



# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

Autumn rains have returned; the grass is growing again like it was spring. Seattle has had a wonderful summer, and I feel ready to fall deeply into practice as the leaves turn and drop. We have two new strongly committed residents and three new Jukai members, and I couldn't be happier with the expanded breadth of our sangha.

Genko Ni-Osho was the lead priest at our August Odayaka Sesshin; there were 15 participants and by all accounts great gratitude was shared by all. You will find more about Odayaka Sesshin later in this issue. Our weeklong Autumn Sesshin had 20 participants and the temple inside and out shines from the samu (work meditation) everyone lovingly poured into the property. Both Genko Ni-Osho and Joriki Osho gave Dharma Talks; Genko also lovingly prepared whisked green tea on middle day. The Tenzo (cook) post was shared by John Daikan Green, Scott Ishin Stolnack and Jaye Seiho Morris, and I also contributed on middle day with my homemade spaghetti sauce. Daikan and Ishin are both consummate Tenzos, who worked with Seiho to introduce him to Chobo-Ji style meals. Seiho learned quickly what he needed and demonstrated that he is blooming into another exceptional temple cook. Our Shika (host/manager) at this sesshin was Sally Zenka Metcalf, and many people have spoken to me about how much they enjoyed being assigned and instructed how to do what needs doing around the temple. Edwin Kyosei Beatty was our Jikijitsu (timekeeper) and valiantly worked to keep us all in line. Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik served as Densu (chant leader) and the beat rolled on. Both Anne Howells and Gavin Mackay served as Jisha (tea servers) and bountifully kept us warm and sustained. Robert Kirkpatrick was my Inji (abbot



Autumn Sesshin 2014

assistant) and did a fine job supporting me. The sesshin concluded with Anne, Robert and Rick Testa (from Shoshinkan Aikido Dojo in Providence, RI) doing Jukai (Buddhist Precept Ceremony). As you read further you will find several offerings in this issue covering this sesshin.

On Bodhidharma Memorial Day, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the third year Opening Anniversary of our residential practice center on North Beacon Hill. This day also marked the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my tokudo (unsui ordination – Zen priest in training). My heart is so full of gratitude to have had the opportunity to do Zen practice with so many compatriots, including my ordination teacher and Chobo-Ji's founding abbot Genki Takabayashi Roshi. Without our association with Dr. Glenn Kangan Webb, who founded the Seattle Zen Center and invited Genki to Seattle, and Genki Roshi we all would not be together here today. Our practice derives from their work and the many generations back to Bodhidharma and beyond. Together I hope we are the foundation of many generations of Zen practice to come. Our potluck at the Anniversary was well attended and of course the spread of delicious offerings was stupendous! More celebrations are in store at my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday dinner, which I plan to have Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> at [Pippy's Café](#), a few blocks away from Chobo-Ji, 5:30PM (RSVP: [zen@choboji.org](mailto:zen@choboji.org)). Save room for zazen at 7:30PM!

My colleague and friend Kyogen Carlson collapsed and died of a massive heart attack Sept. 18, 2014, just short of his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was the Co-Abbot of the [Dharma Rain Zen Center](#) in Portland. I will be attending his 49<sup>th</sup> day memorial the evening of Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>. I miss him. I always found him to be kind, wise and funny, a man who never took himself too seriously.



Looking ahead I'll be traveling shortly to Walla Walla, 11/21-23, to do sesshin and meet with prisoners at the Penitentiary. Thanksgiving and Rohatsu sesshin (11/29 - 12/7) are coming right up, followed by Toya (year-end-party), 12/13, more holidays and our New Year's Day Celebration and potluck, 10AM, 1/1/15. Early next year I will be traveling the second week of January to do [Blue Mountain Zendo's](#) Rohatsu Sesshin, then the first week in February to [Bonn Germany](#) to do a four-day retreat.

As most sangha members are aware, our community has been branching out to do some direct social action beyond our long standing work with prisoners. It is our collective responsibility to bring the peace of mind that we cultivate in the zendo out into our daily lives and wider community. Recently the Chobo-Ji Board authorized support of I-594 "March to the Ballot Box," a



state initiative to require background checks for all gun sales. As I write this paragraph, it is the day after another school shooting, this time in nearby Marysville Pilchuck High School. It is my hope that through collective efforts we can reduce gun violence in this

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nation. There is no doubt that even small steps will save lives. Recently I also had the opportunity, with other [Faith Action Network](#) leaders, to meet with Governor Jay Inslee. I spoke about the need to abolish the death penalty and to approve a bill that would allow inmates access to post-secondary education. Sangha members have also been working with [Patacara](#) to help serve a meal to disadvantaged youth at the [Atlantic Street Family Center](#) on the third Thursday of each month.

Besides the offerings that I've already mentioned in this issue you will find announcements for Rohatsu Sesshin, upcoming holiday events, a couple of Board Reports, three essays from sangha members, and Genko's letter concerning an important workshop investigating prison work. May the upcoming holiday season be peaceful and bright. I look forward to many more years of training with this diverse and rich sangha.

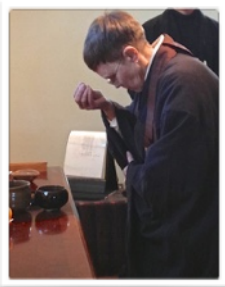
With gassho,

*Genjo*

## Odayaka Sesshin

by Steve Ganko Hanson

The August Odayaka sesshin was a three-day sesshin with an easier schedule than a 7-day sesshin. Key differences: the wake up time is later, the bedtime is earlier, and the samu period is shorter. I was excited about this form, new to me, and I was interested in seeing how Genko Ni-Osho would lead it – this was my first sesshin led by anyone other than Genjo Osho.



Genko set the tone for this sesshin in her opening statement, saying, "Odayaka means 'gentle,' and the schedule is less demanding, but that doesn't mean we can't go just as deep." I was reminded of

Hakuin's "Soft Butter" meditation, where he invites us to imagine melted butter infusing and trickling through our body and sitting in a bath of medicinal herbs.

Genko gave a beautiful dharma talk on "Suffering," based on an early Indian sutra, written before Zen even existed, I assume. She stressed the need to recognize the suffering of others in this world, how this recognition is often enough to do great benefit. For example, when visiting prisoners, just seeing them and recognizing their pain makes a great impact. I have heard a few of her talks on early sutras at this point, and always find them extremely helpful -- I see her standing on and pointing to a foundation stone. Personally, I found that the sesshin was gentle, but with more energy available for sitting. More time for sleep didn't invite "the dread," the resistance mechanisms, one can encounter in longer sesshins. This was a new form for most attendees, and there was a sense of fresh openness in the room -- we were all going with the flow, with more space to explore and inquire. The substitution of "dharma interview" for koan-focused "dokusan" was also notable: what do you talk about in the dokusan room, if koans are not on the agenda? It gave us a chance to bring up topics and areas that wouldn't normally be part of the day.

