celebrated and recognized for this fact. Recently many more ordained have been attending Chobo-Ji sesshins, and this is a welcome development, but I think it is important that Chobo-

Ji remain principally a lay practice where senior laity shares a strong leadership role.

Membership at Chobo-Ji is simple, attend and contribute financially and you will automatically be considered a member, and after three months a **voting member** at our Annual Meeting. We may make this process a bit more formal in the near future, but regular membership will always be simple and straightforward. Anyone who trains enough to attend at least two weeklong sesshins is welcome to do **Jukai**, where the main Buddhist precepts are taken and a Dharma Name with Rakusu is received. A letter should be written to me at least one month prior to Jukai, stating why taking this step is appropriate at this time. After eight weeklong sesshins, if someone feels they are called to propagating Zen training, form and ritual, as the principal focus of their life, please consult with me about the possibility of Zen **unsui** (novice priest – cloud and water person) ordination. After forty weeklong sesshins, a monk automatically becomes ready for an **Osho** (full temple priest) ceremony and laity automatically qualifies for a **brown Rakusu** signifying recognition of their dedication to practice and leadership potential. Anyone lay or ordained who has done forty or more sesshins, completes the full Rinzaï koan

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curriculum and demonstrates through their actions they are living a life devoted to the care of all beings great and small, animate and inanimate is eligible to be named a **Dharma Heir** in our lineage.

I am delineating all this as I contemplate that two people are planning to do Jukai this month, one person is planning to re-ordain in our lineage at the close of Autumn Sesshin, one person will be named an Osho in our lineage just after Autumn Sesshin, another looks like as if they will be ready to be named an Osho in January, and one Chobo-Ji member will likely ordain as an unsui at the end of Spring Sesshin. With all these ordinations and confirmations, I feel it is all the more important to also honor and recognize long-dedicated lay practitioners.

As most of you know I've spent the last year more deeply contemplating socially engaged Buddhism. I began my exploration through my new association with Joan Halifax and Bernie Glassman and his organization Zen Peacemakers. Recall that I went to the Upaya Zen Center to meet with them last summer, (and I'm going again in the next few days) and then to a life transformative Bearing Witness Retreat at Auschwitz/Birkenau last November. I'm going again this November, and this time Seishun will be attending with me. In addition, here in Seattle I've participated with other sangha members in Buddhist Peace Fellowship events, and continue my occasional prison work, most recently at Walla Walla State Penitentiary. Moreover, as you know Genko Ni-Osho is actively involved in prison work and some sangha members have directly supported and assisted her efforts. Genko is also supporting, along with other sangha members, the Buddhist Global Relief (BGR) "**Walk to Feed the Hungry**" which will take place on October 12th. BGR is always looking for local cosponsors for this annual event and this year the Chobo-Ji board has offered to lend our name to these good efforts. In addition, many Buddhist groups are getting involved in raising awareness about global warming

and other dire environmental issues facing our world. Then there are new local efforts to start a Seattle Buddhist Wellness Center where disenfranchised folks can get a good meal and share a peaceful space to practice meditation and other healing arts. I directly support all of these efforts to the best of my ability; the question is how active as a group should Chobo-Ji become involved?

I will be giving a special **teisho on issues associated with socially engaged Buddhism** at the October 6th mini-sesshin, which will also mark our **Second Anniversary** of the inauguration of our new Residential Practice Center. As part of this year's anniversary celebration we will have a potluck lunch, short samu practice period,

great need? What is our role in our local neighborhood? Do we want to sponsor or lend samu support for local services to disenfranchised neighbors? When is it appropriate to take a stand collectively on national or global issues? I expect there will be a lively fruitful discussion that will probably raise many more questions than answers to what paths we want to pursue. Nevertheless, I think it is time to begin a dialogue about possibly expanding our mission and focus beyond the temple grounds.

At our last Annual Meeting, an exploratory working group was formed to examine the possibilities around having a standing Sangha Relations committee to help address some of these concerns, and you will find a report about their efforts and focus in this issue. In addition, Sally Zenka Metcalf has written an article published here about Chobo-Ji "Taking Flight," which is very pertinent to the conversation now happening about Sangha Relations.

Beyond my travels to the UK to do sesshin, I've recently been to Ledyard, Connecticut to do a one-day sesshin with students of Robert Heiwa Burns Sensei, this autumn I'll be going again to do a three-day sesshin with George Lions Sensei in Bucks County, PA, and this coming January I'll be doing a second Rohatsu with Rev. Joriki Dat Baker and Blue Mountain Zendo sangha in Lehigh Valley, PA. I want to give everyone reading this a head's up: to be aware that there is a plan afoot to bring representatives from all the sanghas I train with together under one roof for next year's Autumn Sesshin, **2014**, so please keep this in mind! It will be a good one!

There are four additional activities that I want sangha members to take note of and participate in if they can. The first is our rapidly approaching three-day **Odayaka Sesshin** coming up August 23-25. There are twenty people already signed up, but the more the merrier. With our new space we can conceivably accommodate twice that number at sesshin; but with a number of people coming from out of town, we are not set up to house everyone. Therefore, if you

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and then hold a sangha forum to explore who we are and who we want to be as a community. The discussion will start out with an investigation of how we might want to be of service to each other within our sangha, and then explore what if any presence we want to put forth to participate with our local neighborhood, city and global service endeavors. Can our practice offerings become more family friendly? How do we care for each other in times of

are someone local planning to attend please let me know if you could host one or two people for three nights Thursday through Saturday. This will be an entirely new format than we are used to; the only fixed scheduled items will be meals. There will be a lot more “education,” discussion, Qi Gong and personal time; this is definitely an experiment to broaden our offerings. I’m hoping Genko Ni-Osho will lead the next Odayaka Sesshin tentatively planned for next spring, and she will bring her own style and offerings to that event.

The second activity I want to draw your attention to is the **Fall Training Intensive**, which begins with the mini-sesshin, September 8th (see p. 10). Only one person did the Spring Intensive, so I am lowering my sights a bit in terms of requirements, please read them over and consider if it is something you might be interested in.

