



# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

It is a Blue Sky Mind day in Seattle, not a cloud in the sky, with an early evening waxing crescent moon. It's time to put up my telescope to take a look at Jupiter and other heavenly delights. Two months after bladder surgery, I can again lift the scope onto its equatorial mount on the roof of the temple. My recovery continues smoothly, but I'm not sure that more work won't be needed; for example I can't yet get a good night's sleep, but I'm working on it.

I've been doing a lot of traveling. Back in February Carolyn and I went to Bonn, Germany: there I led a five day sesshin, where Andrew Tonks, from Birmingham, UK, did Jukai on the last day, February 8 (more on this later). Shortly after Spring Sesshin here in Seattle, Tendo and I flew to Zen West in Victoria, BC, where I led several weekend events. Then two weeks later, April 15-17, Sendo and I flew to Walla Walla to meet with prisoners at the penitentiary and with students from Whitman College, and do a one-day sesshin with the local sangha. Two weeks later I was in San Diego to lead a three-day retreat there, April 29 – May 1. Back here in Seattle, while I was in Bonn, Genko Ni-Osho led a very successful three-day Odayaka Sesshin. The next Odayaka will be August 26-28. Just last weekend, Chobo-Ji hosted a one-day Odayaka for Seattle University students, followed immediately by our regular half-day mini-sesshin on Mother's Day. And for all this activity, these are only a few of the events that have been sponsored or supported by our very active sangha!

Spring Sesshin, March 18-25, was a powerful exploration of our deep nature. Coming only two weeks after my surgery, my teishos tended to be more self-disclosing and vulnerable; some people loved this, others did not. My teisho from the third day of sesshin, on



the case "The Slave Punika" from the [Hidden Lamp](#) was uploaded as a [podcast](#) and has so far been downloaded 904 times. I'm not out to please anyone with my talks, and I hate it when I inadvertently offend or alienate someone, which is bound to happen from time to time. It is hard when occasionally I feel misunderstood, misinterpreted and mistrusted. In fact, I have been pretty blue lately. After a day of sitting this dark cloud clears, and also returns from time to time. Above all I do not want to cause harm, yet clearly I do make mistakes that once in a while hurt sangha members. Thank goodness, wherever we are, we are just beginning, and as long as we have sufficient mental acuity and determination there is always room for improvement.

At Spring Sesshin, both Genko Ni-Osho and Eshu Osho gave great Dharma talks. Genko Ni-Osho also provided much needed nurturing on middle day by serving us all whisked green tea. Rev. Rinzan served admirably as Shika (host-manager); I'm not sure what I would do without his support and dedication to this practice. Our tenzos (cooks) led by Dee Seishun Endelman and backed up principally by Anne Sendo Howells and

Sally Zenka Metcalf served us delicious vegetarian meals. Rev. Tendo shined as our Jikijitsu (time keeper) and Rev. Seiho kept the beat moving faster and faster as our Densu (chant leader). Rev. Daikan led the Jisha (tea server) team, supplying us with plenty of tea, coffee, snacks and sweets. Edwin Kyosei Beatty and Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez served as my Inji (abbot assistants), making sure the dokusan room and dokusan line were well groomed. On the final day, Dr. Jeff Skolnick did Jukai, and you can read much more about this later in this issue.

My acquaintance for more than twenty years died recently: [Shunbo Zenkei Blanche Hartman](#), Senior Dharma Teacher of San Francisco Zen Center. On Tuesday, May 17 we did a Dharma Ancestor dedication for her at Chobo-Ji and she will be added at our upcoming Summer Sesshin to the Women Dharma Ancestor lineage that we chant every other day during sesshin. Seishun once said to her, "You must be



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Blanche Hartman” and she said, “Must I be?”

In this issue you will find my middle day teisho from Spring Sesshin and closing incense poem. In addition, you can read our Annual Meeting Report, Annual Financial Report, two book reviews, a poem by Larry Palmer, a report on Muzan’s declining health, and announcements for two workshops, a sangha council meeting and Summer Sesshin. May we all find ways to enjoy this prodigious spring.

With gassho,

Genjo

## Annual Meeting Report

Chobo-Ji’s Annual Meeting took place Sunday, April 10 following the mini-sesshin, kicking off with a delicious potluck lunch. All members of the Board and a quorum of 17 members were present.

Three Board members up for re-election (John Daikan Green, Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez, and Chris Zenshin Jeffries) were all elected to new 2-year terms by the membership. Anne Sendo Howells was voted in as a new Board member. The Board then elected its new slate of officers for 2017-2019:

President: Chris Zenshin Jeffries  
Vice-President: Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez  
Treasurer: John Daikan Green  
Secretary: Justin Myozan Wadland

Daikan went over the past year’s finances. Our budget is balanced; the Finance committee continues to do an excellent job

managing Chobo-Ji’s funds. Each committee presented a brief report; the new President remarked on the year in review, including sharing our revised Mission and Vision Statements; and the meeting ended with each attendee sharing their personal priorities for directions the Sangha might take in the field of social action, for which we now have a policy, a committee and an annual budget. If you weren’t there, it is never too late to share your thoughts on social action priorities; send thoughts to [chrisjeffries8@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisjeffries8@hotmail.com), and watch for updates on committee meetings, which all are welcome to attend.

## Financial Report

2015 was a good year for Chobo-Ji financially. We had total income of \$164,680 compared with \$152,668 in 2014. The increase comes from increased dues, sesshin, and rental income, all indicators of the growth in membership and activity that we all noticed at the zendo this past year.

Expenses were slightly lower than last year, \$98,714 in 2015 versus \$100,816 in 2014. Our building required less maintenance, and we spent less to support our founding abbot’s widow, Genei Leslie Gannon. When Genki Roshi died in 2013, the Chobo-Ji board of directors decided to keep helping Leslie until she no longer needed our support. Mid-way through 2015, she sold her house in Victor, MT, and at that point, her family notified us that she no longer needed our monthly pension. She now resides in a retirement home near her daughter. We stay in touch, and just recently worked with her son Brian to erect a marker over Genki’s grave in Victor.



Net income for 2015 was \$65,966 compared with \$51,852 in 2014. We used \$16,712 of that to pay down our mortgage,

which stood at \$558,541 at year-end. We have \$218,507 in checking and savings accounts, \$358,013 in retirement investments, and carry our property on our books at \$2,107,502.

Towards the end of 2015, the board commissioned a reserve study to better understand what future repairs and improvements our building will need. The report indicated that we currently have adequate reserves to care properly for our building, and the incremental reserve amounts we will need to add each year appear to be well within our means. We are very fortunate to have healthy finances, and the right stewardship of our resources is a responsibility that we owe to past, current, and future sangha members. Deep gratitude to all who contribute and participate in our deep and vibrant practice.