## Prison Work

by Genko Ni-Osho

Dear Chobo-Ji Sangha Members:

As many of you know, I have been working with Buddhist groups in the prisons and King County Jail for ten years now. Over the years a number of the inmates from those groups have released into the community, and I have worked with some of them after release as well. As a society, we do not make it easy for those who have served their term in prison to re-integrate into the community. It is difficult to find a job, housing, and spiritual support with a record, and yet these are the very things that are needed for successful re-integration. At this time I have approached Chobo-Ji's Board to see if there is any way we as a sangha might help.

**A**fter morning zazen on **Saturday, November 8, I will be at the zendo from 9:15 to 11:15 to talk about my work with inmates**, both in and out of prison, to share some thoughts about how the sangha might be involved, and to answer any questions you may have. Feel free to contact me beforehand with questions or concerns as well.

Gassho,

*Genko*

## Coming to Chobo-Ji

by Jaye Seiho Morris

Coming to Chobo-Ji to be in training and residency means a lot to me. I am very honored and appreciative to train and share practice in a direct way with our Sangha. I've been living on the East Coast, about 3,320 miles from Chobo-Ji. That said, I felt it might be good to share with you, what I'm doing here, what I travel with, and what I'm up to in terms of Zen Practice.

The first thing is, I've been practicing since about 1990. I'd encountered Zen well before then, in about 1986. I was on the East Coast, at Salisbury State College (SSC), in Blackwell Library. I was working on a paper and was there to get a copy of "Thus Spake Zarathustra." The thoughts and ideas of Wilhelm Nietzsche were at that time a powerful influence on me. I'd thought... thought... thought... that was "It." Like so many other times, when the rubber meets the road, that wasn't the case.

While there, I was high on pot, reached out for the book, and when I retracted my hand, I was startled to see in my hand what was a brown book, that had no cover. On it in gold was inscribed a word I'd never seen before. I didn't know how to pronounce it, but it was spelled, "Shobogenzo," subtitled "The True Eye of the Dharma."

That sounded pretty formidable. I opened it and read words that have stuck with me ever since. Most of us know them by heart... "To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be awakened by all sentient beings." I was reading that out loud

and when I got to the end, I was no longer high. I was stone-cold sober. Somehow reading it shifted my sense of consciousness. That moment was transformative and scary at the same time. That moment would prove important later.

I'd grown up an addict. My mom had been trying to get me clean since the age of twelve. Alcohol and other drugs were a big thing for me. I didn't consider myself a "Real" addict because I never used opiates, have a long-standing fear of needles, and didn't move in the same circles that the famous so-called "They" moved in.

When I was twenty-one, I'd gotten clean through a Twelve Step Fellowship, I'm still very involved in. I didn't know at the time that March 22nd, 1987, was going to be the last time I was going to use, but as it turned out it was. Since then it's been complete abstinence from all drugs including alcohol.

A large part of what's empowered my recovery process is Zen. Paraphrasing Step One, I express it as, "We admitted we were powerless over our ego, that our lives had become unmanageable," evidenced by the ongoing experience of suffering.

That awareness led me to formally learn how to sit and practice at Rochester Zen Center, thanks to meeting a visiting professor from Rochester Institute of Technology, who came to SSC, and his encouragement. I knew was I sleeping and I didn't want to be that way anymore, so I went after it.

That led me eventually to Dai Bosatsu Zendo, in Livingston Manor, New York and as many of you can surmise, being introduced to the ongoing saga of Eido Shimano. As Genjo Osho himself has evidenced, it's been at times a very baffling and heart-rending relationship and interaction.

I had the opportunity to take Jukai with Eido Shimano and felt I wanted to take full ordination with him, but I refused. I felt that he didn't have the integrity and actualized clarity that I was personally okay with. As a person with long-term recovery, I've never seen duplicity of that sort work out in a way that felt as though it was in alignment with "Awakened Heart/Mind."

Eventually Genjo Osho and I had a meeting of sorts and I found him to be a person of deep integrity and to be quite frank, not so much enlightened (personally my experience is there's no such thing), but he'd authentically and genuinely ceased being deluded. That was important. That combination resulted in my asking to take Jukai with him. And now that request has extended itself into asking to take "Tokudo" ordination with Genjo Osho and become *unsui* [cloud and water person – priest in training] and continue to train with him.

When people ask me what I'm doing, I give them an honest answer... "My best with what I have in the present moment." I'm just doing my life as my own personal version of "Discovery of Happiness Channel." I just do stuff and see what happens.

In coming into residence, there's a new chapter of life to be written, for me. The previous chapter involved having been caught by some things that blinded me to my happiness. It's been accepting 90° happiness instead of 360°. I work in the addictions treatment business. For me it's like being a duck in water. I enjoy what I do, but at the same time it's become something that seems like it's substantively lost its heart, though I still work there, for now.

For me embracing *Shu Jo Mu Hen Seigan Do*... "However innumerable all beings are, I vow to care for them all" has been a part of the foundation of my life. It's been a growing awareness that the "Buddha-field," is wherever we are. My Buddha-field is working as a fellow Twelve Step Program member to help other people to suffer less and gain recovery from addiction. I have a feeling that my training here will bring that to a new place.

Having set things into motion and doing Discovery Channel of Happiness "The Chobo-Ji Episode," I received an interesting request from my wife that I've been separated from for 5 or 6 years. She wanted to help herself and my son "Bear" reboot their lives, wanting to come to Seattle themselves. It was based on my sharing of experiences here. It gave them a sense of possibility. The reality was that she couldn't do it without my help.

She would be more than 3000 miles from the normal support system of her family. To raise a 9-year old boy would not be doable on her own. On top of that there was an added thing that had always concerned me about Bear. It was his safety. Bear was born female. Despite this medical fact, there's never been a time when he's identified as being a girl... not in a single instance.

The result of that and the community in which we lived, placed Bear in a consistent state of jeopardy and harassment. It was tough as people would directly confront me and ask, "What are you going to do about this. Your kid is gender confused. You need to straighten your kid out." My response is, "I will love Bear as is, that's my truth."

As Bear has gotten older, adults and kids alike, mostly cause it's a small community have grown bolder and more aggressive. Bear has found Seattle and the culture here a natural fit. Basking that for me was having a sense of comfort with that "still & small voice" within me.