The third activity is a workshop to be held at Chobo-Ji entitled “**Spiritually Based Gestalt Workshop**” the weekend of September 14-15. This workshop is taught by a good friend of mine, open to the wider public, is a fundraiser for the temple, and hopefully will attract a number of our own sangha. The workshop will principally explore **powerful communication tools** for deepening one’s spiritual path while living our very complicated ordinary daily lives. If you are reading this, I hope you will strongly consider attending this important offering with me.

The fourth offering is **Autumn Sesshin** 2013, September 20-27. We already have a number of reservations, but we appreciate getting an early count, so please get your deposits in on or before September 8th. September 1st will mark the start of new posts, which are listed in this issue. Scott Ishin Stolnack has agreed to take on the post of Dai-Tenzo this coming season. If you have been assigned a post to which you think you won’t be able to serve at least one of our two upcoming weeklong sesshins, please let me know, and be sure to seek instruction from me or other senior members about your responsibilities and duties.

Also in this edition you will find reports from the Board, Program task force and the Building and Grounds task force, a letter from Brian, the son Leslie Genei Gannon

concerning her days since Genki Roshi’s bodily departure, and a short report on the selection of the next book for our collective study. I hope you enjoy all of these offerings, and better yet I hope you can participate in many of them.

Take care,

Genjo

Sangha Relations Working Group

by Sally Zenka Metcalf

I’m told the Buddha once said, Even if you are in deepest samadhi, residing in transcendent bliss, if you hear someone is ill and needs a bowl of soup, get up and get him his soup!

Chobo-Ji has a new Sangha Relations (SR) Working Group composed of Chair: Edwin Beatty, Dee Seishun Endelman, and Sally Zenka Metcalf. We’ve had four meetings to date in which we’ve birthed a host of meaty questions that have become our guides as we investigate the meaning and responsibility of sangha relations. We long to involve the wider sangha in a discussion of these questions to help shape the purview of this all-important work group. To that end, you’ll be hearing from us soon. For now, we’re sharing many of our questions in this article in the hope that readers will mull them over and provide us with grist for our mill.

Some of the first questions we asked ourselves were, “What is the meaning of community as we experience it at Chobo-Ji?” How is community fostered here? How is it undermined? What is the responsibility of Chobo-Ji to its members, and of members to Chobo-Ji? Lastly, as a community, how do we watch over and support members facing challenges?

Interesting questions? We think so. They stimulated enthusiastic research into other spiritual communities that effectively and lovingly offer member support. Quakers have a centuries-old tradition of solid

congregational support under the auspices of a Membership Committee started to help families whose parent(s) were imprisoned for taking unpopular political stands. Quaker Meetings have published very helpful books on the activity of this committee, which are an inspiration to us. We’re researching other communities, too. Do you have suggestions?

As we see it, our principle care is to watch over the wellbeing of the sangha. As Genjo Osho put it, “*How do we hold each other? When someone is struggling in the sangha, is anyone paying attention?*” How about when someone is new to Chobo-Ji? Or when the sangha community itself is facing a challenge? We intend that the Sangha Relations group will be paying attention.

Keeping in touch with members and providing help to those in need: A regular practice of this group is to review the member list for those whom we haven’t seen lately, followed by a check-in to see whether they need anything. The SR group will facilitate support, when called for. This could be anything from listening to the person over tea, to gathering a group of sangha members into a Care Committee. Or we might broadcast a call for action, such as when we scare up furniture for new Zen Residents.

This group hopes to assure truly helpful support to sangha members in need, but this effort raises concerns and questions. We ardently hope to assist members in a way that is neither fixing, nor judgmental, but centers around deeply listening and being present to members, however they are, whatever their challenges. How would we do this? We feel we have a lot to learn!

Member support is everyone’s responsibility: It’s critical to us that sangha support is not seen as the sole province of this group’s specific members. Rather, we hope it will be a sangha-wide responsibility. Not long ago the health and vision of a Chobo-Ji member with severe neurological disease had declined to such an extent that we were concerned. With her permission, a Care Committee was formed of four people she felt comfortable with. The group helped

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her shop, clean, do errands, go out for fun, get to appointments, and just listened to her when she needed to talk. Such Care Committees would be profoundly helpful in the Chobo-Ji community. We hope readers of this article will volunteer for such committees.

You might be thinking, “What right do I have to butt into someone else’s business?” Truly, who are we protecting when caution keeps us from acting to help others—perhaps just ourselves. Quaker wisdom speaks to this reticence to sit face to face with someone in distress.

“An act of true caring is never intrusive. It may be awkward. It may not be fully received by the other at the time. But it is never intrusive. Admittedly, true caring, i.e., love, is something that needs to be nurtured within us. It can only flow fully when we suspend our judgment.” (p. 5, Grounded in God)

To help us address our lack of confidence and reticence to intrude, we are actively investigating training in chaplaincy and companionship. Genjo Osho is acquainted with a professional chaplain and is arranging a meeting for us. We look forward to this connection and hope to share with the sangha guidelines and skills for supporting individuals in need. Peter Ilgenfritz, our Chobo-Ji member who is a long-time Minister at University Congregational Church, will be helping us, as well.

Membership is another purview of the Sangha Relations Working Group. What makes a Chobo-Ji member? Historically, it’s pretty loose. “If someone pays dues for three months and simply shows up, they’re considered a member,” says Genjo Osho. How about all the people who attend Chobo-Ji who don’t fall into this category? Every Tuesday night, people are attending Introduction to Zen. The latest four-week introduction series had ten committed students! Many Introductory graduates are quietly fitting themselves into our zazen schedule, and hope to be welcomed. How can we support them?

Does the new Chobo-Ji need a membership application process? It has been proposed. There is something to be said for being more formal about membership than we

have been. There is also a lot to be said for our traditional process of allowing people to find their own way, in their own time, to greater commitment to the Chobo-Ji community.

Would a directory of members help us incorporate new folks, build community, and keep in touch? University Quaker Meeting has one with photos and bios to help members get to know each other. We could, too.

It’s worth noting here that people who live in the Zen Residential Program or assist at Introductory often meet visitors who have been searching the Seattle area for a solid place to practice meditation. It’s hard to find. Our schedule is filled with opportunities to practice. What we have is rare and precious! We predict that more people will be finding us and gladly practicing here.