Carolyn Josen Stevens  
Fusu (Temple Accountant)

## The Pale White Sun by Larry Palmer

*The pale white sun  
Over inland waters  
Scatters the snow clouds--  
Sunbeams appear to  
Disappear (but don't)--  
Entrails of light at play on the  
Grey and rolling meadow of  
The sea, but then a snow owl  
Wraps her wing around  
A sleeping city on  
The far shore once again.*

*Blindness.  
Then light.*

*White appears to  
Disappear but won't.  
Light was here, then not here?  
We are here, then  
Not here?  
But the silence around us--  
Too vast for magic tricks!--  
And bigger than all the gods  
And all their stars.*





# Reflections on Taking Our Places

by Rev. Seiho Morris

I picked up the book [Taking our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up](#), by Norman Fischer and smiled. Deep and broad maturity can be the background canvas to a Buddha field of active and compassionate action. I was interested to see what Fischer's take was going to be because I've long observed that many of the troubles and challenges that we experience are directly attributable to immaturity in our culture. I'll touch briefly on each chapter, relating what I've noticed and taken from each one. I hope that you find these points of reflection useful in your own Zen practice and life.

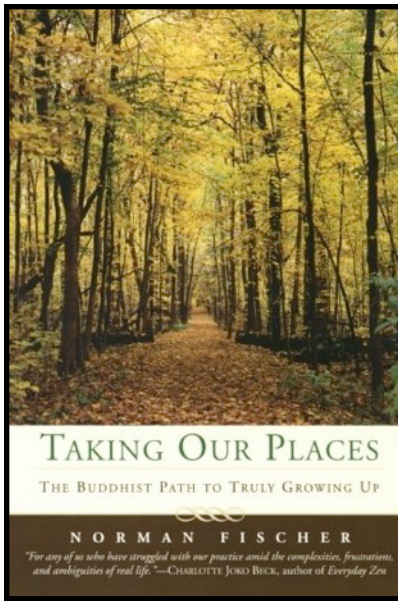
**Meetings:** Martin Buber once said, *"All real living is meeting."* This is where Fischer begins: *"...when we truly meet one another – beyond our defenses, beyond our preconceptions, beyond our needs and desires – and open ourselves to each other with the courage to step toward one another, then and only then can we be said to be completely alive."* Here is the question and challenge: *"How am I meeting myself and others—past, present and future?"*

From the outset he discusses and contrasts what I call "shallow water maturity" and "deep water maturity." Shallow water maturity comes with age and what one might call the acquisition of "smarts." It's nearly accidental. Deep-water maturity comes when we're consciously and intentionally connected to our intuitive nature. Its lack becomes painfully clear when friction and turbulence characterize our relationship with others and ourselves.

**Maturity:** Reality and the experiences of our life seem to be an *"indefinite place."* Things come and go. They happen without consulting us, asking our opinion, or wondering whether we're okay or not. As Genjo Osho recently said in a teisho, *"It's just happening."* It may seem personal, but in truth it's not. Narrating his own life, Fischer writes in this section that D.T. Suzuki's book on Zen *"confirmed for me that, yes, just as I was beginning to feel, the world was indeed a wreck, and the people in it fundamentally confused. No one, not*

*even God, was going to fix it."*

Fischer points out that while we're powerless over many aspects of reality, we are not powerless in how we respond to the events and situations in our present moment field of vision and experience. *"If only we could see the world as it truly was, if we could open the inner eye, we'd see that beyond our confusion and the world's suffering was a deeper acceptance and perfection, a profound and dynamic peacefulness even in the midst of trouble that made energetic and imaginative engagement with the world possible. This was Zen enlightenment, a sudden and transformative opening to the truth."* Here Fischer presents the idea that Zen practice, the development of deep water maturity, is no other than to be what might be best described as a bodhisattva in training.



Zen practice is about consciously, mindfully and attentively meeting, as Genjo Osho so often says, *"all beings, great and small, animate and inanimate."* Meeting life on life's terms, rather than being reactors, we are responders who act from our core Buddha-nature. Supporting this Fischer writes, *"Bodhisattvas understand the hidden secret of awakening: there can be no self awakening without the awakening of others. The practice of the Way and the realization of its truth can be accomplished only with the help of others, through helping others....The word 'bodhisattva' always implies compassion and altruism."* This practice is conscious, direct, clear, mindful and intentional.

**Listening:** To respond to life with deep-water maturity, we need to be tuned in to what's actually happening. We must go beyond the theories, stories and narrative about what we think is happening to what is actually taking place. As sangha members, we have all heard the instruction to sit, breathe and listen to the voice of our life, deeply rooted in the earth with our antenna raised. In this way, we listen carefully and hear not just with our intellect, the shallows of our mind, but with our deep nature where there is no coming and going.

Fischer writes, *"Listening is magic: it turns a person from an object outside, opaque or dimly threatening, into an intimate experience, and therefore into a friend. In this way, listening softens and transforms the listener. Listening is basic and crucial because it is the soil out of which all the fruits of human relationships grow. Listening takes radical openness to another, and radical openness requires surrender."*

He emphasizes that listening is a meditative practice. *"Don't just go on autopilot. Instead, reflect on what is actually going on."* Listening to reality as it is, and to others as they are without getting caught by our intrusive ego can be really challenging and requires effort. It doesn't come naturally for us because our ego consciousness has a lot of theories and stories about what's happening in and around us. Cultivating maturity helps us to separate our storylines from reality. Fischer offers several helpful practices to guide and support deep listening.

**Persistence:** Fischer defines persistence as *"the ability to hang in there with something difficult without turning away, to be willing to simply wait when waiting is what's called for."* This can be really challenging for us. We live in a culture that is oriented towards instantaneous results, instantaneous reactions, and instantaneous gratification. We often perceive the need to take an extended period of time to accomplish something as a sign of incompetence. As an example, I was once asked, *"How many koans have you passed?"* When I gave an answer, the person responded, *"You've been practicing far longer than me, and I've passed way more than you. That totally surprises me. What do you think is going on in your practice?"* I replied, *"Life!"* and

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laughed. Persistence, not giving up despite adversity, is an art form.