Adding to the need for a reboot is that fact that my older daughter was almost killed in a near fatal car crash January 27, 2013. Since that day, a lot of perspectives and seeing our collective and individual lives have changed. That experience had a devastating impact on all of us, as Michaela experiences complications connected to that day, as do Bear, Debra and myself.

I agreed and requested that they be able to reside with me on a temporary basis, while they calibrate to Seattle, with the idea they'd get their own place near by. Bear has been registered at school and is doing extremely well. We'd talked with the school and they have been incredibly helpful and definitely don't see him as "gender-confused" or a "Problem to be solved," but as a child who enjoys school that they seem happy to have. I check-in with Bear on a daily basis. His response is one of relief and feeling people understand. It's the first time outside of Bear's family that he's felt a sense of acceptance. That's speaks volumes in and of itself.

People say, "Wow that is an amazing thing for you to do. Most people wouldn't help

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their ex.” My personal feeling is, that if I’d said no, then I would need to give up on Zen. It would have been obvious to me that my practice has not been informing my life-behavior. Zen has taught me to grow and expand loving-kindness, not shut it off. Zen has taught me that instead of rejecting, negating, invalidating others, to always look and notice what I call “Points of appreciation,” and concentrate and harmonize with that. I’ve been a lot happier doing my life that way.

And that brings me back to Chobo-Ji, “Autumn Sesshin,” and Genjo Osho. In a particular teisho, Genjo Osho asked... “What is Buddha?” And after a moment, looking around the Zendo at the sesshin participants, he replied “Loving presence.”

Hearing and feeling those words it was a kind of internal confirmation for me. It was a “yes,” I have the right teacher. I am in the right place. I am here at the right time, doing the right things, grateful to be a part of Chobo-Ji, helping nurture the practice in whatever way I can.

Each person comes to Zen for their own reason. The reason that we came to practice, we usually find out, isn’t the reason we stick with our practice. It grows, changes, expands and adapts to the circumstances of the present moment. Though Seiho means “Clear peak,” I feel fortunate to continue here unfolding and expressing this journey, on this path of interconnected and intersecting Dharma life.



## Mumonkan

### Case 30

### Mind is Buddha

Middle Day Autumn Sesshin, 2014

Koan: Taibai once asked Baso, “What is Buddha?” Baso answered, “Mind is Buddha.”

Mumon’s Commentary: If you can at once grasp “it,” you are wearing Buddha clothes, eating Buddha food, speaking Buddha words, and living Buddha life; you are a Buddha yourself. Though this may be so, Taibai has misled a number of people and let them trust a scale with a stuck pointer. Don’t you know that one has to rinse out his mouth for three days if he has uttered the word “Buddha?” If he is a real Zen person, he will stop his ears and rush away when he hears “Mind is Buddha.”

#### Mumon’s Poem

*A fine day under a blue sky!  
Don’t foolishly look here and there.  
If you still ask “What is Buddha?”  
It is like pleading your innocence  
while clutching stolen goods.*

In yesterday’s Teisho, we heard more about Eno who was designated as the Sixth Chinese Zen Patriarch. In our lineage, Nangaku follows Eno, and then comes Baso Doitsu who is listed as the Eighth Patriarch. Taibai was one of Baso’s principal disciples, but he had many, including Hyakujo and Nansen. From Hyakujo comes Obaku and then Rinzai. From Nansen comes Joshu. The Chinese Dharma tree really starts to significantly branch out from Baso.

Recall that the 27<sup>th</sup> Case of the Mumonkan is titled, “Neither Mind, Nor Buddha.” In Zen parlance, “Neither Mind Nor Buddha” is safer to talk about than “Mind is Buddha.” In Zen we can quickly get in trouble with any statement that affirms anything! This koan already has two affirmations in the title: Mind and Buddha. Moreover, this koan investigates two seminal Zen questions at once: “What is Mind?” and “What is Buddha?” According to Baso’s proclamation, “Mind is Buddha,” these two terms are pretty much equivalent, and I agree.



Zen Master Baso Dōitsu

Usually we think of Buddha as representing our awakened Mind, but this short sentence implies that all of what we call Mind, awakened or not, is Buddha. Therefore, what we call Mind is equivalent to what we call Buddha Nature. The whole multidimensional universe is nothing but Nature; therefore, no need for the word “Buddha.” In this view what we call Mind is an indivisible quality of Nature; therefore no need for the word “Mind.” It’s simpler to say, “Neither Mind Nor Buddha” or just “THIS.”

If we don’t get caught in our conceptualizations of Mind or Buddha, and dip into the experience that is being pointed at, then as Mumon’s commentary says, we’re already “wearing Buddha clothes, eating Buddha food, speaking Buddha words, and living Buddha life; you are a Buddha yourself.” When our actions are sublimely ordinary and we drop our attachment to “self,” we no longer have any need for Buddha. In this condition of no-self and no-Buddha we arrive at: “Ordinary Mind is Tao.” Our ordinary clothes, food, words and life are the nameless Tao manifest.

It’s an interesting question, “What is Mind?” or “What is consciousness?” Is mind an emergent quality of the universe, as a hurricane is an emergent property of weather? Or is what we call “Mind” an intrinsic quality of the fabric of reality? My sense is that what we call “Mind” is an integral part of the very fabric of THIS. As

with all qualities or aspects, none of them can be isolated, each aspect is inseparable from other aspects. What we call “Mind” is likely a part of the fabric or nature of reality in much the same way as gravity. We don’t know what gravity is, but it’s an integral part of the very fabric or nature of space-time. I think the same holds true for mind.

**M**ind doesn’t seem to reside anywhere or emerge from anything. My sense is that it is already everywhere. However, as soon as we attach to any quality or aspect of the universe as being “real,” that is to say, separable from other qualities or aspects, we’ve totally missed it. It’s an observable pattern. To me, and this is just my impression, what I’m calling Mind is felt as an alive presence in the midst of the walls, floor and the ceiling. It can be felt in the rock, dew, fog, wind chime and squawk of a bird. What I am calling Mind is not dependent on thoughts, but is a totally natural presence that completely imbues physicality but is not dependent on it. Perhaps this impression is just my imagination run wild. Maybe when we sit here long enough, we start hallucinating this idea of “Mind” presence. If it is a hallucination, then from what I have heard and read, millions have shared this hallucination. This view of reality keeps popping up time after time, a deep sense that there is more going on than just the dimensions of space and time. Even physicists tell us this is a multidimensional universe, many more dimensions than the four constituting “space-time.”

**M**y experience of “presence,” i.e. Buddha Nature or Mind, is always peaceful, totally accepting, with no judgment, and even benevolent. With our rational somewhat objective mind we might easily conclude, “Well, if there is any truth about Buddha Nature or God, it’s probably malevolent 100% of the time, but only effective 20% of the time.” (laughter) I heard this sentiment expressed in a recently released TED talk, when the presenter was reflecting on the awful events of the past few centuries and pondering if there is a God, what kind of God is it?