Discovered by our neighbors: Many people come here who are from our own neighborhood. The word is getting around. This raises another question for the group. What is the sangha? We could argue that it is members. But are the edges of a Buddhist sangha so clearly defined? Might our sphere encompass Block Watch support, Disaster Preparedness, and acting as a community gathering place? In our former neighborhood, we had a positive affect on crime reduction, just by being there. Here on Beacon Hill, our garden path is already enjoyed by many as a scenic public-access short cut. They bring their children to play at the fountain beside bathing hummingbirds and robins. Providing a peaceful and beautiful respite for all sentient beings, Buddhist or not, human or beast, is service (*ananyayogena* - unalloyed devotional service) at its best. What more might we offer our neighbors in the spirit of our oneness?

This sums up the efforts, thus far, of your fledgling Sangha Relations

Working Group. We hope some of our questions piqued your interest enough that you have something to say about them. If so, please contact Edwin, Dee, or Sally with your comments, suggestions, and questions. Many heads are better than one, and produce lively dialog that leads us all to new ground and a healthier, happier sangha community. Also, if you know of a sangha member who is facing a challenge or might just need company, please let us know.

Taking Flight

by Sally Zenka Metcalf

Some time ago, I came across a dragonfly emerging from its long-lived phase as a nymph. Its radically new body—wings hanging limp as damp paper—had split free of the crust of the old. Then began an arduous process of filling the wings with blood. The metamorph was utterly vulnerable throughout. Slowly, diaphanous wings unfurled and became taught, until at last the dragonfly took flight.

Since moving into the Residential Program, I’ve been attending Chobo-Ji’s Tuesday night Introductory classes, including a couple of our very successful four-week series. These evenings have placed my unwitting fingers directly on the pulse of both the wider community’s sincere desire for meditation practice and upon Chobo-Ji’s sangha growth. Attending sesshins recently has magnified this pulse for me and brought up concern and a deep longing that inspired this article. In the past, sesshins were always strongly supported by a core group of senior practitioners who attended the full week. Lately, these experienced members have not been present as much.

Not the least of these core practitioners is Genko Ni-Osho. Her example, her unfailing knowledge of the forms of practice, her deep experience with the psychophysical challenges sesshin attendees face and often succumb to, and her wise and



expedient interventions were a gift to us all. She consistently raises the bar of sangha practice. Her health and other commitments have not allowed her to participate full time in sesshins for some time and she is sorely missed.

Several other senior students whose exemplary practice, unfailing kindness and helpfulness, and wise guidance are also missing or can only attend part time. Last sesshin one senior student held almost every post by the end of the week, including mine because my present job doesn't allow me to attend a full week.

Many of these missing senior students are among the tireless and inspired group who brought our beautiful new zendo and residential program into being. We owe them so much, including a well-earned break from the intense dedication it took to create the new Chobo-Ji. Thank you! Understandably, people might need family time, professional time, or personal time they didn't have much of during the zendo project.

Or, it is possible people might have become disenchanted. The metamorphosis of Chobo-Ji has been demanding. Relations can become strained in such circumstances. Running parallel to building the new zendo was the angst around Eido Roshi. Exhausting. Infuriating! Alienating?

In the way the world has of turning darkness to light, Genjo Osho's conduct through this troubling period with Eido Roshi caught the attention of sincere followers of the Way. These practitioners, many of whom are ordained, are beginning to attend our sesshins.

In discussions, these new folks tell us they find our sangha and Genjo Osho kind and welcoming and safe. Many have met with wounding cruelty in other sanghas. They come to us with long experience, yet humbly enter beginners mind on Chobo-Ji's threshold. They work on this property with loving dedication and ardently practice.

Standing beside them at our door are all the earnest new people from the Seattle community and even from our own neighborhood who are wondering how, and whether, to trust, and to practice with us.

We have a long and powerful tradition of learning by watching and following along. To do that, our new people need someone to watch.

How I wish for the presence of Chobo-Ji's long-time senior students to mix and meld with these wonderful newcomers! If you are such a member, might you find time to attend again and make room in your schedules for as much of sesshin as possible?

In the June mini-sesshin, Osho gave a thought-provoking teisho: (<http://genjo.libsyn.com/requiting-beneficence>). It addressed the Rinzaïroku chapter in which Rinzaï, having been traveling after graduating from training with his teacher Obaku, visits Obaku to pay his respects. He ends up slighting Zen Master Obaku and being chased away. Walking for some miles, he ponders the exchange with his teacher and returns to practice with him for the rest of summer session and perhaps more. When he departs, Obaku gives him a final gift, the teisho seat passed to him by Hyakujo as a sign of his maturation as a teacher.

Had Rinzaï not returned to train, perhaps Chobo-Ji would not be here today. "What about you? Are you totally satisfied with your clarity and openheartedness in all situations in life? If you have your doubts, how about coming back to train. If you are doubt-free," Osho suggests, "better train!"

To paraphrase Osho's talk: As students of the Dharma, it's our obligation to requite the gifts of training we've received. We do this by living the Great Vow to serve uncounted beings throughout myriad worlds with our whole heart. However, we must exceed the level of our teachers. Only by adding to what we've been taught through our own creativity can we contribute to the unfolding awakening of compassion in humanity.

Chobo-Ji is in metamorphosis. If you are one of our senior practitioners, you are part of its life's blood. A new sangha is spreading its wings.

Board Report

The Chobo-Ji Board met in June and again on August 11th. Following is an update of our conversation topics and decisions:

- Chobo-Ji's financial status continues to be healthy. We are planning to conduct a Reserve Study that will help us decide the amount of money we should keep in reserve for major building expenditures.
- We voted to make our Center a full residence center by January 1, 2014. This means that the remaining two apartments, currently rented by non-Zen students, will be vacated and, in future, only those willing to commit to Zen training will live at the Residence Center. We will, of course, do what we can to make the transition workable for the tenants who must move out.
- We have agreed to reduce further Genjo's rent to allow him more time for some writing that he is planning to do. The Board decided that, since we don't compensate Genjo for his deep dedication to our Sangha, this reduction so that he can continue his work is appropriate. As you may recall, the Board gave Genjo a small reduction in rent when we first moved into the Center in return for his functioning as "apartment manager," a role he continues to fill.
- We have begun to talk about Chobo-Ji's place in community and social justice issues. Realizing that this is a Sangha-wide conversation, we would like to invite the Sangha to be part of this conversation during our second Residential Anniversary Celebration on October 6, 2013, after Mini-Sesshin.

