



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

I began writing this letter while at an annual family gathering with nearly twenty of Carolyn's relatives down at the Gwinwood Conference Center in Lacey, WA. This is the same place where we held last year's Rohatsu Sesshin and where we will gather again soon for this year's Rohatsu Sesshin on December 2nd.

My mother, Maureen Dawn O'Shea, fought lung cancer for 11 months, and dropped her physical form on October 4th. I stayed with her the last two weeks in hospice, which overlapped with most of Autumn Sesshin. This was the first week-long sesshin in 40 years in which I have not fully participated in. Of course, being at my mother's bedside was its own kind of intensive. I wrote a poem shortly after her death:

Maureen Dawn O'Shea

7/26/36 - 10/4/17

*Early October morning,
the dawn is bright and clear.
At dusk, clouds obscure the mountains
and a soft rain falls.
Eighty-one orbits around the sun
in human form,
now a bit of dust and bone.
Who hears the willow's call
in a gentle breeze?
Circling over the Bitterroot Valley,
a hawk glides silently, leaving no trace.*

Fortunately, our sangha is rich with talent and leadership, so my absence from sesshin was filled by two Oshos, four more unsuis, and additional senior sangha members. I asked Rinzan Osho to give dharma talks, conduct dharma interviews and in general take over oversight for me in my absence. Joriki Osho also gave two dharma talks. Rev. Sendo was our Shika (host-manager) and coordinated the show. Rev. Tendo was the Dai-Tenzo (chief cook), Rev. Seiho served as Jikijitsu (time keeper) and

Lynn (Sogetsu) Hernandez was Densu (chant leader). Rev. Gendo served tea, coffee and snacks as lead Jisha (tea server). Pam Hagestedt served Rinzan and the sangha as Inji (abbot-assistant). Rinzan's last Dharma Talk during Autumn Sesshin on "Ordinary Mind is Tao" has been transcribed for this issue. On the first full day of sesshin, before my departure to Montana, I led a Jukai (Precept) ceremony for Anil Singh-Molares. Anil did several sesshins at [DBZ](#) in the early 80's, and has now joined Chobo-Ji. You can read more about Anil and the Jukai ceremony later in this issue.

It was grand to visit the [No-Rank Zendo](#) in Portland last month. Rinzan Osho invited me to come down and give [teisho from the Hidden Lamp](#) and dokusan at their October 14th zazenkaï. Last weekend, November 3-5, Rinzan hosted No-Rank's first three-day sesshin at his home. It is very gratifying to see the Portland sangha blossoming so strongly.

Reflecting on the fact that not everything goes as we would like and we are all disappointed in one another from time to time, I want to put forward the following thoughts which I have already shared with unsui associated with Chobo-Ji.

From time to time, those with whom we train, those to whom we are closest, will break our trust. Shit happens. We will not be perfect at keeping the forms. We will not easily shed our self-preoccupations or egocentric views. We will not always be caring in our connection to others. Then what? We are upset with our fellow practitioners. He or she is not doing it right! In such cases our trust with the other weakens, wavers or is broken. We



become disappointed in each other and tend to blame the "other."

I try to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Very rarely is anyone being malicious or trying to hurt someone. It is best to assume that everyone is doing the best they can, has a good intention, and is working to improve their skills, beginning from where they are at this moment. This approach serves the sangha well and I sincerely ask that no matter our opinion or view, hurt or even harm, that we all try to return to these basic assumptions about each other and work again to re-establish healthy relations. This will not be possible if we hold firmly to our own opinions. We must remember, that *to HOLD our opinions for or against anything or anyone is truly the disease of the mind.*

This means that even when we are hurt, or our trust broken that we work to give everyone in the sangha another chance to regain our trust. To the extent that we hold anyone in a fixed view, positive or negative, we are creating a road block to growth. To paraphrase a good friend and mentor, [Leonard M. Shaw](#) puts it this way, "In a two step dance someone is to blame, either myself or the other; in a three step dance, I step back to neutral, look for commonalities and mutual needs, assume the best intentions under difficult or conflictual circumstances and then attempt to step forward with this view in mind." We may not agree always as to what is right or wrong, but in the vast majority of

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circumstances, everyone is looking for what is the best course of action.