**M**y sense of this presence is that it’s quite benevolent. I sense no motive or purpose inside this dimension, but I can only say it feels to me to be warm and unconditionally accepting. This presence is called many names: Mind, Tao or Buddha Nature to

name a few. Some may choose to call this presence God or the manifestation of God, but all names fall short and tend to remove us from the feeling. Much better to forget about names and just allow ourselves to directly feel the quality of what is. This dimension, though entirely empty, radiates love and acceptance.

**W**hat is Baso pointing at when he says, “Mind is Buddha?” To me he’s saying, “loving presence.” If we can accept this, then Mumon’s commentary is telling us that everything is infused with loving presence. Therefore, the clothes we are wearing are full of loving presence. The food I’m eating is imbued with loving presence. Everything



seen and unseen is IT. Even this very narrow band of ego consciousness called “self” is nothing but loving presence. So we’re already “wearing Buddha clothes, eating Buddha food, speaking Buddha words, and living Buddha life.”

**W**e are already Buddha itself. We’re already a composite of various qualities, one of them being loving presence. However, if I go around stuck with the idea that everything is loving presence I’m going to trip and fall real quick! For example, I could walk out in the middle of the street and have a car run over me thinking, “Well, it’s all IT” and it’s true, even though I’d just be a pile of broken and squished cytoplasm on the ground. If I went around stuck on the idea of loving presence, I couldn’t be appropriately fearful about walking off a cliff, and I would be denying our very powerful instincts for survival, which are also a component of this life. Moreover, if I’m not cautious I could claim my own greedy, even murderous thoughts are examples of loving presence. If I got stuck in the lovely unity of everything, I could

sure make a mess of things. This would be a grievous error. Loving presence is everywhere, and it is all Buddha Nature, but not every action or thought that arises is loving.

**A**s Zennists, I hope we feel, from time to time, this loving presence jumping out at us from the silence, stillness and all manifest forms. However, if we get stuck on terms like “Buddha”, “Dharma”, “Tao” and “Shunyata,” or even short, pithy phrases like “Mind is Buddha” or “Loving Presence,” then it’s much better to run for the hills, stop up our ears and wash out our mouths. Better to never have heard of Buddha in the first place than to get stuck on it. Better still to say nothing: feel it, and just be ordinary.

**S**o what good is our practice? Why practice at all if our aim is to forget about Buddha and just be ordinary? We sit here, long and hard. There are a lot of things going on in this room. Sometimes I know how deathly boring or tiring it can be. Sometimes practice can be incredibly painful, frustrating or fearful. On the other hand, practice can be a catalyst for deep insight and vast breakthroughs. Most of us have probably repeatedly visited all these places. Sometimes, practice will uncover old trauma from our childhood. Yup, I’ve been there and done that. I kind of feel sorry for those of you who don’t have any old trauma to discover or relive. It can be pretty interesting shit, but I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. Nevertheless, I’ve learned a lot about the human condition from deeply experiencing my own early trauma on the cushion. There are a lot of great lessons imbedded in every kind of experience.

**O**ther times, practice is a lot like waiting for a pot to boil: we wait and wait. It’s like paying attention to a newly planted seed in the ground and waiting for it to grow. You may be waiting for a very long time, even when you have tended to the seed carefully, making sure it has enough water and sun. It may make take days or weeks of sesshin before you see any results. We may think, “Why doesn’t it grow? Is there something wrong with me? I must not be doing something right!” No, the seed of expansive awareness will grow in the readiness of time and not before.

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Over time we learn concretely that we have no power over when we're going to have a breakthrough or an insight. Our practice does plant the seed for insight, but it sprouts only when it is ready. We can cultivate the soil a little with practice, but that's all we can do. Mostly we have to wait and wait and wait, developing patience and learning to trust in the process. After a while, when our efforts come to fruition, openings may come in a cascade, and we may get the false idea that we have arrived! Oh, forget about it. Moments of clarity can last for a while and even be very transformative. Still we soon learn again and again that everything is temporary, including clarity.

Over the course of time, breath after breath, day after day, sesshin after sesshin, decade after decade, we become more familiar with the whole range of the human condition, more familiar with both confusion and clarity. Undoubtedly there's some advantage to getting a view of the whole range. However, even when we have seen the full rainbow of human awareness, we realize that this visible spectrum is only a small slice of what Carl Jung called the collective unconscious. Even if my perception expands to include the visible spectrum of consciousness, I realize that Mind is far more vast than this, infinitely more vast. Only a fraction of this vastness is knowable, and that's perfectly fine. Over time we become more and more comfortable with the unknowable. I still have no idea what Mind or Tao is, nevertheless my range of perception is greater than when I started.

When we start our practice, the movie that we create inside ourselves through our primary senses is rather limited, like a small black and white monitor. Over time we develop a more cinematic multichannel HD view, but still it is only a narrow facsimile of reality. Even after years of practice we mostly live in a narrow egoistic perspective. Usually our sense of a separated individuality is so strong that we are unable to see past the artificial barriers that separate self from other. Thus, even a few glimpses penetrating the veil of self and other can be life transformative.

What we call "self" is part of the spectrum of what we call "Mind," but it's only a thin slice of an infinite spectrum. Likewise, visible light is only a narrow slice of the

electromagnetic spectrum. It's what our eyes can see, but there's a whole other kind of light out there that runs from radio waves to high-power gamma rays. All this light is bathing us all the time, but our eyes only report on a fraction of this rainbow. Similarly, our "mind" or "self" can only tune in to a thin slice of what we call "Mind" or Tao.

Through our Zen practice, we slowly and sometimes suddenly break through our artificial barriers. We begin to realize the depth of our own heart-mind, all the way down to what is sometimes referred to as the black before black. Most of the time our perception is focused on the surface waves of the ocean of Mind. As we learn to allow our perception to go deeper we begin to feel the lower archetypal currents, and if we keep diving we reach the deep dark cold still waters, where no further discrimination is possible. We can go no deeper, yet we get the sense that the blackness has no bottom, and in Zen we vocalize this infinite blackness as Mu.

Going the other direction, above the surface waves of Mind, our perspective can expand to see the ocean, the planet, the solar system, the galaxy and even the whole universe! Nevertheless, just when we think we have seen it all we realize that Mind has no boundaries, no location in time or space, certainly no dependence on physicality and no end or beginning, in other words, once again we reach the realm of the Unknowable.

Putting all of this speculation aside, if you still ask, "What is Buddha?" it is like pleading your innocence while clutching stolen goods. Stop looking and enjoy this day with an open heart and loving attitude. I know well this is not always possible, but this is why we keep practicing.