**Fischer** writes that persistence is *“a key practice for nurturing all the qualities of maturity that we value: stability, responsibility, self-acceptance, a loving heart – all require that we persist with what we are up to, that we stick with it steadfastly, without glancing off or running away....The simple ability to be persistent with what you do, to not look for quick fixes or miracle cures, to be able to go on ... eventually blossoms into trust. And trust is the secret ingredient.... A person who chooses to walk the path of maturity is a trusting and trustworthy person.”*

**Connection:** *“I... appreciate the power of human pain. So much of what motivates us in our lives is the avoidance of pain at any cost. How often we distract ourselves, run away, strategize solutions that never work out, or just decide without really deciding not to take notice.... Pain can never really be ignored or avoided. And when our pain is confronted, it has the power to open us up – if it doesn’t break us apart. It has the power to inspire us... to wisdom, forgiveness, and compassion. Nothing connects us more to life, to ourselves, and to each other than our unavoidable human suffering.”*

In this part of the book, Fischer writes about the nature of the interdependent relationships in our lives with our parents, our children, friends and coworkers. He explores how maturity has a profound effect on our moment-to-moment experiences, especially when a sense of difficulty or suffering is involved. We learn, he says, that *“Forgiving... is an important step in the direction of maturity.”* From the Buddha’s earliest teachings, we learn to *“see suffering for what it is, and then... live in such a way that suffering is not only reduced but entirely put it aside. Nirvana, the path’s goal, was said to be ‘cool’ ‘extinguished,’ like a candle flame blown out.”* I understand this as suffering without suffering; experiencing the challenges of life without being discouraged or giving up on ourselves, others, or life.

**Meditation:** In many ways, meditation has been a consistent form of mediation within myself, a way of distinguishing reality from the stories and narratives that I can carry

around in my head. Through our practice, the sitting still, observing without pushing and pulling, we untangle our knots. In this chapter, Fischer shares zazen practices that are familiar to most of us. His suggestions and experiences have benefited my practice as I have brought them to the cushion, sit by sit.

**Vowing and Conduct:** The final two chapters deal with the precepts. In a very elegant and beautiful way, Fischer writes, *“I believe we are born with vows. As children we know this. We feel instinctively the power of our vowing, for the deep intentions inside of us we know we must live out somehow. This vowing power is what makes childhood so rich and mysterious.... All children hold vows to learn, to grow, to create, to love, to experience, to plunge forward into the endless and unknowable future. Although as they grow older children forget these vows – and the many other vows they find inside themselves – they do not forget entirely. Vows remain a latent force in our lives, no matter how hidden it may seem.”*

*“Vows are energies. Vows are aspirations. They are larger than life. Endless sources of inspiration, vows differ from goals, which are limited in scope. Goals can be met. Vows can be practiced but never exactly completed, for they are essentially unfulfillable, and it is their very inexhaustibility that propels us forward, opens us up, shapes our desires and actions.”*

*“We need the impossible idealism of the bodhisattva vows.... Without impossible idealism we would always be selling ourselves short and so would never be able to find satisfaction.”*

These chapters focus on taking our practice off the cushion into the very heart of our life. There is no standard issue way to do this. For each person it’s very dynamic, which brings up an interesting point. People have an idea that so-called “Enlightenment” is essentially a quantifiable thing. In fact, it’s so quantifiable that a Zen teacher can tell when you’ve attained it. I find that hilarious. Zen teachers worth their salt point to what’s noticeable and not there, as opposed to implying that we have some missing part that they can somehow mystically give to us. Looking back over my life experiences

and reading of Zen history, I’ve noticed that no two people have come to awakening in precisely the same way. It’s always a personal and individualized experience. For one master it was a pebble striking a wall. For another, it was a candle being blown out. For another it was accidentally jabbing herself with a needle while sewing. The stories of initial awakening are endless and different.

Many of us have Dharma names that point to something that is inherent in us and already there... we just seem not to notice it. Noticing comes with our conscious and intentional efforts towards deep-water maturity, for which there’s no real formula. It’s a dynamic and co-creative experience that fully fits us rather than someone else.

[Taking Our Places](#) has been a very kind and generous traveling companion. I hope you get to travel with it some time. It will prove to be a good friend.

May you become who you already are,  
Seiho

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## Summer Sesshin

June 24<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a **deposit and application** by **June 15**, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Please drop it by or mail it.

The cost of sesshin is \$250 (less dues). Sesshin will start Friday evening, 6/24, 5:30pm with informal supper, introductions and orientation. Sesshin from Saturday to the following Thursday runs from 5am – 10pm and concludes July 1<sup>st</sup> around 11am.

We provide sleeping accommodations for those traveling from out of town (**an additional \$10-20 per night**); please bring a sleeping bag, toiletries, sitting clothes, work clothes and a towel.

If you are departing by air please don’t schedule your return flight before 3pm on July 1st.



## Hidden Lamp

### Nyozen's Pale Moon of Dawn

Middle Day, Spring Sesshin, 2016

Japan, Thirteenth Century

*The nun Nyozen of Tokeiji used to meditate on the enlightenment poem of Chiyono as her theme for realization:*

*With this and that I tried  
to keep the bucket together;  
and then the bottom fell out.  
Where water does not collect  
The moon does not dwell.*

*Later, Nyozen grasped the essence of Zen and she presented the following poem to her teacher:*

*The bottom fell out of the bucket  
Of that woman of humble birth;  
The pale moon of dawn  
Is caught in the rain puddles.*

**Study Questions:** *When your body no longer holds together, where will your Buddha nature go? How can the moon be caught in a rain puddle? And how can one person's enlightenment light another's?*

Earlier in [Hidden Lamp](#), we examined this 13<sup>th</sup> Century poem written by Chiyono and it certainly is a beautiful verse. In this case, it was used by another follower of the Way, Nyozen, and she used this poem of Chiyono as the catalyst for her own investigation and, ultimately, insight into the nature of reality—her own reality—and the reality of the Universe.

We often hear how koans, exchanges usually between a senior student and a Zen master, are used to spark our investigation of this matter, of life and death. As we look deeply within our own heart-mind, we too are encouraging our own realization and insight. So it goes—century after century—these stories are handed down and still have much life in them. They never seem to get old.

When we begin to plumb the depths of our own nature, all of a sudden it may feel like the bottom falls out of our false sense of a separated selfhood, and perhaps as the first

time as an adult, we become aware of a reality beyond our narrow egoistic perspective. At once this breakthrough feels new and wondrous and also somehow old and familiar. If it is our first glimpse, it is likely a life transformational experience. Every time we dip into our own depth, it's restorative and shifts our perspective to one which is much broader. I often use a tree metaphor to describe this shift: our egoistic perspective is like that of a leaf on a tree; the shift is to the trunk or root perspective, which of course is a much more universal view. Or I like to use an ocean metaphor: the shift in perspective is then from a wave to the oceanic perspective. Finally, a photon of light is said to be both a particle and a wave; then the shift I'm speaking of is from a particle to a wave perspective. These are all different ways to point at the same shift in perception. If we make this shift in perception with some regularity, then we are indeed Followers of the Way. Shifting into this broader perspective informs and makes our Great Vow real and vital, allowing us to walk in our daily life with a caring, open heartedness.