Buildings and Grounds Report

The Building and Grounds task force met on 7/28. Following is the latest and greatest:

- We recommend convening an ad-hoc working group to undertake a DIY reserve study. Emily HoU Ross is willing to spearhead this effort, and will need several willing participants for this project.
- We think we can work within the budget that John Daikan Green guesstimated based on our first quarter expenditures. This amount will not include special projects. We will bring special projects that total amounts \$2000 or more to the board for approval as possible separate line items in the budget.
- Larry Palmer and company have just a few little projects left to finish, and Genjo is confident that these will be completed.
- The back garden drip system is 95% complete, and is automated and functioning properly. Emily needs to get some parts in order to finish. The front garden beds will be on a separate automated drip system, scheduled for installation next season. We have not yet received a bill from Ross & Schwartz.
- We endorse the estimate for a combined improvement project which will add new shelving to the rakusu rack, a literature rack, an outdoor bulletin board, and a new shoe rack. We asked for board approval for this expenditure.
- Tom Shodo DeGroot and Alex Walker have been working on logos. Tom will have several designs to show to the board.
- We are in the beginning phases of conceiving of and constructing a sign to be located on the corner of Horton and Lafayette. We are hoping the project will be completed by year's end. Genjo is working with Michael Daizan Lyons on getting a cost estimate for this project.
- We discussed the possibility of an apartment being reserved for guests during sesshin, and when the apartment is vacant, we can list it on [airbnb](#) as a short-term rental. We will need to do a cost-benefit analysis for this scheme.

Program and Practice

The Program and Practice Group welcomed new member Sally Zenka Metcalf. We have been making adjustments in the weekly sesshin schedule to acknowledge the need for connection among sesshin participants and at the same time encourage deeper silence.

In addition, we are experimenting with a less physically demanding three-day sesshin schedule. The first one scheduled for April did not have enough commitments to proceed, but the August one will be happening. Anyone who plans to attend, please feel free to comment on your experience.

Tom Shodo DeGroot spoke to the sangha in July about his long involvement with Zen, and Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard will speak in the autumn.

Additional events planned include a Gestalt therapy workshop in September, a sangha potluck after the mini-sesshin October 6, and hosting the Northwest Dharma Association teachers meeting October 5. As always, we encourage members to let us know how these events and changes are working for you.

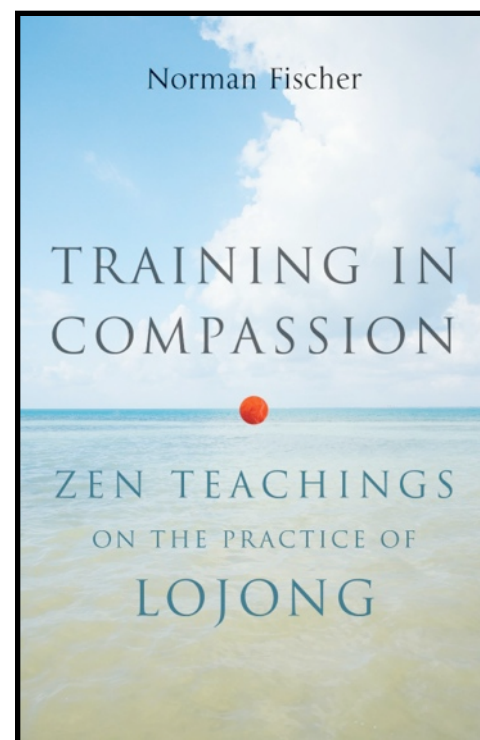
Study Book Selection

by Genko Blackman Ni-Osho

This fall we will be reading Norman Fischer's recent book [Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong](#). It is available in paperback and eBook editions.

The Lojong is a set of 59 "slogans," or aphorisms, summarizing instructions for practices to develop and actualize bodhicitta, the awakened compassionate mind. A 10th century Indian master, named Atisha first put forth the teaching, which was reframed in the 12th century in Tibet by Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje as The Root Text of the Seven Points of Training the Mind. For those with a historical bent, this is roughly the same time that Zen was transmitted from China to Japan.

A number of translations and commentaries of the Root Text have been published over the years. Fischer bases his work on Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche's translation, and his commentary provides a vivid Zen spin on these important teachings.



Rather than meeting several times to discuss the book as we have done in the past, this time we will try to read on our own and have one discussion somewhat later in the intensive (Nov. 16th, 9:00AM). Following are some study questions to consider during your reading.

1. Both karma and the suffering of samsara are heavily emphasized in the first point, Training in the Preliminaries. How do you see these from a Zen perspective? Do you feel that Fischer captures the essence of your understanding?
2. The instructions under the second point, Train in Empathy and Compassion, make it clear that the practitioner must consider and train in bodhicitta from both the relative and the absolute perspective. To do otherwise risks either burnout (if we focus on the relative perspective), and lack of skill (if we focus on the absolute

perspective). How do you see these two trainings working together as a practical matter?

3. One of the primary practices central to the Lojong is Tonglen, or Sending and Receiving. Do you see a role for this practice in Zen training? If so, how would you incorporate it?
4. The third point, Transform Bad Circumstances into the Path, contains a number of slogans as a way to approach this. How do we keep this practice from becoming Pollyanna-ish? Which of these slogans resonates the most with you and why?
5. The fourth point is Make Practice Your Whole Life, including practicing for our death. The slogans related to this point make it clear we should not just wait for our meditation practice to gradually change us, but must proactively work on our unskillful habits. One way to do this is through reproach. Does this make sense to you from a Zen perspective?
6. The fifth point, Assess and Extend, follows from the fourth. The most important instruction in it is the first slogan, There is Only One Point, that is, to let go of self. Jamgon Kongtrul in his commentary says, "If your efforts in dharma do not counteract ego-clinging, your practice is meaningless." (Jamgon Kongtrul, The Great Path of Awakening, Shambhala edition, p. 29) Do you agree?
7. The sixth and seventh points list a great number of slogans designed to help us improve our workings with other people and the environment we live in. Which two under each point resonate the most with you? How do you see them helping you in your daily life?