With gassho,

Genjo



## Autumn Reflections

### Sit - Breathe - Listen

As I write this I'm sitting on a plane returning from Seattle Washington after attending Autumn Sesshin at Chobo-Ji Zen temple. It was my first training experience at Chobo-Ji and I was received warmly by Genjo Osho and the sangha. The temple is nestled in a quiet suburban neighborhood surrounded by a wonderful array of bungalow style homes. The Zendo is a large, brick building with apartments for the resident sangha. I was given an apartment for my stay and shared it with three other attendees from out of town.

The grounds are covered with diverse and ornate plant life with flourishes of artistic, Buddhist accents.

The Zendo itself is housed in the basement and is open and spacious allowing for comfortably fitting many practitioners. The bamboo floor, calligraphy, and beautiful altar all lend to creating a



perfect place to "sit, breathe, and listen" (Genjo's words). I was assigned a spot in the Zendo which would be my place for the duration of the training. I was supplied a zabuton, zafu, sutra book, meal kit, and tea cup.

Sesshin can be translated as "to collect one's self," and this Sesshin was the longest I've participated in so far. Totalling 7 days, six of them from 5am to 10pm. This included breaks for meals and samu, or work period. My body ached and I experienced fatigue throughout the first few days. It certainly required concentrated focus and energy to sit zazen for that many hours each day. Eventually, around day three, I began to get my foundation together, and was able to keep my posture consistent. I also began to get in sync with the rhythm of the schedule.

During zazen there was a dropping down, "more onto," the zafu and I really began to feel the sensation of being in the floor. This led to a great deal of discomfort due to the

fact that was I holding unnecessary tension in and around my sacrum. It took days to feel how to release this, and find new balance points for my sacrum, spine, and head. Still, sitting for that many hours is inevitably tiring and becomes very uncomfortable at times. My ability to work with my breath was the only thing I had to hold it together, both physically and mentally.

Each day everything got a bit more high-def, so to speak. All my senses heightened and my internal landscape became more open and positive. A stronger connection to the present moment and admiration for my fellow participants began to emerge. The Zendo bristled with a vibrancy.

On the fifth day Genjo asked me to provide a class following the afternoon chanting. I shared basic Breath-work exercises augmented with appropriate body movement exercises. I am so very pleased to have met Genjo. I feel such kinship, almost a familiar, brotherly wavelength with him. Our mutual affinity and understanding is facilitating a process of uncovering experiences that would otherwise remain hidden, never to be explored and examined. I am returning home from sesshin with many insights into my internal wiring and propensity for certain behavioral characteristics, many now no longer necessary.

On the morning of the last day, I with two other participants, Anne and Robert, both from Chobo-Ji, had the great honor of doing Jukai. We were each given a dharma name and presented with a rakusu with our new names. After the ceremony we gathered around the table one last time, chanted the Heart Sutra and began our first non-silent meal together. The warm connection we all felt for one another was expressed with kind words, laughter, and reverence.

It is my intention to attend a Sesshin each season to continue my commitment to Zen training and the sangha. It is the correct path for me. And all who I am blessed to know will benefit from my doing so.

Rick Testa



## Fall Board Report

by Scott Ishin Stolnack

### Finances

- We are pleased to report that the temple continues to operate in the black, with income exceeding expenses by a comfortable margin.
- We continue to extend ongoing financial support to the widow of our founding Abbot until her situation stabilizes.
- The Board voted to sponsor [Patacara's](#) work with homeless youth; Chobo-Ji is financially supporting two monthly teen feeds (\$125 per month) over the coming year.
- The Board agreed to continue using Apartment 8 as an AirBnB when it is not housing out-of-town guests during retreats.

### Other matters

- We recently processed a report from the Ethics and Reconciliation Committee related to a complaint of clergy misconduct (see next article). As a result, the Board voted to request that all our clergy take an online "[Healthy Boundaries for Ministry](#)" course offered by the Faith Trust Institute; the curriculum will be tailored for Zen Buddhist priests. Chobo-Ji will pay for the course for all Chobo-Ji teachers and priests training directly with Genjo-Osho.
- The Board recently heard updates from Genko Ni-Osho on aspects of her prison ministry, and requested that she give the sangha an update as well. At future Board meetings we will be discussing the broader issue of social engagement in the community as well as the specific issues raised by Genko Ni-Osho's work.

- The Board continues to think about how Chobo-Ji is growing, and how in a few short years we've gone from a small 'mom and pop zendo' to a residential center with national and international affiliations. We welcome your thoughts on this.
- Finally, our committees are truly the 'engines' of Chobo-Ji. The Board would like to thank those Chobo-Ji members who continue to do excellent work for the sangha, offering expanded Introduction to Zen and Buddhism courses, a new, monthly investigation of the Precepts, care for ailing members, outreach to the community, support for tracking our finances, care for the temple and grounds, as well as careful and compassionate work to support and foster ethical conduct and clear interpersonal relations.

## Clergy Misconduct

Letter, October 18, 2014

In the spring of 2014, a priest practicing at Chobo-Ji, Rev. Daitetsu Michael Hull, resigned from his priestly duties and began a romantic relationship with a woman he had mentored while residing at another monastery. The Chobo-Ji Ethics and Reconciliation (E&R) committee subsequently received a complaint of clergy misconduct and a request that it make a statement on the matter.

The E&R committee investigated the complaint. Following Chobo-Ji policies regarding allegations of clergy misconduct, the E&R committee also consulted an outside resource ([Faith Trust Institute](#)). The committee concluded that Mr. Hull's romantic relationship with an ex-student constituted a breach of teacher-student boundaries, noting that, among other factors, an informal student-teacher relationship is still constrained by ethical

*Continued on next page...*

boundaries. The Board received the committee's report at their September meeting, and concurred with their findings.

**C**hobo-Ji has clear [policies](#) and expectations regarding the ethical conduct of its clergy and all those in positions of authority. The Board is saddened by the pain these events have caused. We believe that Mr. Hull acted correctly by relinquishing his priest's duties and openly acknowledging the relationship; however, the relationship is still a breach of student-teacher boundaries. We also feel that complete transparency is essential in matters such as these.

**T**he Board also acknowledges our responsibility to the sangha to ensure all our clergy have the training necessary to discern where ethical boundaries exist. Therefore we are requesting and requiring that all Chobo-Ji clergy and priests-in-training complete a "[Healthy Boundaries for Ministry](#)" course at Chobo-Ji's expense. We will work with our clergy to see that they complete this training within the next 12 months. We will also continue to review our policies to determine whether other improvements are necessary.