Often we are stuck inside our bucket perspective and it's a relatively small bucket. We think of it as containing our body, mind and spirit. This narrow bucket perspective gives us a sense of a separated identity, but it's not real. We are often confused, because for many the bucket perspective is the only view we have ever known. Therefore, we act almost exclusively from our own egoistic delusions and desires and these often conflict and compete with one another.

Sometimes, even within our bucket, we will see or hear something that moves us. Maybe it's a symphony, the wind chimes, the sound of the water falling, or a bird song. Maybe it's a beautiful sunset, rainbow, or the subtle light of the moon, which is often used in Zen circles to represent the profound mystery of reality. It can't be seen directly because it has no intrinsic form, but the subtle light of the

moon can intimate the ineffable. Our bodies are indeed a sack or bucket full of water, as we are mostly composed of water. Therefore, when we see a clear reflection within ourselves of what is beyond ourselves we may say, "That's so gorgeous," and we're moved! We may have a reflection of the moon inside the bucket but we're still inside our bucket perspective.

For Chiyono, her bucket was old and creaky—and for those of us in this room getting old, we all know what *that* feels like! We feel the bucket dissolving and know the bottom's going to fall out at any moment (laughter). If we live into old age, we can feel the bucket literally disintegrating while we're in it. It starts to leak; I'm leaking all over the place (Genjo's referring to the seepage from his recent surgery)—laughter! We stitch

up the bucket and hope it holds together. Over time, every bucket gets weak and frail, and undoubtedly we come to feel more vulnerable. It eventually becomes clear that the bucket itself is quite temporary. In the same way, we all know the leaf in autumn is temporary and the snowflake in spring is temporary. Of course, when we look closely enough, we realize everything is impermanent. Eventually every wave dissipates or crashes on the beach. The wave was there and then it's gone. Where did it go?

If we're stuck inside our bucket perspective, a sense of panic may arise when it becomes clear that the bucket will inevitably fall apart. As human beings, we are not only aware of death, we eventually become aware of our own mortality and we realize that at any moment our sense of a separate identity may go "poof." This truth gives rise in all of us to

ascertain amount of "existential angst," and we all suffer from this truth. People have created and turned to religions to help manage our fear of mortality. This is why so many of us are very interested in the ideas of rebirth, entering heaven or reaching Pure Land. These ideas give us some



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mythological pathways to maintain our sense of self, despite all the evidence to suggest that everything is impermanent and disintegrating.

In Zen, we say, “Just go ahead and die the Great Death and get it over with.” We don’t mean, “slit your throat,” but we do say, “die on your cushion.” One of the things I appreciated about Eido Shimano’s perspective is that he often said, “Bring me someone who is really ready to commit suicide and I will have any easy time inviting them to be a good Zen practitioner!” (laughter) If they’re really ready to kill themselves, there is a good chance that they will make fine Zen students because they’re already ready to die! If you have a Great Death on or off the cushion then undoubtedly you can no longer be worried about a limited sense of a separated selfhood. Once the shift takes place, even though we easily come back to this tenacious sense of a separated identity, we will still have some substantial confidence about what is real and what isn’t. Apparently, there’s a separate self, but once we’ve made this shift, we know it’s just apparent and that in reality there is no self at all. Our sense of self is real enough, but after the shift we know our sense of self is just that, a sense of self. There is no reality to it. We realize that our sense of self is an abstract construction of mind.

This isn’t to say that the bucket, leaf, wave or flower doesn’t have some sort of reality. However, relative to the ocean, a wave is but a brief surface manifestation. A drop of ocean has all the qualities of the ocean, but it’s not the ocean. The leaf and tree are seamless, but the leaf isn’t the tree. Our sense of a separated individuality is like a leaf on the tree; it therefore behooves us before wilting and falling to the ground to shift our perspective from the leaf to the tree and beyond the trunk down into the root and the deep, dark, vast earth.

Chiyono tried to keep the bucket together and then while she was carrying water, the bottom fell out. She couldn’t keep it together anymore. The water, representing her personal life-force, fell suddenly to the ground of all being, and the moon could no longer be reflected in the bucket. When the bottom falls out of our bucket perspective, it can no longer sustain a false sense of a separated identity. What then do we do with the rim of the bucket? We might as well just

set it down on the ground and turn it into a pot for a plant (laughter).



If you set this bucket down on the ground, it’s now like a tiny fence. It no longer has a sense of a separated identity, but blends with the whole earth. This is what we are pointing at with our talk of a Great Death. After a Great Death experience, which is like having the bottom of the bucket fall away, our physical form, the rim of the bucket, may still hang together for a while, and it becomes a seamless planter, one with the earth, that is to say, one with spirit, Dharma, Tao or the Vast Void. It has no form, let alone a name. The bucket is not a bucket any longer, but simply a little fence sitting seamless within the whole earth. This condition reminds me of Zen Master Hyakujo’s response to the question, “What’s the most wonderful thing?” He said, “Sitting entirely alone atop a sublime peak.” A bucket without a bottom, sitting seamless with the whole earth, is likewise like this.

From this vantage point, we realize that even when the rim of the bucket disintegrates, The True Person, who was never identified with the bucket in the first place, is never born, never dies, has nowhere to go and absolutely nothing to do. The True Person moves effortlessly through the ever repeating seasons of life and death. All things circulate, dust to dust, but the whole earth, representing both The True Person and the Dharma, has no coming and going. Of course the earth is also just a metaphor, as we know that the earth is also temporary, but then we recall, “There is a reality even prior to heaven and earth. It has no form let alone a name.” This reality is incomparably profound and minutely subtle, it truly has no coming or going.

Later, Nyozen grasped for herself some realization of her Deep Nature and presented the following poem to her teacher:

*The bottom fell out of the bucket  
Of that woman of humble birth;  
The pale moon of dawn  
Is caught in the rain puddles.*

Chiyono at this point has experienced the Great Death, and realizes that she is nothing more than dust. Of course, all we have ever been is stardust, and this is all we will ever be. Certainly, as dust-to-dust, we have nowhere to go and nothing to do. The stardust in this peculiar lump sitting here on the cushion has been traveling around the sun for four and a half billion years. This same dust will be doing the same for another four and a half billion years around the sun. We too will be the merciful incarnation of Buddha, providing food, drink and clothing to all sentient beings. When the sun sheds its skin after becoming a Red Giant, our dust may go off and join another solar system, where again we may well serve as the merciful incarnation of Buddha.

“The pale moon of dawn is caught in the rain puddles.” When our body no longer holds together, where will our Buddha nature go? How can the moon be caught in a rain puddle?

You know it’s beautiful to see the reflection of the moon in a calm lake, but if it’s raining or the wind is blowing, the moon isn’t seen in a whole image, it is reflected as a bunch of little sparkles on the water’s surface. If we have the eyes to see it, we realize that these little sparkles, like a speck of dust or a grain of sand, reveal and manifest the aliveness of the whole Universe.