The Book of Rinzai

Anroku Chapter 8

June 27th, 2013

Case

Carrying a letter from Obaku, the Master went to Isan. At that time, Kyozan was the shika. Upon receiving Obaku's letter, he said, "This is Master Obaku's. 'Where is the messenger's?' The Master slapped Kyozan. Kyozan grabbed his hand and said, 'Brother, since you know, let's stop it.' They then went together to see Isan. Isan asked, 'How many monks practice under brother Obaku?' 'Seven hundred,' replied the Master. 'Who is their leader?' asked Isan. 'He has just delivered a letter to you,' replied the Master. The Master then asked Isan, 'Osho, how many monks practice under your guidance in this monastery?' 'Fifteen hundred monks,' replied Isan. 'Too many!' said the Master. 'Brother Obaku also has no small number,' said Isan.

The Master took his leave of Isan. Kyozan saw him off. He said, 'Later, you go to the North. There will be a good place for you to live.' 'Is that really so?' asked the Master. 'Anyway, just go! There will be a man who will help you, brother. He has a head but no tail; a beginning, but no end,' replied Kyozan. Later, when the Master went to Chin State, Fuke was already there. When the Master began teaching, Fuke truly supported his activity. But the Master had not been there for long, when Fuke cast off body and all.

This section of the Rinzaieroku is full of cross-examinations, but they take place when Rinzai was younger, while still training under Obaku. We've heard of Isan and Kyozan, through the koans associated with them. They are neighbors of Obaku's temple. Obaku sends them a letter to be delivered by his head monk, Rinzai. Kyozan at that time was Isan's head monk. Kyozan receives Obaku's letter, and says, 'Well, this is your master's. Where is the messenger's?' In other words, challenging Rinzai by asking him, 'what did you bring?' Rinzai immediately recognized this challenge and was not at all puzzled by Kyozan's question. He rose to the challenge immediately. Rinzai had two favored responses to such a challenge, a slap or a

shout (Katsu!). My sense is that when Rinzai was younger he was more partial to a slap, and later favored the shout. In this case, he raises his hand to slap Kyozan. Kyozan grabbed his hand and said, 'Brother, since you know this much, let's stop.' In other words, since you understand that you've been challenged and demonstrated that you know how to respond, enough! We don't need to carry the conversation further. Let's go on.

These kinds of examinations are really quite quick; there's not a lot to them. There's not a lot to Zen. At its core, Zen is so simple! Together Rinzai and Kyozan go on to see Isan, and Isan starts what seems like a casual conversation with Rinzai. But, of course, this is a Zen Master talking with a Head Monk; no doubt the "casual conversation" is the beginning foray of a Dharma battle. Isan asks, 'How many monks practice under Obaku?' 'How many,' is a totally relative question. From the Absolute perspective, there is only One and that One is None. That's how simple Zen is! Coming from the Real, there's no such thing as "many", "too much" or "too little," because from the absolute perspective, there is only One, and the One has no form, let alone a name. This sums up Zen's perception of reality nicely.

Isan is genuinely asking the relative question, 'How many monks train with Obaku?' and he wants to see if Rinzai catches the strongly relative word "many." How will Rinzai bounce with this interrogatory? He responds straight up by saying, "700," which is of course a totally relative answer. That's okay; we are welcome to respond to a relative question with a relative answer. There is nothing wrong with acknowledging the apparent wondrous diversity of THIS, but we must also be aware of and acknowledge the absolute view, so in a Dharma dialogue we don't stay in the relative long. As followers of the Way, if we don't acknowledge the absolute view by the second question in a Dharma dialogue, there's something amiss, and if we take until the third pass, that's barely acceptable.

Now Isan asks the next question, also a relative question, 'Who is their leader?' If Rinzai stayed in the strictly relative way of

Continued on next page...

responding he could say, “Obaku is our teacher.” or “I’m Obaku’s head monk.” A relative question is being asked, but as this is the second relative question, Rinzai knows well he must at least hint at the absolute in his response. Instead of giving a shout (Katsu!), to this question Rinzai says, “He has just delivered a letter to you.” How does this response hint at the absolute?

The fundamental leader of our temple is the Historical Buddha. The other principal icon in our temple is the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Kannon. So, in this hall, these two icons of the Buddha and Kannon represent the absolute. But from the Rinzai Zen perspective, the real leader or master is called “the true person beyond rank or post,” that one beyond identification with ego or personality. I sometimes refer to this depth of being as “the sage beyond our own years who has our voice” and, borrowing from Rinzai, “This sage, or true person, goes in and out of our face all the time.” In other words, sometimes you see it, sometimes you don’t. It’s always here, but often we don’t recognize it. The true person beyond rank or ego identity is certainly beyond any definition, label or identification with Buddhahood or Bodhisattvahood. The sage beyond our years is always here, but not always heard, and when heard, not always listened to. All too often, without significant training, dedication and investigation, an attachment to ego identity leads the way. In fact, ego identify is usually up front, right? Once in a while, when we are truly led or motivated by our deepest heart, we fully respond to circumstances or conditions completely appropriately and naturally without any hesitation. When we respond to the world from this depth, our actions can have a profoundly helpful impact.

So who is their leader? At the most relative level, Rinzai is the lead monk. At a little deeper level, Obaku is the abbot. Digging a little deeper, fundamentally every Zen Buddhist temple is led by the inspiration and example of Buddha and the Bodhisattva Kannon. Dig deeper yet and you will discover that “true person,” who has no beginning, no end, no dependence on form but is not separate from form, is the real leader. Rinzai says, “He just delivered the letter to you.” Rinzai doesn’t say, “I delivered the letter.” The letter was just delivered to you by the leader, as in, the one who is beyond rank, post and any sort of

name — not Rinzai, Obaku, Buddha, Kannon, not even “sage beyond your years”, not even the “true person” beyond rank or post, not even “That One Shining Alone”...no name whatsoever! And Rinzai offers, “No name whatsoever delivered the letter to you right now.” Wow, that’s good!