*Scott Stolnack, President,  
Chobo-Ji Board of Trustees*

## Rohatsu Sesshin

Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a *deposit and application* by Nov. 24, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check, \$75 or more, to Chobo-Ji and leave it the bowl by the zendo entrance or mail it to: Chobo-Ji, 1733 S. Horton St. #7, Seattle, WA 98144.

**T**he cost of sesshin is \$390 (less dues). We will leave from Chobo-Ji, on 11/29, by 3PM with informal supper, introductions and orientation to follow upon arrival at Camp Indianola. Sesshin concludes the morning of Sunday, Dec. 7th around 10AM. Departure flights should be made for no earlier than 2PM, 12/7. Please bring a sleeping bag, toiletries, sitting clothes with layers, work clothes and a towel.

## Zen Boundaries

by Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik

Anais Nin wrote, "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." This is what it is to enter spiritual practice. Each person confronts their own willingness to become vulnerable in the pursuit of growth. In the process, they seek out guides and companions to help them on the way.

**I**n over a decade of spiritual practice, what I find myself most touched by is the vulnerability that people bring to their first meditation instruction class, their first sit, their first sesshin. Naturally, in this new environment, they look up to those with more experience and authority and most often, in this process of seeking out the mirror for their own hopes and dreams, look to people wearing symbols (rakusu or robes) or having titles that signify authority (osho or unsui).

**Z**en priest is one of my roles. So is psychotherapist. In each role (more specifically in the latter where I have more years of experience), people turn to me with tender and vulnerable hearts seeking guidance and/or respectful companionship as they embark on a personal journey to greater peace and fulfillment. In both of these roles, I have taken a vow to be of service to others. In this place of such open vulnerability and such tender susceptibility to influence, it's important that I am not confused about whose needs I'm taking care of in these relationships. If my own needs come on-line, and I begin to use the relationship to meet them, the growth of the person whom I'm serving will become stunted and distorted, and that person will most likely end up hurt and confused.

**We've** all heard stories of spiritual guides who have used their students to meet their

own needs, and the confusion and darkness that these dynamics cast people into is profound. It's important to note that, while a psychotherapist and priest and teacher are all human beings, they are often held as more than human beings by their patients, congregants and students.

**M**any of my patients idealize me. It's part of the process, and I can accept and hold the idealization because I understand that, in the words of the Jungian therapist Robert A. Johnson, I know that I'm holding their "gold" for them. What they see in me is not about me, it's about what they want to become.

**O**ver time, the idealizations fade as clients actualize themselves and normalize my humanity. It's at this point, again as Johnson beautifully states, I hand them back their "gold." (It was never mine nor about me to begin with.) If I were to get caught in the trance of their idealizations, however, I might not want to give it back, and I might start to act as if the idealization were true and endeavor to hold the idealization in place in order to continue to get my needs met, thereby subverting a person's natural growth to my own undeveloped shadow.

**T**he most noxious form of this kind boundary violation is the romantic/sexual violation. Its closest corollary is to the incestuous relationship, when a parent subverts the vulnerability of their child to meet his or her own sexual needs. Again, we all know the damage, the fragmentation, and the development stagnation that takes place with this kind of abuse.

**T**here are times when one can fool oneself into believing that by going beyond certain boundaries the client, congregant or student will be propelled along their path more efficiently. A painful example of this occurs when a teacher asks a student to drop their self-consciousness by engaging in levels of intimacy that are outside the natural boundaries for the established relationship. For example, if the person in the role of teacher asks for sexual display or for entrance into deeper realms of sexual intimacy as a way to help the student to expand their horizons, it is all too likely that the "teacher" is abusing their position and taking advantage of the student/client/congregant. While there's a certain internal logic to the approach of "expanding





horizons,” it fails to take into account the fundamental psychological realities that I’ve already written about. Too many times, I’ve worked with people saying, “It all made sense, and I didn’t want to get caught in ‘self,’” while vulnerable aspects of their psyche were being damaged.

Another way in which boundaries can get crossed and damage occurs when the teacher begins idealizing the student. In this case, the teacher begins to project onto the student levels of attainment that the teacher idealizes. The teacher then begins using the student for his or her own unmet developmental needs. The student, in this case, becomes the idealized parent and the teacher the child. This sort of dynamic often burns with a bright light that leads each partner to believe in the utter and unshakeable profundity and spiritual depth of their relationship. It often leads both parties to abruptly abandon their existing values and end ongoing long-term relationships in the name of having suddenly awoken to something much deeper that others simply cannot understand. Indeed, such sudden, about-face behavior is a good sign that one is caught by the trance of an idealization. The relationship may last with some depth of passion for a time, but is rife with risk of pain and psychological disruption. Imagine how the student will take it when the teacher removes his or her idealization, and the student is left abandoned by both the once idealized-parent and idealizing-child.

Many will say that adult spiritual practitioners are more mature than children and that an adult is making adult decisions or even that, once the idealizations are withdrawn, a normal more mutual, or even sexual, relationship can be developed. In my experience, these are fanciful ideas with little experiential support. No matter that a person is an adult, the power differential triggers childhood dependencies, and even when these dependencies are understood and withdrawn, patterns of power (made even more profound when there is an age difference between the teacher and the student) have already been laid out and the subconscious is usually unwilling to ever fully let them go. (All any of us need do is think about our own continuing adult relationships with our parents to see that we never truly become equals.) At most, a cordial friendship might be developed, but a mutual romantic relationship is difficult to imagine and nearly impossible.

There are the exceptions, wherein teachers/priests have developed healthy long-term married relationships with one-time students or congregants, and these are often used as fodder to dismiss the sorts of concerns that I raise, but these relationships are few and, in my mind, the possibility of success does not outweigh the risk and potential for serious damage. (They correlate to the misused logic of the sort people use to engage in other vices. “My grandpa smoked two packs of cigarettes and drank half a pint of bourbon a day and lived to be ninety!”)

Another protestation is the question of “falling in love.” “What if, through no fault of my own, I fall in love with one of my clients/congregants/students?” Firstly, I am no curmudgeon. I am a romantic at heart. But more importantly, I am a mature adult. I don’t believe that “falling in love” trumps caring for and protecting those whom we serve. “Falling in love” is just “falling in love.” I’ve done it many times. I don’t use it as a polestar.

Life is full of missed opportunities. These include missed opportunities for friendship, love, pleasure, sex, professional advancement, interpersonal connection, and so on. The paths we may take are infinite, and with each decision, we close a path off. I did this when I married. I did the same when I became a therapist. I did it again when I became a priest. In each, I’ve limited possibilities in order to reach greater personal potential and to be of more loving service to those in my life.