I’ve told this story many times before, about coming back on the Edmonds-Kingston Ferry from Rohatsu Sesshin, when Genki Takabayashi, our founding abbot, asked me if I could talk to rocks. At that time, Genki was working as a landscape gardener because our group didn’t have the money to support him entirely. Some sangha members had a landscape garden business and Genki worked hard with them. One of his jobs was to place the rocks so



that they looked beautiful in the garden. Genki said to me, "You know, Genjo, I talk to the rocks and the rocks talk to me. They tell me exactly how they want to be placed. Do you understand?" Just after Rohatsu, I said I did understand! And I see that Eshu Osho is smiling because he's also good at talking to rocks. If we truly respect and talk to rocks, how then can we fail to honor and respect all human beings?

Hopefully, my stumbling teishos are of some inspiration. Perhaps you will accept them as an invitation to die the Great Death, dropping the bottom out of the bucket. You can still keep the tiny fence for a while. The fence, too, will one day disintegrate, but that won't be a problem once the bottom has dropped out.

Here we are at the pinnacle of Spring Sesshin, we have had oatmeal with maple syrup for breakfast, and shortly we will have Genko Ni-Osho's whisked green tea, followed by Marinello's marinara sauce with garlic bread. This is how we celebrate the middle day of our sesshins together. However, we must remain vigilant and not just coast down from here. As we are now as malleable and vulnerable as we are likely to be in this sesshin, it is essential that we not waste one breath, one step or one syllable. Now is the best time to deeply investigate our True Nature. Even our bucket perspective is our True Nature, but we spend plenty of time outside of sesshin in our bucket. Now that the discipline and rigor of sesshin have made us a bit more flexible and exposed, let's explore the whole deep earth!

With gassho,  
Genjo

## Closing Incense Poem

Spring Sesshin 2016

*Bodhisattvas sit under the silver maple tree.*

*Confusion and awakening ensue.*

*Remarkable this practice of  
sit, breathe and listen.*

*Who hears the wind chimes and rain?*

*Tulips gently sway in the breeze.*

## Stepping East to Arrive in the West

by Anne Sento Howells

Recently I finished reading Elizabeth A. Fenn's *Encounters at the Heart of the World*, a sensitive and beautifully written history of the Mandans, a farming people of the Northern Missouri. I was particularly fascinated by a segment about the Mandans' religious traditions, which both maintained a continuity across centuries and changed considerably over time. "Mandan spiritual life was fluid," says Fenn. "It evolved continuously, embracing new practices, spirits, and ceremonies as they emerged and abandoning others when they outlived their sustainability or usefulness." Their core ceremony, the Okipa, "was supposed to change with the people themselves." This adaptability and flexibility, Fenn thinks, ironically "created continuity. It allowed the Mandans to preserve their identity in the face of change, both before and after 1492." (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014, p. 100)

This passage leapt out at me because I have also been thinking about the third volume of Richard Bryan McDaniel's *Zen Masters* series: *The Third Step East: Zen Masters of America* (Ontario, Canada, Sumeru Press, 2015). As North American Zen practitioners of the early twenty-first century, we are in a quite self-conscious tension between tradition and change. This tension is a central theme of McDaniels' third volume, which tells the stories of the people through whom Zen leapt east to arrive in the West: Japanese Zen masters like Ngoyen Sensaki, Shunryu Suzuki, Eido Shimano, and Taizan Maezumi, and also American masters like Robert Aitken and Philip Kapleau, who studied for long periods in Japan before undertaking their pioneering Zen teaching in the United States. To both the Japanese and the American teachers it was clear that Japanese practices couldn't and shouldn't simply be transplanted to the west, but "the process of developing appropriate Zen structures and traditions for North

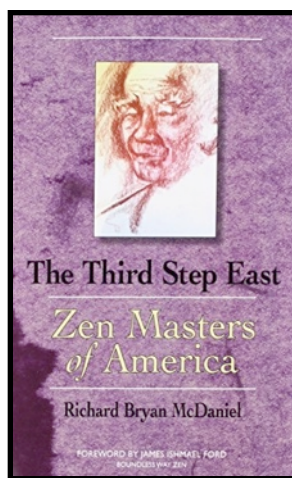
Americans was going to be a long and difficult one played out over and over again in Maui, San Francisco, Rochester, and elsewhere." (121)

It's still playing out, of course, and I think we're fortunate that it is. I think as humans we need—I need—a sense of connection with our past, with the wisdom and creativity of ancestors, and also the surprise, delight and difficulty of what's new, how things are right now. Not just tradition, but *living* tradition. But why, as North Americans most of whom are at least partially of European ancestry, have we wanted to make *Japanese* (and Chinese and Indian) traditions also our own?

Several of the Japanese teachers who brought Zen to the United States early in the twentieth century doubted that we could even sit zazen properly: Nyogen Senzaki's students in L.A. in the thirties sat in chairs. (48) So did Sokei-An Sasaki's in Manhattan, and it took the determined Ruth Fuller Stewart, who had learned seated meditation in Japan, to move them onto cushions. (67) His students' minds, though, were for Sokei-An an even less likely ground for Zen than were their bodies: "When I came to America," he said, "I realized that people here . . . don't care what thoughts run around in their brains. Their minds are really in a

primitive state." (69) But Ngoyen Senzaki, despite his doubts about American bodies, was delighted with American minds. He listed eight "aspects of American life and character that make America fertile ground for Zen," singling out our practicality, informality, optimism, love of nature, rationality, and capability of living simply and efficiently. Two features of our cultural beliefs seemed especially important: "Americans consider true happiness to lie in universal brotherhood," and "The American conception of ethics is rooted in individual morality." (55)

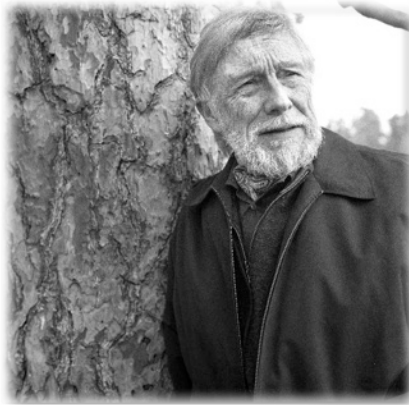
On the Western side of the equation, the universal brotherhood spirit *was* strong, but also Zen appealed partly because it was *not*