Then Rinzai continues the conversation without skipping a beat. He’s just made this profound statement: “The one of no name just delivered the letter to you” and adds, “and by the way, how many monks practice under your guidance at your monastery?” He rolls with the relative conversation, fully demonstrating there’s nothing wrong with the relative! This is so ingenious and sharp! Now it’s Isan’s turn. The tables have been turned on him. The conversation is still in play because, rather than giving a shout, which would have brought the dialogue to a natural conclusion, Rinzai dropped the ball back in Isan’s lap. Isan, too, gets one relative answer free, and responds, “1500 monks.” He passes the ball back to Rinzai. Rinzai shoots back with something, that in Zen circles, is totally funny, and says, “Too many!” Of course, even from only the relative perspective, everyone can recognize the humor of this comeback, but from the absolute, it’s impossible to have too little or too much. It’s all one fabric! How can the universe be too much or too little? It’s all perfectly whole and indivisible. In fact, how can there be “many” at all? Isan totally realizes from the preceding conversation that Rinzai is at once making both a relative and absolute joke. Now it is Isan’s turn to respond with an answer that hints at more than the relative, and it must be as sneaky and subtle as Rinzai’s. Isan at this point certainly could have concluded the conversation with a shout, but instead says, “Brother Obaku has no small number.” I’m going to leave that one open to your investigation. How might this statement of Isan’s be more than just a relative response? On the relative level he is certainly acknowledging, “Yes, 700 is no small number.”

Well, that concludes the case, but upon Rinzai’s departure, Kyozan makes an addendum. As Rinzai is leaving, Kyozan sees him off and says, “Later, you’re going to end up in the north.” Rinzai says, “Really, is that so?” Kyosan says, “Just go...believe me, you’re going to end up in the north and you’re going to find someone there to help you, a Dharma brother.” And

he probably named the town where Rinzai should go, implying, “You should really check him out. This guy has a head but no tail, a beginning and no end.” Later Rinzai did go north and checked out the town that Kyozan recommended and found Fuke, who we’ve heard about in the earlier chapters of the Rinzaïroku, and we know he becomes Rinzai’s Dharma foil or holy fool. This little postscript doesn’t in my mind add much, but explains how Rinzai first heard of Fuke.

Zen is so simple. It’s all one fabric. It’s indivisible. It has no form, let alone a name. It’s incomparably profound and minutely subtle. It’s prior to heaven and earth. It’s prior to the Big Bang. It gives rise to multi-universes. And when it speaks with the voice of the Dharma, it has no rank, no position, no attachment to personal identity. It’s like a sage beyond your years who has your voice and goes in and out of your face all the time, but we don’t always feel it. When our actions arise from this deep inner heart/mind (kokoro) we foster harmony and compassion in the world. That’s a pretty good summary of Rinzai Zen.

Torei Zenji’s Preface to the Bodhisattva Vows expands on this view; let’s open our Sutra book to page 21. I believe that Torei wrote this when he was about thirty-five. He was a principal disciple of Hakuin Zenji, who revitalized Rinzai Zen in 18th century Japan. Together Hakuin and Torei founded Rutaku-Ji where Robert Aiken Roshi, Genki Roshi, Eido Roshi, Sochu Roshi and Soen Roshi trained. Soen was the retired Abbot and Sochu was the Abbot when I briefly trained there in 1981 & 1982. In the Founder’s Hall of Rutaku-Ji, Torei and Hakuin Roshi’s life-size effigies are there, each wearing a “death mask” and dressed in full vestments. In the middle of the night when monks were doing Yaza (individual after hours sitting), at least one or two of us would take our cushions to where these two guys were sitting and we would sit with them. At such times, I could feel their presence transcending time and space. Torei expands on what we have just been talking about when he says, “...the real form of the universe, all is the never failing manifestation of the mysterious truth of Tathagata. In any event, in any moment, and in any place, none can be other than the marvelous revelation of its glorious light.” He’s saying exactly what the historical Buddha said in Atta Dipa. It’s all light. It’s all shining.

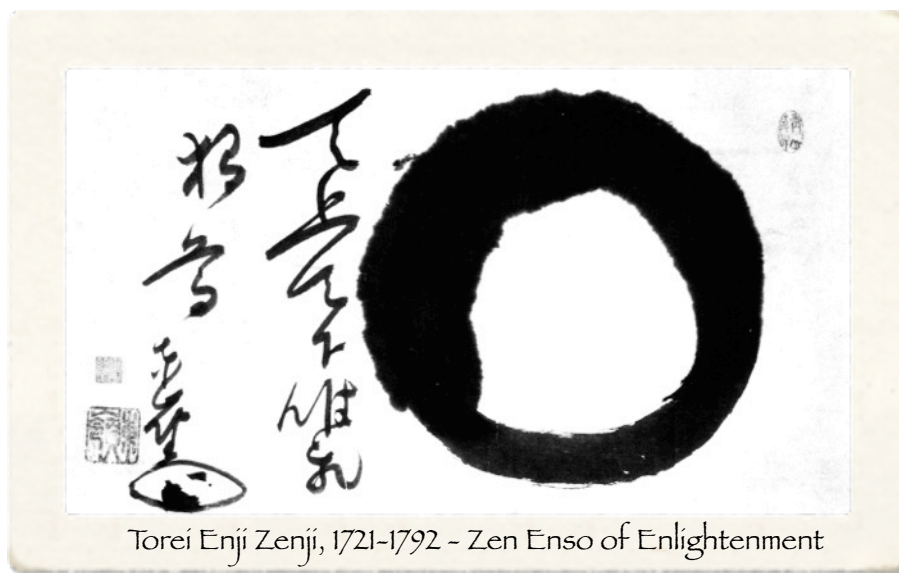
We're not talking about visible light. I don't know what kind of light to say, "it" is, except to say this is the best metaphor we can come up with; "it" is all light, all shining. Another metaphor I like is "it" is all a good vibration. On the sixth day of this sesshin, I'm hopeful that everyone is having sufficient samadhi that they feel the truth of "It's all a good vibration" or "it's all light" and "it's all shining." Even the mechanical sound of the plane overhead or the dumpster being picked up, the dog barking, or certainly the rain falling, the smell of the incense, the smell of the roses, everything, including your own image when looking in the mirror, is shining.