My advice: when there are difficulties stay away from any kind of fixed view of the situation, persons or events. Make an effort to take deep breaths, relax, return to an internal neutral position, do whatever it takes to refresh ourselves, and begin again fresh in our relationship and connection to each other. If we fail to do this the gears of sangha development and cohesion will grind to a halt and eventually break. I've seen this happen, and fortunately many times more I've seen all parties in some hurt or dispute, take a deep breath, relax, return to neutral and begin again, which means risking trust again. I hope I'm making sense and being clear and that these thoughts prove useful as we attempt to go straight on with the flow of the undeniable and unstoppable flowering of the Dharma.

Included in this issue are updates on Chobo-Ji's Nonviolent Communication training, an announcement for our upcoming Rohatsu Sesshin, Rinzan's Autumn Sesshin closing incense poem, a fascinating and important essay by Rev. Sendo on "Zen and Moral Education" and finally a wonderful story about how to use one's koan for deep inquiry by Rev. Tendo. As we go into late autumn and the upcoming holiday season may we all stay warm and healthy as we share times together with sangha, friends and family.

With gassho,
Genjo

Restorative Practices

Following July's and September's workshops on Nonviolent Communication as a Spiritual Practice, eleven sangha members have begun meeting as an every-other-week study group, the "Ongo Group," to develop skills of deep listening both to self and others, and of honest expression which is mindful of its impacts. The group is following a text, [The Ongo Book: Everyday Nonviolence](#), by Catherine Cadden and Jesse Wiens, which provides guidelines for group meetings, individual practice, and practice in pairs. "Ongo," inspired by an old Zen term, is shorthand for "ongoing spiritual practice." As stated in

the book's foreword, "At the heart of the Ongo journey is Dogen's invitation to 'study the self'".



The Restorative Practices Committee has planned two more community-wide all-day NVC workshops for the first half of 2018: the dates are Saturday, January 20, and Saturday, June 2. More details about each of these workshops will appear in *Temple Happenings*. Our hope is that the skills for "right speech" and awareness cultivated in both these larger meetings and by members of the study group will help everyone in our sangha better negotiate tensions and conflict, and return to harmony after disconnection.

Zen and Moral Education

essay by Rev. Sendo Howells

The scope of Dale S. Wright's [What Is Buddhist Enlightenment?](#) (Oxford University Press, 2016) is, as befits the question it asks, wide: spiritual, philosophical, individual and collective, and historical while arising from the dilemmas and potential of our own lives and our own time. Dale Wright is Professor of Religious Studies and Professor of Asian Studies at Occidental College, where I knew him as a valued colleague and friend. My own academic introduction to Buddhism was a long-ago lecture on Asian religions which he gave to freshmen in a course we taught together: I remember struggling to keep straight the distinctions among Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism! He writes as a scholar but has also been a Zen practitioner; among his other books are one on the six paramitas and one about koans.

"Enlightenment" is a contested word

among western Buddhists. For one thing, we recognize that it's a term which had become central in modern western thought around the time when the West began to discover the thought of the East, and bound up in it are western assumptions and values which in many respects are problematic and also quite different from those of the Asian cultures in which Buddhism arose and developed. At Chobo-Ji we tend to prefer "awakening" – actually, as Wright says, a word much closer to the Sanskrit "bodhi" than is "enlightenment." We have good reasons for our preference – among other things, it feels less grandiose than "enlightenment" – but Wright makes a good case for "enlightenment" as a term suggesting ideals crucial for the future of Western and also world Buddhism.

That is something I'll touch on again later. My main focus here is the central section of book's three sections, "The Moral Dimension of Enlightenment." In Section I, "Contemporary Images of Enlightenment," Wright first examines Vimalakirti as an early and highly idealized image of the bodhisattva, then explores the far less idealized representation of the awakening of moral consciousness in two young monks in a 1981 Korean film (Im Kwon-Taek's *Mandala*). Section I concludes with a chapter insisting, via a debate with Stephen Batchelor, on the religious dimension of enlightenment, a perspective which I think is critical to the whole book. In the opening chapter of Section II, Wright takes up "karma" as a central moral/ethical concept for both early and contemporary Buddhists. In the next two chapters, he turns more specifically to Zen, first examining the consequences for Japanese Zen of what he argues has been its relative lack of attention to moral training, and then presenting the story of Taizan Maezumi Roshi, founder of the Zen Center of Los Angeles, in light of both the traditional idealization of the Zen Master and the realities of human fallibility.