*Continued on next page...*

American, *not* European. In the U.S., Zen really took off in the 1960's, with the general countercultural eagerness to shrug off the old. Helping prepare the ground were two writers: the Japanese D.T. Suzuki, whose books in the 1920's and 1930's portrayed a religion "which stood in stark contrast to the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West" (32), and the Englishman Alan Watts, son of a strict Evangelical Protestant family, who had announced when he was 15 that he was a Buddhist because he considered Buddhism more reasonable than Christianity. By the time his most influential book, *The Way of Zen*, was published in 1956, he was presenting Zen as a "way of liberation"; the book, and Watts's radio and television appearances, reached a wide audience. In the 1960's, Shunryu Suzuki began to teach in San Francisco and people who had read Watts became his students. Also beginning to teach in the U.S. in the 1960's were Robert Aitken and Philip Kapleau, both of whom had been in Japan right after World War II (and in Aitken's case also during the war, as a POW). Aitken's initial interest was in continuity with his interest in English poetry: as a young POW he read both Basho and Shakespeare, and right after the war he completed an English major before turning toward Asian studies. But for Kapleau as for Watts, Zen was what he had felt missing in European-America culture; back in the U.S. in the early 1950's, Kapleau found his American life "vacuous" and abandoned a successful business to return to Japan as a committed Zen student. As Zen teachers, both Aitken and Kapleau eventually developed flourishing Zen centers in the U.S., and each published his own influential introduction to Zen practice.

My personal favorite example of a mid-century American drawn to Zen is Gary Snyder, in whom I see a model of the integration of Zen into a full, creative West Coast American life. For Snyder the path to Zen may have involved, as it did for the other "Beats" with whom he is sometimes grouped, a rejection of "American" conventionalities, but it also grew quite directly out of his upbringing by leftist dairy farmers north of Seattle, early camping and mountaineering experiences in Washington and Oregon, and an early admiring interest in the "native peoples of the Pacific Northwest" and their "way of relating to the natural world," which later would make Zen teachings about Buddha nature and the inherent value and



interconnectedness of all things feel so obvious and right. Snyder was drawn to the Chinese landscape scrolls he found in the Seattle Art Museum, and at Reed College, where he wrote a thesis on Haida folklore, he also found in Philip Whalen a friend with whom he could share an interest in Asian studies. Right after college he read D.T. Suzuki, quit his graduate program in anthropology, and began a series of steps which enabled him to spend nine years as a Zen student in Japan. He couldn't actually become a Hopi, he knew, but "Zen, with its emphasis on personal experience, appeared to be a tradition open to anyone who was willing to undertake the training." (82) Zen monastic life in Japan seemed to him elitist and Zen traditions there dying, but he could take from it what he needed to develop a lay Zen life in California as a poet, activist, and experimental developer of a rural life enmeshed in a deep sense of place. As a poet and essayist he strikes me as thoroughly American, yet it's also easy to understand the connection between his writing and his Zen practice.

McDaniel's book gives us a good sense of the shape of Zen in the U.S. during the twentieth century. As he says in the preface, "One hundred years ago, in 1914, there were no Zen teachers in North America. There were, however, two practitioners"—Ngoyen Senzaki, in California, and Sokei-An Sasaki, who would make his way to New York City. From their teaching the movement grew slowly, until its boom period fifty years later. "A mere twenty years later, by 1984" as McDaniel says, "the nascent Zen movement seemed to be foundering," in some disarray from the revelations of misconduct by Zen teachers Richard Baker in San Francisco and Taizan Maezumi in Los Angeles, and from a splitting off of half the membership of Philip Kapleau's Zen center in Rochester,

N.Y. What has followed, as we know so well, has included both new revelations of scandal and continued flowering. McDaniel's chapters about individual teachers pay attention both to their struggles and accomplishments and to the larger picture. His chapter on Maezumi, for instance, both shows why Maezumi was such an influential teacher and discusses the differences between the cultural situations of Zen in Japan and in the U.S. which contributed to the misbehavior here of both Japanese and American teachers.

At the end of *The Third Step East*, the story is far from over. In fact, this book is only the first third or so of a much longer manuscript in which McDaniel takes his story of American Zen up to the present. The rest of that manuscript became *Cypress Trees in the Garden*, volume four of McDaniel's *Zen Masters* series, which Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik and Monika Winkelmann wrote about in the winter 2016 issue of *Plum Mountain News* and about which I hope to write something for the summer issue.

In his "Foreword" to this third volume, James Ford writes, ". . . these stories, brought together with attention and care . . . tell us of something quite real, a human enterprise, with heroes and villains, sometimes the same person. And something more. This book sings to us of something coming to form, a living and dynamic spiritual tradition taking shape today, sinking new roots into new soil. And out of this, I find myself invited into the stories." (7) Indeed the stories of "Zen Masters" in this volume and the next invite us to find our own stories within them as McDaniel's earlier volumes about China and Japan cannot. Reading this third volume, I kept thinking about how my own story intersected with those of the twentieth century Zen teachers. The earliest, born in the later nineteenth century, are my grandparents' generation—several members of which were interested in theosophy, one of the fringe "spiritual" philosophies which helped draw some westerners of that time to Asian religions. Soen Nagakawa, Kapleau, Watts, and Aitken belong to my parents' generation. And when I get to the sixties in California I start asking with some urgency, where was I? Why, when I arrived in Los Angeles to teach in 1966, didn't I get involved with Zen? A couple of my college classmates did—one of them in Los Angeles.



I know the answer: my own great intellectual and spiritual passion then was European culture, English literature; those were the traditions in which I immersed myself and hoped to pass on to my students.

Zen would have done me a lot of good during my younger life. And yet, I most likely would have been a student of Joshu Sasaki at Mount Baldy (that being the Zen center closest to where I lived) and possibly affected by his monstrous behavior. In the course of the life I did lead, an interest in history and tradition gradually became a pull toward connection with the whole of the human past. I became interested in Asia; I encountered Buddhism in Nepal; I started reading about it; and I was finally willing to take the risk of attempting to practice Chobo-Ji's Sino-Japanese version of it. As it has for other Americans, Zen feels to me fresh and new, free of the baggage of Christianity. But also it invites me to share in the beautiful traditional practices I have observed in Asia, and thus to be more fully a part of the global culture of our present moment. I celebrate in today's American Zen the qualities of fluidity and adaptability that kept Mandan spirituality strong, and which are strengthening me in my seventies.

## Sangha Council Date

On Sunday, July 24, 9 to 11 in the morning, Chobo-Ji will be holding a sangha council circle to consider again the question of whether or how we might allow convicted sex offenders to practice with us. The last time we discussed this issue, concerns were raised about safety and about communicating around safety issues. This spring a series of communications workshops have been held to offer sangha members the opportunity to build their skills in communication, as a direct response to this concern.

We will begin the July 24 session with an educational piece on some ways in which safety concerns can be addressed. The council itself will be for feedback on three possible safety scenarios, to see what might work for our sangha.