"Who cannot be respectful of all senseless things, not to speak of a human being? Therefore, even if someone names us as a sworn enemy and persecutes us, we should be warm and compassionate towards them. Their very abuse conveys the Buddha's boundless loving-kindness for us." Usually, we probably think, "Well, that's a bummer. I don't want that kind of loving compassion; you can keep it Buddha! And I'm not sure I'm going to love my enemies either." But doesn't every great religion get around to saying that you must love your

enemies the way you want to be loved yourself? Of course, they all use different words, saying it in a slightly different ways. But the Golden Rule is at the heart of all great religions: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." This is Torei's way of saying it. He also implies that the things we find most difficult and trying are the very things that hone or sculpt us into mature followers of the Way. We are followers of the Way when we sit here and explore the nature of what is. We are followers of the Way when we see the "light." But we're really followers of the Way in a deep sense when we make use of difficult circumstances and become stronger, more compassionate, human beings by facing difficulties straight on. We must learn to see difficulties as "...compassionate devices to liberate us entirely from our own egoistic delusions

and attachments we have built up from the beginning-less past."

Often we get stuck on, "This was done to me and therefore, I'm upset because this person offended me or took something from me or persecuted me." Exactly who is offended? Who's put out of whack? I get out of whack as easily as the next person, especially when someone challenges what I call "my integrity." I hate to be called a liar, for example. I hate it because I try really hard to be truthful. But I ask myself, who's taking offense? And I conclude it's my ego that is taking offense. Not the sage beyond one's years; this deep voice takes no offense. The true person who goes in and out of our face all the time...takes no offense. The true person has no ego to begin with, and what we call ego is no more than



Torei Enji Zenji, 1721-1792 - Zen Enso of Enlightenment

a little strand of dust found on a leaf of a great tree. From the tree's perspective, there is no offense taken by a strand of dust on a leaf. So when I feel offended, put out or wronged, I work to take a deep breath and ask, "Who is offended?" If I can get this far I always conclude, "it's the small egocentric self that feels offended or abused." If I'm then able to take a second deep breath and encounter my deepest self (which is really no self), no offense is possible. Can we learn to operate from this depth more often? Yes, of course we can, with a lot of work! Just because no offense is taken doesn't mean that no action is taken, but if action is taken it will have the feel of "no action" (buji) because this kind of action leaves no ego trace and promotes harmony through responses that arise from a caring heart/mind.

To review, Zen is really, really simple: it's all one fabric. It's indivisible. It has no form, much less a name. It gives rise to multi-universes. We are it. It's all shining. It's all vibrating. Great! And...we all get stuck in our ego identity from time to time! When we are stuck in our egoistic perspective, we divide self from other, differentiate friend from foe. Then we go to war, on a personal, ethnic or national level to "defend" our offended ego. Through our greed to have more, we rape the world. To be a deep Follower of the Way, we must improve our ability to transcend our survival instincts, which tend to keep us stuck in ego identity. Investigating what is, seeing the light AND transcending our attachment to ego identity is what Zen is all about. It's not just about investigating, "What is this?" and feeling the Good Vibration! It is also about letting go of our attachment to who is worried, who is offended and who is feeling put out. Zen is about learning how to let go of attachment to our surface ego identity. At the very least, we want our egoistic perspective to move into the background, which allows the voice of the sage beyond our years to come to the foreground.

We use icons of the Buddha and Kannon to represent who we want to be leading the show.

But the deeper truth is we must learn to allow our deep nature, that aspect that does not take offense, is not put out, does not worry, and has nothing to worry about, to run this life. Our deep nature is fully capable of making use of conditions that feel troubling as a compassionate device to liberate us entirely from our own egoistic delusions and attachments. This is Zen practice; this is our practice. Investigating what is, and the seeing the "light" are not at all useless, but incomplete by themselves. If we use our practice to dislodge ego identity as the principal governance of our life, then, "In each moment's flash of our thought there will grow a lotus flower." A "moment's flash of our thought" is known as a Nen. In other words, each non-ego Nen

Continued on next page...

will assist with a new flowering of compassion in this world. These flowers of manifest compassion are popping out all the time, but when we transcend worry and offense, we become a genuine peace force in the world. When we can show a loving, strong, unyielding response in the face of hate and fear, we will see flowers of Buddhas pop out right in front of us. It's so transformative! It melts people's hearts! To become transformative catalysts in the world, all we need do is transcend our attachment to a separated selfhood and realize, it's all vibrating, it's all shining, this is and has always been the Pure Land.

"In every moment, may we extend *this* mind over the whole universe..." This mind needs no extending over the whole universe. This mind is already over the whole universe, and seamless with every aspect, but Torei Zenji is calling us to participate, "so that we and all beings together will attain maturity in the Buddha's way." When there is maturity in the Buddha's way, we have no need to talk about the light, or seeing the light, or Buddha. With maturity we stop talking about compassion and loving kindness, we are compassion and loving kindness, and indeed flowers of "Buddhahood" appear everywhere. Our practice is to foster maturity, by becoming more skillful at letting go of our attachment to ego identity. It is the hardest work we can do. It is the most important work we can do and, without it, we are not yet practicing Zen.

With gassho,
Genjo

Closing Incense Poem

Summer Sesshin, 2013

Investigating Heart/Mind,

Who sees Dai Bai mountain?

Flowers bloom in the summer rain.

*A flash of lightning illuminates
the dream.*

New Posts

Beginning Sept. 1st

John Daikan Green:
Shika (Host - Manager)

Scott Ishin Stolnack:
Dai-Tenzo (Chief cook for Sesshins)

Sally Zenka Metcalf:
Jikijitsu (Timekeeper)

Mike Daiun Urban:
Densu (Chant Leader)

Rick Muken Proctor:
Densu Assistant

Edwin Beatty:
Jisha (Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Lynn Hernandez:
Jisha Assistant

Tom Shodo DeGroot:
Inji (Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn Josen Stevens:
Fusu (Accountant)

Tobin Fudo Youngs &
Steve Ganko Hanson &
Sally Zenka Metcalf &
Rick Muken Proctor:
Introductory Zazen

Fall Intensive

Chobo-Ji's Fall Intensive will start September 8th with mini-sesshin, and conclude on December 8th. 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 [Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong](#). Also, attend the one scheduled session of the Book Study Group on Nov. 16th, 9-11AM.