For Wright, “karma” is an early concept of “extraordinary sophistication” which “should . . . be counted as one of the most significant achievements of South Asian culture and an impressive gift to contemporary ethical thinking globally.” At its core is the articulation of “a close relationship between what a person chooses to do and who or what that person becomes over time.” (74) In traditional Asian thought this “over time” has been connected to beliefs in rebirth and thus an “assertion of ultimate cosmic justice”: if you behave badly now you’ll be a cockroach in your next life. However, the “naturalistic theory of karma” which emerges when we strip away the supernatural dimension has huge potential for deepening our own moral understanding. As he sketches out this potential, Wright makes four main points.

One is the inseparability of freedom and consequences. In the moment, we choose and act on our choice. One by one, these choices “shape our character . . . and the character we have constructed, choice by choice, sets limits on the range of possibilities that we will be able to consider in each future decision.” I would add to this (and it’s clear that Wright agrees) that gradually accumulating choices don’t just limit future possibilities, but can also open them up; this is what gives substance to the fourth Noble Truth, pointing us to the complex path of self-cultivation. Nonetheless, as Wright says, “. . . the past, on this view, is never something that once happened to us and is now over; instead, it is the network of causes and conditions that has already shaped us and that is right now setting conditions for every choice and move we make.” The reality of human freedom thus “becomes highly visible, and awesome in its gravity,” as we come to understand “the far-reaching and irreversible impact on oneself and others of choices made, of karma.” (89)

A second main point for a contemporary and naturalistic theory of karma is that we are aware that in exercising the freedom of self-cultivation, we are shaped not only by our own past choices but by “forces far beyond our control,” and these forces create conditions which are both “strict” and “always fluctuating.” Failure “to recognize the encompassing forces of nature, society, and history places us in a precarious position and renders our choices naive. Our choices and our lives arise dependent on

these larger forces, and in view of them, mindfulness and reverence are appropriate responses.” (90) I would add that a comic sense is also helpful: even making my best efforts, I am always going to be working in near-darkness, stumbling, and in retrospect, naive.

The third point draws on what Wright sees as a great strength in traditional Buddhist ethics: the understanding that most of our moment-to-moment “choices” are the “unconscious ‘non-choices’ that we make every day in the form of habits and customs that deepen over time and engrave their mark into our character.” Ordinary daily life, daily practice, “. . . the ways we do our work and manage our time, the ways we daydream, or cultivate resentment, or lose ourselves in distractions, down to the very way we eat and breathe”: all this adds up. This understanding of karma, “closely related to the development of meditation,” means that Buddhists, “to an extent not found in other religious and philosophical traditions . . . saw that ethics is only rarely about difficult and monumental decisions and that, in preparing ourselves for life, it is much more important to focus on what we do with ourselves moment by moment than it is to attempt to imagine how we will solve the major moral crises when they arrive.” (90) The human excellence represented by the bodhisattva ideal is as much made as born.

The Buddhist doctrine of no-self is, Wright thinks, important to understanding that our “selves” are malleable “and open to . . . ethical transformation.” And this leads Wright to his fourth point about the potential of a “naturalized” conception of karma for our own time. The “extraordinary Mahayana teaching of emptiness, the Buddhist vision of the interpenetration of all beings” is the ground from which we can continue to develop what has already begun in contemporary socially engaged Buddhism, an emphasis on our collective as much as on our individual experience.

Conceiving self-construction on the collective as well as the individual level, we may be able “to design strategies of ethical education that are both honest to the requirements of thinking in our time and profoundly enabling in the quest for human enlightenment.” (92, 93)

* * *

Wright’s closely argued chapter on karma sets up the two chapters which follow, his essay on the consequences of Japanese Zen’s downplaying of moral development, and his exploration of the life of Maezumi Roshi as one which points to the importance to Zen of a realistic understanding of the human fallibility of our teachers.