We look forward to seeing as many sangha members as possible at the council so that our decision will have as broad a base as

possible. If you are not able to attend but wish to provide input, a mechanism for that will be provided closer to the date. If you have questions at any time, please feel free to contact Genko at [genkokb@gmail.com](mailto:genkokb@gmail.com).

## Muzan Update

Ralph's Caring Bridge—called **Muzan's Mountain**—went live. Caring Bridge (CB) is a web-based nonprofit organized to provide free websites to people facing challenges in life. CB makes it possible for those who want to share news about their progress with their wider community. It's also a place where the community can leave encouraging messages in the Guest Book. Please follow the link below to read Ralph's Story and recent Journal Updates about his situation, look at photos, and leave your messages. Journal updates will happen each week. <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/ralphmuzanleach>



You can access the site even without an invitation. However, if you have problems using it, email Sally ZenKa Metcalf at [metcalf.sally@gmail.com](mailto:metcalf.sally@gmail.com) and you'll get an invitation. Please note that CB offers lots of opportunities to donate "in tribute to Ralph," but these donations go to Caring Bridge, not Ralph. Muzan's Chobo-Ji fundraising brought in twice the hoped for target, so presently we are not collecting more donations.

Thank you for your loving support of Muzan. It means so much to him. He continues to enjoy everyone's visits, cards and letters. Now, he'll check out his Caring Bridge messages from all of you.

## Communication Savvy Gestalt Process Work

Sat, June 4; 9:30am – 5pm  
Suggested donation: \$85-\$150

If you haven't yet been to one or both of our Communication Workshops so far, you have missed out on some fine presentations and practice skills, but there is still one more opportunity coming up Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. *The Chobo-Ji Board and Program, Practice Committee and our Abbot Genjo Osho have strongly recommended that every local sangha member attend at least one of these workshops* to help us collectively improve our skills to ensure a healthy community. **All ordained and residents have been strongly encouraged to attend all three.** Each workshop is held here at Chobo-Ji and open to the wider public, but is focused on healthy sangha relations. No one will be turned away for lack of funds, contribute what you can.

This workshop's presenter is Leonard Shaw, who has been in private practice since 1966. The master therapists Carl Rogers and Fritz Perls have heavily influenced his practice. After eleven years of studying, practicing and teaching Gestalt therapy, he started practicing what he now refers to as "Love-and-Forgiveness-Ego-Death-and-Surrender" therapy. Leonard has been a long time mentor and friend of Genjo Osho and has taught at training centers in the USA, Canada, Europe and the Canary Islands.



At this upcoming workshop, learn how and why communication gets derailed; and through some core exercises, how to get it back on track. In addition, Leonard will offer fun and interesting communication tools we can all easily learn and practice. Also, we'll explore two important ways to communicate with yourself that can facilitate powerful healing outcomes. Finally, discover how the very thing that drives you nuts in intimate relationships can be turned into a productive tool for healing.

# Writing from the Heart

with Monika Jion Winkelmann

Sat, July 9; 9am – 3pm

Suggested donation: \$40 or more

This is the second time that Jion is offering this workshop at Chobo-Ji. During her upcoming month-long visit to Seattle, the workshop will be offered on Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 9-3. Those who attended last year were very enthusiastic about it and greatly appreciated the exercises that were offered. The workshop offers ways to foster a creative space for writing and communicating from the heart. She will again be presenting simple techniques to help us loosen up our heart-mind. The whole group will work to cultivate a “resonance-body,” a kind of collective field that manifests as a safe and sacred space in which participants can “just write,” surrendering to the flow of writing from one’s heart. No previous writing experience is necessary, but also know that experience is no hindrance. Genjo Marinello Osho will be assisting with Jion on this day. (Minimum suggested \$40 donation, limited scholarships available.) Jion has been a writing coach for more than 20 years.



## Jukai Ceremonies

Last February, while I was in Bonn, Germany, I led a five-day sesshin. On the last day of sesshin, February 8, Andrew Tonks formally accepted the Buddhist precepts and received a dharma name. Andrew started reading D.T. Suzuki when he was 18 and came to Zen through Aikido training. He lives in England and has come to nearly every sesshin I have offered there or on the European continent. He also attended Autumn Sesshin last year here at Chobo-Ji. In his Jukai application letter he wrote:

...It was Chris Mooney Sensei who introduced me to formal zazen when I

moved back to Birmingham in my thirties. Chiba Sensei had begun to introduce Zen practice to complement the aikido of his school. I no longer practiced aikido at that point but decided to come along for one sit a week in the aikido dojo. Finally, a starved part of me breathed again and the practice has steadily grown. I have been sitting daily for perhaps 10-11 years and attending sesshins by a number of Zen organizations...

It has taken a long time for me to come round to the idea of making any formal commitment to Buddhist practice, though the core of my being has been pulling, pushing, cajoling and often kicking me along the path of awakening...

When I reflect on the form of my investigation into This Matter, which has taken over three decades, the Buddha and Buddhism have always been present in one form or another, just there, often not in focus or directly an experiential part of my life, but a guiding force and a compass. Several times I have been lucky enough to visit the Himalaya region including India, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim... Perhaps it’s some age old karma but when I’m in that part of the world, it feels very much like home. Even as I write this I am drawn to think of planning another trip there, back to those utterly amazing mountains and wonderful people.

Through many hours of sitting I have looked at the question of what is at the root of my being and probed a dim disquiet that is always just out of reach in the dark. I have perhaps finally come to the point of surrender and a willing turn towards that which directs my life...

In the communities of Zen I have had the blessings to meet, I find there is more understanding that the innate Truth is always, always working to express itself to the benefit of all, but as complicated humans we often get in its way and trip ourselves up. I, of course, am as susceptible to this as anyone. The Precepts act as a perpetual aspiration to refine my body-mind’s expression in the world. The feeling comes closest to that of a tree which offers its fruit freely and without discrimination about who or what comes to take it. The seeds within pass through whatever took the fruit and spreads the tree’s nature over wider areas.

In taking time to reflect on what Vowing is and what it means to me personally, I

discover, now after all the above reflections, there is one personal vow that sits in this body-mind at its core. It is this: **I vow to live this life fully open to the Universe, to respond to it as it responds to itself, to see it seeing itself and to love it as it loves itself.**

On further reflection about the precepts Andrew wrote:

...The precepts come from a single unity and there is no distinction whatsoever in my appreciation of their common source in Love. Their apparent disaggregation into a list of ten is to me a simplified codification of how Universal Love would naturally express itself in the behavior response to specific human situations...

In considering the Great Vow of the Zen lineage to care for all beings inanimate and animate, the immediate response is a deep feeling of resonance. It feels like a natural hard wiring into my being and I have a deep trust that it is hard wired into all human beings...