4) Come to Dokusan at least once a week, or if one of us is out of town, try and schedule a Skype video call with Genjo Osho.

Note from Brian

Brian Erbach who is Leslie Genei Gannon's son wrote Chobo-Ji about how his mother is doing since Genki Roshi's (her husband and our founding Abbot) bodily departure. Brian was very instrumental in the care of Roshi in his last few weeks, and has been of invaluable support to his mother during this difficult time. He writes:

I was so gratified to get the news last month through Genko, that... the board at Chobo-Ji had decided to provide additional support for my mother, Leslie. Please extend my gratitude, as well as my mother's, to all at the temple for this kindness. Genki's extended illness, and his passing have been emotionally exhausting for my mother. Thankfully she is gradually regaining her strength, but it is the quiet passing of time she requires most, and the generosity of Chobo-Ji is helping provide her with the opportunity to heal. I was also very pleased to attend the ceremony for Genki Roshi in April. It was touching to hear the personal remembrances of Genki and to see how he had affected so many lives.



3-Day Odayaka Sesshin



AUGUST 23-25

FRI
7 AM-8 PM

SAT
7 AM-8 PM

SUN
7 AM-4 PM

"Odayaka" means peaceful and this Sesshin is a little less arduous with more dialogue than our weeklong Sesshins. It is especially suited for Dharma Dragons (practitioners over 60) and others looking for a more spacious daily schedule.

A vegetarian breakfast, lunch and dinner will be served each day with zazen, kinhin (walking meditation) dokusan (private interviews with the Abbot), teisho (dharma talk), chanting, qi gong, dialogue and personal time for reflection and integration.

Cost is \$100. To hold a spot please send a deposit of at least \$25 by Aug. 11th. For questions email zen@choboji.org.



Bearing Witness Retreat at Auschwitz/Birkenau

Bernie Glassman and the Zen Peacemakers are returning for the 18th year to the old site of the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, in Oświęcim, Poland, for a Bearing Witness Retreat, Nov. 4-8, 2013.

This retreat is multi-faith and multinational in character, with a strong focus on the Zen Peacemakers' Three Tenets: Not-Knowing, Bearing Witness, and Loving Action.

Auschwitz, the Place, is the main Teacher for this retreat. Experienced Spirit Holders meet, with Bernie Glassman, each day to reflect on the retreat flow, schedule, events and make appropriate modifications if necessary. For more information see: www.zenpeacemakers.org

Spiritually Based Gestalt Workshop - Sept. 14 & 15

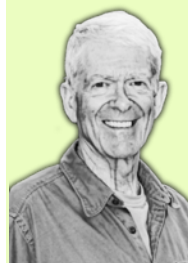
With Leonard Shaw M.S.W., ACSW at Chobo-Ji
9:30AM to 5:00PM both days

Participants will learn the blending of Eastern and Western psychology, to empower and educate themselves and others. The workshop is almost entirely experiential, no prerequisites are required. There will be didactic exercises involving art therapy and gestalt therapy practices.

You will also learn:

1. How to transform somatic or medical issues into powerful consultants.
2. How to deeply heal traumatic experiences.
3. How to breakthrough intransigent difficulties with someone, when each person thinks the other is avoiding a serious problem.
4. Three powerful communication tools for discussing loaded subjects.

Fee: \$50 - \$150 (sliding scale - 80% goes to temple)



For more information and registration contact Leonard at 206-322-5785 or visit www.loveandforgiveness.com

(CEU's available for therapists on request)

Autumn Sesshin - Sept. 20th to Sept. 27th

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a **deposit by Sept. 8th**, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check, \$50 or more, to Chobo-Ji and leave it the bowl by the zendo entrance or mail it to...

Attention: Carolyn Stevens
Chobo-Ji
1733 S. Horton St. #7
Seattle, WA 98144

The cost of sesshin is \$250 (less dues). Sesshin will start Friday evening, 9/20, 5:30PM with informal supper, introductions and orientation. Sesshin from Saturday to the following Friday starts at 5AM. Structured program ends each evening at 10PM. Sesshin ends 11AM, the morning of Friday, 9/27. We provide sleeping accommodations for those traveling from out of town, please bring a sleeping bag, toiletries, sitting clothes, work clothes and a towel.

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: 8/18, 9/1, 9/29, 10/14, 10/28, 11/3, 11/17, 12/15, 12/23 - 7:30 PM

Ellensburg mini-sesshin with Genko Ni-Osho ...

Aug. 17th, 9am - 3pm

Three Day Odayaka Sesshin ...

Aug. 23rd - 25th

(Odayaka Sesshin is especially for new comers, Silver Dragons or anyone wanting a more relaxed pace)

Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and teisho ...

Sept. 8th, 5am - 11:30am

Ellensburg mini-sesshin with Genko Ni-Osho ...

Sept. 14th, 9am - 3pm

Spiritually Based Gestalt Workshop ...

Sept. 14th & 15th, 9:30am - 5pm

Autumn Sesshin ...

Sept. 20th - Sept. 27th

Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and teisho ...

Oct. 6th, 5am - 11:30am

Second Anniversary Celebration, potluck and forum ...

Oct. 6th, Noon - 3pm

Ellensburg mini-sesshin with Genko Ni-Osho ...

Oct. 12th, 9am - 3pm

Buddhist Global Relief - Walk to Feed the Hungry ...

Oct. 12th, 9am, Volunteer Park

Introduction to Zen Series ...

Oct. 15th, 22nd, 29th, Nov. 5th, 7:30-8:15pm

Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and teisho ...

Oct. 20th, 5am - 11:30am

Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and teisho ...

Nov. 10th, 5am - 11:30am

Book Study Group ...

Nov. 16th, 9am - 11am

Rohatsu Sesshin ...

Nov. 30th - Dec. 8th



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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