His central observation about traditional Zen (Chan as well as its development in Japan) is blunt: Zen hasn’t been particularly interested in the moral development of its practitioners. No doubt, he says, many Zen traditional Zen masters “were moral exemplars in their communities,” but this would have been directly attributable much less to their Zen training than “to their participation in the traditions of East Asian Confucian morality, as well as to the moral teachings of the broader Chinese Buddhist tradition.” In neither Zen sacred literature nor in “the full repertoire of Zen practices,” Wright argues, do we find much “evidence of substantive interest in morality.” The stories about Zen masters handed down over the centuries, mind-stretching as they are, aren’t about moral dilemmas. No one was keeping a record of what happened when these masters faced ethical dilemmas in their monasteries or in the society around them. Nor do Zen practices “appear to be intentionally and directly focussed on the powers of moral reflection; none appear to aim explicitly at the cultivation of generosity, kindness, forgiveness, empathy, regard for the suffering of others, justice, or compassion.” (94, 95) Wright opens this chapter with a summary of [Brian Victoria’s research](#) on Japanese Zen masters’ support of Japanese military aggression during World War II: one dramatic illustration of the limitations of their training and probably also of the respect for authority inculcated by the hierarchical structures of their institutions.

Reading this chapter, I kept thinking that my own experience of Zen training at

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Chobo-Ji has been quite different. As much as I aspire to a deeper understanding of reality, I also aspire to becoming a more mature human being and feel the two aspirations to be connected. In teishos and in other contexts, Genjo Osho repeatedly points out the need to move from the cushion to active, concerned engagement with the social worlds beyond the zendo. Of the Four Great Vows, the important one is the first, caring for all beings, sentient and insentient, and the others are at the service of this first one. In zazen we may focus on life koans as well as on the traditional ones. And even the traditional koan curriculum has been enlarged for us by *The Hidden Lamp's* stories about women, most of them left out of the traditional books and many of them touching on moral issues.

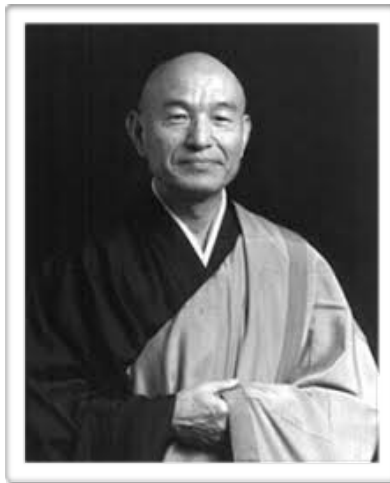
We study the Precepts and think beyond them. Trying to understand our interactions with each other during sesshins can be practice for handling the more complicated interactions of our lives when we leave sesshin. The dualistic thinking and feeling that come so easily to us and can do so much harm to ourselves and others is something we can practice moving beyond. There can be considerable scope for moral reflection in the weekly practice reports we write as part of the training we undertake in Intensive Study periods. We slowly cultivate the habits of maturity. Many in the sangha are engaged in social justice issues, and we support a social justice committee. This past summer we embarked on a new branch of our practice, cultivating “right speech” by practicing the techniques of Nonviolent Communication.

In the latter part of this chapter on the moral dimensions of Zen training, Wright sketches out what he thinks is needed. The point of the meditative cultivation of mind should be “that it deepens our contact with the world in every sphere of our activity.” The Zen tradition must expand and develop “its thought of enlightenment – the understanding a practitioner has of the point and the consequence of Zen training.” This, Wright thinks, “can only be accomplished by practicing the arts of thinking that have so long been banished in Zen.” (104, 105) A reason why Wright prefers “enlightenment” to “awakening” is that he thinks some of the Western values implied by “enlightenment” – including moral values – make it a more inclusive term. I

would say that we at Chobo-Ji and other western Zen groups I’ve been learning about are on this path. After two and a half years reading through Dogen’s marvelous *Shobogenzo* from beginning to end, all those hundreds of pages mostly unconcerned with moral life, I’m aware that all along I’ve been conscious of how limited an education his monks were receiving, and how glad I am that my own Zen education has been so much less cloistered.