In maturity, we move from impulse to inspiration. The underpinnings of impulses are seeking pleasure or avoiding pain. The underpinning of inspiration is vow. I have marriage vows, professional vows and ordination vows. In marriage, I have vowed to close off certain exits and potentials to get my needs met when my primary romantic partner cannot meet them. This provides for personal growth and development as a certain amount of self-soothing and tolerance to my own unmet drives must be handled internally.

Similarly, as a psychotherapist with licensure under my state board, I have agreed not to have “dual relationships” with clients. In other words, someone cannot be both my client and my friend, let alone my

lover (which is different from me loving my clients, which I do). Some boards put a three-year moratorium on this restriction. Mine makes it lifelong. What this means is that, as soon as anyone approaches me in my role as a psychotherapist, any possibility of romantic connection with them is forbidden for the remainder of my life. This seems reasonable and mature to me, and I submit to it willingly. The restriction helps me clarify my role as a caregiver, trumps selfish gain and demands that I create an even more mature outlook on life, accepting personal limitation for the benefit of others.

A priest’s vow goes even farther because relationships aren’t contained in the four walls of a therapy office. Anytime I am in public wearing my priest’s garb, I’m taken as a religious figure and projections start to fall into place. Currently, I am married, and I have no idea what it would be like to date as a priest. That said, any clergy will tell you that it is a complicated and nuanced project. Many go outside their congregation, and the courting process is long and involved, and the intensity of connection (sexual connection in particular) is forestalled while the relationship develops and matures. In my mind, this is natural and appropriate, and the only thing it disrupts is my impatience. What it develops is safety for others and maturity in me.

We are faced with decisions in life, and these decisions create limitations. To paraphrase psychotherapist and author Irvin Yalom, “Choices create exclusions.” With each choice we make, our life possibilities diminish. The diminishment of possibilities forces us to face our own mortality. In the end, spiritual practice is not about feeling good, but being comfortable with our limitations and being comfortable with our own deaths. (Once we are comfortable with limitations and death, we indeed tend to feel good, but this is a different topic.)

Looking at and working with dissatisfaction and death is one of the core components of living a spiritual life. This is why renunciation is so emphasized in practice.

In Zen, we intentionally limit our choices. We restrain the body and roaming mind for long hours at a time. We learn how to face

*Continued on next page...*

pain and boredom. We take vows and shape our lives according to the precepts. The entire schedule of sesshin is designed to take away choices so that we come face to face with our small-self and so that we can open to what it is to be truly alive. In other words, we limit our lives to look more fully at our lives and then to become more alive.

Contrary to what the small-self would believe, restraint from desires does not limit my life energy. On the contrary, it expands it. It gives it more space to flow and grow and function well. As a priest (as well as a married man and as a psychotherapist), I've willingly renounced many possibilities in my life (as a man in recovery, I've also renounced the possibility of using recreational drugs or alcohol as well). Each renunciation has created more clarity and freedom for me. Its analogous to clearing clouds in the sky. Things open up as I mature into my vows.

Again, using psychotherapy as the corollary I have most experience with, when working with a man or a woman who has suffered sexual trauma, there is often a tightness and uncertainty in the room. I don't address it right away for the tightness is there as a self-protection. My client does not yet know if she is safe with me. I let it sit, and I speak about how important it is for her to know her own boundaries. This is an important conversation, but it doesn't have much weight until, at some point, with all the certainty of my vow, I'm able to confidently and maturely tell her, "You need to take care of yourself, and you need to make decisions about what is safe for you and what is not, and you may believe you already know this because we've already gotten to know each other, and you've already said you trust me, but I also just want to make clear and say it out loud: I will never violate your sexual boundaries. That simply will not happen. I say this because I think your safety is most important, and I'm not saying it so that you trust me. I'm saying it because that's where I'm coming from, and I want you to decide how that feels for you and whether you feel safe enough to do the work you came here to do."

Invariably (in no small part because I'm saying something true from every pore of my being), the tension eases and there is more space in the room. Some clients can then clarify that I'm not enjoying their

disclosures. Others can simply relax and know that they can talk about themselves without fear of it being used for my own purposes. Regardless, the room opens up. You can feel it.

The same is true inside of me. I open with the clarity of knowing where I stand. The same must be true inside a sangha when we know and trust that the boundaries of leaders and authority figures will remain intact, and we need not fear being used by others.

It's true that part of spiritual practice is saying "yes." We say "yes" to life and to the truth and to the cultivation of our practice. Some believe that establishing boundaries for ourselves is blocking a natural "yes." But, if we look closely, we can find a "yes" embedded in every "no." When I say I will not have romantic relationships with people whom I serve, I'm saying "yes" to the tenderness of caring for and respecting people's gently opening hearts. I'm saying "yes" to something larger than me and my own egocentric needs. I'm saying "yes" to my own capacity, "yes" to the acknowledging of each person's individual healing.

## Jukai Ceremonies

On the morning of Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, the final day of Autumn Sesshin, Anne Howells, Robert Kirkpatrick and Rick Testa formally accepted the Buddhist precepts and received a Dharma Name. Anne had her first encounter with Zen at 17 when reading *Dharma Bums*. She writes in her Jukai letter:

*I want to accept the Buddhist precepts and to commit myself to Zen and Chobo-Ji. I want to work on becoming a kinder person, in all the ways the precepts name. I want to commit myself to trying to live my moments and weeks and years more mindfully and more compassionately. I know, theoretically, that I am not separate from everything else. This knowledge is something I feel only fleetingly; I want to feel more fully and persistently that it is the reality of my life...*

*Reading Norman Fischer on the precepts, I am struck by how what begins by seeming a set of rules opens up difficult and meaningful challenges in my relationship*

*with others and myself. He asks me not just to act in certain ways, but to act from an altered consciousness, from kinder and more loving feelings and a more grounded sense of what matters. I observe gratefully how people around me at Chobo-Ji are modeling this for me. In *The Snow Leopard* Peter Matthiessen says, "In the longing that starts one on the path [of Zen] is a kind of homesickness, and some way, on this journey, I have started home. Home-going is the purpose of my practice."...*

*I feel that at Chobo-Ji I have come home, and I am hugely grateful to you and the sangha for welcoming me in and pointing me in the direction of discovering the largest home of all.*

When I asked Anne about her Dharma Name she suggested it include something about a river and wrote:

*A river finds a path. It goes around obstacles, finds openings.*

*A river also IS a path.*

*A river is a traveller, and some rivers travel quite far.*

*A river flows, sometimes swiftly and tumultuously and sometimes slowly.*

*Sometimes a river becomes a waterfall; sometimes it's a lake for a while.*

*A river is always changing in minute and subtle ways.*

*A river seems to have a beginning and an end, but it doesn't really; it is part of the cyclicity of water.*

*A river nurtures the sentient inhabitants of the ecosystems within it and spreading along its banks. They can help keep its waters pure.*

*A river receives what comes into it.*

*A river can become polluted, but it can also return to health.*

*A river is what it is, moment to moment.*

Anne's new Dharma Name is Sen-Do: River - Way.