The unavoidable fact that our actions cause untold myriad effects in the world, makes this Great Vow, which I consider the First Natural Vow of Being, something that can weigh me down with incapacity and overwhelming apathy, that can give me the greatest joy by way of overcoming selfish tendencies and allowing myself to actually be the vow and let the Love that cares for all beings act unopposed through this body-mind...

I have had many tests that require perseverance against the odds, sitting unmoving in suffering for long periods, waiting, breathing, enduring and holding



*my inner compass pointed in the direction of trust, hope, faith and confidence that all things pass and ultimately I am being helped. Only recently has the energy shifted finally, perhaps becoming secure in itself and knowing that it can start to turn its attention to the wider world. I don't judge it, I just let it be and let it find its way. I am drawn to find some useful expression of this and will be working on finding suitable options to give something back in some ways.*

*The fact that the four Bodhisattva vows always reference the infinitude of ways in which suffering is caused and vow to eliminate them all, also seems to me to not just refer to everlasting effort and work, but also to imply the cultivation of a total openness and responsiveness to all situations, perceptions, feelings, thoughts and environments such that no opportunity is missed in THIS current moment. It's all very well building up a grandiose pile of good intentions in our heads, but right now, right here, am I seeing and responding to any pain, delusion or suffering in a compassionate way? Of course the answer can only be 'sometimes' and if I continue to practice then the best I can expect is 'more times than before' and aim to stay on that track...*

*The formality of Jukai reminds me that there is still much work and purification to do. In taking this step I feel that I am showing the Universe that I surrender, I give up trying to find my own way, and hopefully I can truly let the Light direct my life from here on. It certainly feels easier this way!*

As for a Dharma Name, Andrew mentioned deep connection to peaks of the Himalaya mountains. I selected Haku (white) Ho (peak) for his Dharma name, white in the sense of brightly fresh and pure.

.....  
**O**n the last day of Spring Sesshin, March 26, Jeff Skolnick formally accepted the Buddhist precepts and received a dharma name. Jeff has attended several sesshins at Chobo-Ji over the years, and has been a sporadic attendee at daily zazen and local sangha events. He wrote in his Jukai letter:

*I started thinking in earnest after we spoke about why I wanted to do Jukai. What came flooding up were evolving reasons why after 36 years of meditation practice I didn't do it. The main reason why now... it chose me.*

*It sprung into consciousness with the ridiculous joke about a Dharma name I told you about in Dokusan that arose out of the blue at my last sesshin—being Jewish so that "Chozen" would mark me as one of the 'chosen people.' Or that I was born Jewish, but 'chose Zen.' But the real reason is that I've had a natural Bodhichitta sensitivity since I was very young—fretting about whether the turkey served on Thanksgiving had feelings. I see a world of hurt and want to make it better. My plan: use brain science and modern wellness to carve an increasingly accessible path to Awakening, so that one day it will be seen as a normal stage of development.*

*This pursuit—reinterpreting Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—now borders on an obsession. As you know, I'm creating a set of brain skills that I believe activate the neural circuits of samadhi. I've taken ten years to write three books about these skills, spent countless time and money building a wellness company to make them work better and have been teaching these skills for years as a way to better understand them. I experiment with them every day through most days.*

*Realizing with better clarity that all our choices are unconscious, perhaps "Chozen" was my unconscious brain's way of getting my attention.*

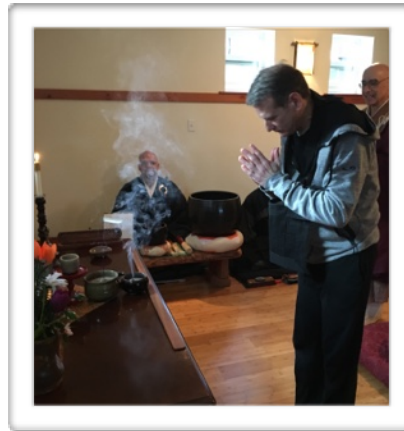
**C**oncerning the importance of the precepts, Jeff wrote, "For me the precepts are statements calling attention to various dimensions of balance leading to a state of no-self. In the case of 'not harboring anger but to forgive,' the balance is this: anger and the love that comes from existential knowing = assertiveness." Following this statement Jeff gave a fine example that we all might learn from:

*For instance, once, not too long ago, experimenting with an intentional state of equanimity and no-self (which doesn't last very long) I looked at my son sitting on his computer screen (who has a video game addiction) and it attenuated my anger down to a diffuse experience of loving, frustrated energy. What was left became an assertive statement that flowed freely from my lips,*

*"It's time to get off." My stalemate showed a, shall I say, 'gleeful', confidence and that certainty surprised even me... What amazed me even more was that my son seemed to respond readily to that statement, more than he has in the past when I was either snarky and impatient or lighthearted and pleading...*

*For me, this precept and my anger, remind me of and stimulate a powerful route to practice—balancing anger and the loving silence and stillness that lies at the center of the giddy miracle of existence.*

**J**eff has been a good friend and professional colleague for more years than I can remember. Here is part of a foreword I wrote for a new book he is working on titled, *Going Beyond Mindfulness: The Zen Art and Brain strategies of Enlightenment*. "I have known Jeff for over a quarter of a century. I know him to be an excellent psychiatrist and expert in brain science. More importantly, he has been exploring his own inner nature since he began meditating in 1980. He has attended several weeklong



Zen retreats at the temple where I am abbot and continues his practice of deepening his awareness, thereby expanding his capacity and desire to serve all beings. He has actively worked his whole professional life to serve a hurting world."

**I** could not resist selecting Cho (remarkable) Zen (meditation) as his Dharma name.

**J**ukai 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). They are expected to explore the Ten Precepts using Norman Fischer's book [Taking Our Places](#) as a study guide.

## 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: 5/22, 5/29, 6/5, 6/12, 6/19, 7/3, 7/17, 8/7, 8/21, 9/1

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45PM (except 6/28)

**Communication Savvy with Leonard Shaw, MSW ...**

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

**Summer Sesshin ...**

**Writing from the Heart with Monika Jion Winkelmann ...**

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

**Board Meeting ...**

**Sangha Council ...**

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

**Summer Odayaka Sesshin ...**

**Post Workshop (learn about Zen posts) ...**

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

**Board Meeting ...**

**Autumn Sesshin ...**

**June 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am - 5pm**

**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 5am - 11:15am**

**June 24<sup>th</sup> - July 1<sup>st</sup>**

**July 9<sup>th</sup>, 9am - 3pm**

**July 10<sup>th</sup>, 5am - 11:15am**

**July 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**July 24<sup>th</sup>, 9am - 11am**

**Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>, 5am - 11:15am**

**Aug. 26<sup>th</sup> - Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 5am - 11:15am**

**Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> - Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>**

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*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

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