* * *

Maezumi Roshi’s story has become one of the cautionary tales of American Zen. Founder of the Zen Center of Los Angeles and its charismatic guiding teacher through a period of booming growth through the 1970’s and into the early 1980’s, it was disclosed in 1983 to have been sexually involved with several of his female students, including one to whom he had given dharma transmission. As this became



known, both Maezumi and his community realized that he had a serious alcohol problem. Many practitioners left ZCLA. Maezumi, “under enormous pressure and in emotional turmoil . . . checked himself into an alcohol rehabilitation center.” Though he seemed to have solved his drinking problem and though he was “deeply apologetic and remorseful about the damage he had caused,” people continued to leave and ZCLA shrank dramatically and never recovered “the powerful spiritual image that it once radiated.” Associates interviewed by Wright recall, he says, “that it was many years before Maezumi returned to anything like his former exuberance and confidence, the spirit of Zen that had so animated his teachings.” Nonetheless, he did recover to a

great extent. His persistence and spiritual strength in doing so were admired by those close to him, and because leading disciples dispersed and founded Zen centers around North America, his lineage has played an important part in developing American Zen. However, his manner of death again confounded his admirers: he died very suddenly at age sixty-four while visiting family and Soto Zen leaders in Japan – having drowned, under the influence of alcohol, in his brother’s bathtub. (114, 115)

Wright tells Maezumi’s story following the traditional chronological format of stories about the “golden age” Zen masters: his early life and Zen training in Japan through to his death. Doing this, he calls attention to a notable feature of those old stories: though they “humanized” the old masters to an extent not seen in earlier representations of saintly bodhisattvas, though they emphasized the masters’ cultivation of ordinariness and their individual styles, they nonetheless do not record “difficulties, problems, weaknesses, and other characteristics that would make them more like us, that is, ‘human, all too human.’” (167) And, for all that we now demand far more verisimilitude in accounts of historical figures about whom we have more evidence, these old stories probably still tend to lead both Zen students and teachers to hold exalted expectations about the “Zen Master.” It’s clear that Maezumi’s students had such expectations of him, as he did of himself.

Wright’s point in this chapter, though, is rather different: that Maezumi – who was one of Wright’s own teachers – was deeply fallible and vulnerable *and* a Zen master who was genuinely “enlightened,” in Wright’s understanding of the breadth and depth of that term. A huge amount is known, has been written, and is still remembered about Maezumi’s life. And what it adds up to for Wright and also, he says, for many others, is a continuing conviction “that the depth of Maezumi’s enlightenment was authentic and beyond serious doubt. No one, they claim, could have demonstrated this level of personal presence and depth of character and not have ascended to remarkable levels of Zen insight; no one could have faked the level of clarity and compassion that Maezumi’s life so clearly demonstrated.” (125)

Even the manner of his death becomes part

of the realistic portrait of an admirable man: though he died through an embarrassing accident, a bit of careless behavior, he had rebuilt ZCLA, he had served as a stepping stone between Japanese Zen and the ongoing teaching of his American students, and one purpose of that final trip to Japan was “to finalize his dharma transmission to Bernard Glassman, his first and foremost disciple.” In classical Zen, Wright observes, this act of transmitting a legacy to a successor “often happened in the final days of a master’s life.” The poem Maezumi transcribed on the *inka* certificate became his death poem. And “[t]hose who remember him at the end of his life recall a wizened, compassionate, and humble Zen master still fully within the power of his Zen mind.” (127)

Wright’s detailed account and analysis is a sympathetic and objective contribution to the “humanization” of our understanding of what it means to be a Zen master. Indeed, Wright says, “. . . Zen mindfulness may be the overarching skill that effectively allows one to enlarge oneself” in dimensions which are not the focus of Zen training – “including the moral dimensions having to do with sexual relations and substance abuse.” But there is nothing magical about Zen enlightenment “wherein everything in life is perfected at the moment when the results of [traditional] Zen practice come to fruition.” Genjo Osho tells us this again and again. We all need other forms of practice as well, and the old and new Buddhist wisdom about the never-ending path of moral self-cultivation can help us extend our Zen practice into that dimension. A problem with “enlightenment” is that it can seem to name more definitively a kind of completeness than does “awakening,” which more clearly points to an ongoing process. Wright wants “enlightenment” because he wants a word which, unpacked, can point to the highest (and always evolving) human ideals of understanding and responsibility. “Reflecting on Maezumi’s life and legacy,” he says, “helps bring contemporary Zen to a maturity that we typically evade when we look at classical images of Zen masters, a maturity that need not consider Zen masters as enlightened gods in order to hold them in admiration and deep respect.” (128) And, I will add, a maturity which brings us back, once again, to the humility of some of the greatest of the ancient masters.