**Robert** began practicing at Chobo-Ji in 2011 and attended many sesshins; recently he became the newest residential practice member. In his Jukai petition letter he writes:

*In 2009 I took off nearly a month from work and bicycled to San Francisco riding along the Pacific Coast. This was a wonderful trip where I was out on the ocean and in the woods, which are places that touch the root of my being. I grew up on islands here in the Pacific Northwest and always have been around and loved oceans, trees and mountains. When you tour for longer periods of time you really can let go of your thoughts of work, of the daily grind and are almost forced to be present. As you ride through such beautiful environments you have to let it all just wash over you with a more holistic awareness of it all. How your body is doing, how your bicycle is performing, the traffic coming from ahead and behind and the sides while at the same time taking in what is to be seen and heard and smelled. You can't grasp onto any of it, you have to let it all just come in and out or you'd be hamstrung by it all. Several times during this tour I got into these states of flow where this was just the case. I experienced it all, but just let it all go. I knew from my intellectual Zen that this was a simple form of mindfulness and I knew that through practice this could be how one operates by default instead of just in these specialized circumstances....*

*[In 2011] I did an internet search for "Zen Seattle" and found many Soto groups. But from my college instruction in Zen and my intellectual reading of koans since that time I knew that Rinzaï appealed more to my mind. I searched again for "Rinzaï Zen Seattle" and found Chobo-Ji and that they had an evening intro session on Tuesdays. I went the next Tuesday and I was quite nervous entering the fence into the Capitol Hill house. But another beginner showed up at the same time and we entered together. Daiki was giving the instruction that night and he corrected some aspects of my posture - I had been sitting head bowed primarily and he corrected that - and then went over the other aspects of the service. I decided then that I should go to the next evening service. That night Genjo and I were the only ones there and he led us into chanting the Heart Sutra in which I immediately got lost. I did a bit better with the English translation. Genjo and I talked*

*a little afterwards and for me it was the formal casualness and the quiet confidence that really appealed. I went a couple more times and there were more practitioners and I took part in the sharing of tea and the ritual prostrations. I felt that there was something to the group practice and I kept coming back....*

*Rohatsu was incredibly hard, as I remarked to a friend that I could talk about these things with, "Rohatsu was the hardest thing I've ever done and I say that in the year I bicycled across country." But it was so rewarding. I began koan practice, I had a genuine (if minor) breakthrough working on the 'sound of mu' and my practice truly deepened....*

*Taking the precepts is ultimately to me a public declaration that one is committed wholly to the practice. That to uphold the precepts one has to be more kind and to be*



*more kind in one's interactions with all sentient beings demands radical changes to any person that commits to it. So by committing wholeheartedly to the precepts you are committing to radically change your life in ways that are unmistakable. The rakusu then is simply a public signifier of this commitment that can be seen by all but more importantly by yourself. A reminder that you are committed to being more kind, that the great matter of life and death demands your full being, that you are willing to remake yourself in order to fully face it. I feel at this point fully willing to make these changes and to take on this commitment.*

**Robert** gave me lots of ideas for his Dharma Name, but when he said he was "enamored with the sky in all its states: clear, cloudy, star filled" I knew I was on a roll and gave him Ten-Do: Heaven - Way for his Dharma Name.

**Rick** has been training with me the shortest amount of time but already has many years of training. He began Aikido in 1998 and now is the Chief Instructor at City Aikikai in Providence, RI. He started doing zazen two years ago, four hours weekly. He wrote in his Jukai letter:

*My first full day sit was last July [2013], when you visited our group at Aiki Farms. It was a tough day! But... oddly or strangely I wanted more. So when things aligned and I had the chance to go to sesshin in January [Rohatsu at Blue Mountain Zendo] I jumped in. The depth of the training and its purity helped me reach a much needed shift in perspective. Oh I suffered, but not nearly as much as the first time. More importantly, I had the wonderful opportunity to gain insight to you as a teacher. Our heart-to-heart conversation about moving into maturity is why I am writing.*

*I humbly ask to be part of your community or Sangha. I am certain of my decision and am aware of the many difficulties that await me on the zafu. Honestly, there is no way I could stop sitting at this point. It is the correct path for me and all who I am blessed to know will benefit from my doing so.*

**Rick's** new Dharma Name is Gen-Do: Subtle/Profound Way. This "Gen" is shared by Genki, Genko and me; it literally means "black before black."

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

## Closing Incense Poem

Autumn Sesshin 2014

*The River of Dharma flows without end.  
To follow the Way is  
to follow the current.  
Who hears the subtle silence of the Tao?  
Seagull soaring over the Cascades  
leaves no trace.*



## Important Dates to Remember

Daily zazen: M-F, 5:30-6:30 AM; Sat. 7-8:30 AM; M & W, 7:30-8:30 PM; Sun. 6:30-7:30 PM

Dharma Talks, Sundays: 10/26, 11/2, 11/16, 11/23, 12/21, 1/4, 1/18, 2/1, 2/15, 3/1, 3/15

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45PM (except 12/2/14, 12/30/14, 3/24/15)

**Intro to Zen koans with Genjo Osho ...**

**Intro to Four Noble Truths ...**

**Genjo's 60th Birthday Dinner (Pippy's Cafe) ...**

**Precept Class with Genko Ni-Osho ...**

**Prison Work - a discussion with Genko Ni-Osho ...**

**Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Intro to Eightfold Path ...**

**Intro to Ten Precepts ...**

**Intro to Four Great Vows ...**

**Rohatsu Sesshin (Zendo CLOSED for this retreat) ...**

**Toya Party ...**

**Zendo CLOSED for Holidays ...**

**New Year's Day Celebration and Pot Luck ...**

**Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Oct. 28th 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 4th, 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 5th, 5:30-7:15pm**

**Nov. 6th, 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 8th, 9:15-11:15am**

**Nov. 9th, 5am - 11:15am**

**Nov. 11th, 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 18th, 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 25th, 7:30-9pm**

**Nov. 29th - Dec. 7th.**

**Dec. 13th, 6-9pm**

**Evening of Dec. 24 - Jan. 1st, 2015**

**Jan. 1st, 10am - noon**

**Jan. 11th, 5am - 11:15am**

**Feb. 1st, 5am - 11:15am**

**March 8th, 5am - 11:15am**



*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

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