What is Tao?

Mumonkan, Case 19

*Dharma Talk given by Rinzan Osho
Final day of Autumn Sesshin, 2017*

Koan:

Joshu once asked Nansen, “What is Tao?” Nansen answered, “Ordinary mind is Tao.” “Then should we direct ourselves toward it or not?” asked Joshu. “If you try to direct yourself toward it, you go away from it,” answered Nansen. Joshu continued, “If we do not try, how can we know that it is the Tao?” Nansen replied, “The Tao does not belong to knowing or to not-knowing. Knowing is illusion. Not-knowing is blankness. If you really realize the Tao beyond doubt, then it is like the great void so vast and boundless. How, then, can there be right and wrong in the Tao?” At these words, Joshu had a sudden awakening.

Mumon’s Commentary:

Questioned by Joshu, Nansen immediately shows that the tile is disintegrating, the ice is dissolving, and no communication whatsoever is possible. Even though Joshu can be awakened, he can truly get it only after studying for thirty more years.

Mumon’s Poem:

*Hundreds of flowers in Spring,
the moon in autumn,
A cool breeze in summer,
and snow in winter;
If there is no vain cloud in your mind,
For you, it is a good season.*

As I have said throughout the week, coming to sesshin is no easy task. We abandon our daily lives, our everyday responsibilities. We become, for a week, home-leavers. Traditionally, this is how monks are referred to: home-leavers. They abandon their everyday life to devote themselves to the practice of the Buddha-Dharma. No one in this room is a monk in that sense. We all have our home-lives, but for a week, we all become monks. We have practiced together and learned together and held the forms together and rubbed up against each other the wrong way together, sat and looked deeply together and struggled through koans together and had

openings and broken barriers together. We kept looking deeper and deeper and, to some extent, touched the infinite together.

It’s no easy task coming to sesshin, and it’s no easy task being in sesshin. Everyone had hardships. Everyone had difficulties. Everyone also had moments of opening and bliss and pleasure. Regardless, I have faith that not a moment of this week was wasted, not a moment of this week was wrong. Not a single mistake was made, not a single sit was frittered away in sleepiness or in doubt or confusion. If there was sleepiness, there was valuable sleepiness, and if there was doubt, there was valuable doubt, and if there was confusion, there was valuable confusion. And if there was opening and breakthrough, there was just that too.

We come to sesshin to clarify our lives, and to that end, we let sesshin clarify us. It’s not so complicated, though the mind wants to make it complicated. It’s like a machine that moves us through it. We put ourselves in at the beginning and, day by day, facing now this and now this, and in the end, sesshin pops us out the other end, and we’ve been clarified.

All we have to do is strive, to show up, to be present. That’s really all we need do. The circumstances, the challenges, the requests made — either by an Osho or someone in a post holder role or even by our own minds — are going to be the catalyst that pushes us forward and clarifies our lives until we get popped out on the other side, and we’re just different. There are other means of creating change, but for me, there has been nothing better than sesshin to serve as the catalyst for change, clarity, wisdom (to the extent that I have wisdom), maturity (to the extent I have maturity), and developing a caring, tender heart.

I did not start training in Zen expecting to unveil a fundamental tender heartedness. I started Zen to see the truth and to break through, to find freedom, and I have had breakthroughs, and I have much more freedom than I used to. I can tell you, going from the pains and struggles and constrictions that I used to have to endure to the life that I live now, I have much, much more freedom. But what I didn’t expect is that this freedom would come hand in hand

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with the rediscovery of a tender caring heart. This is the rediscovery of the foundational love that cares so deeply that my little ego mind is willing and able to step aside and endure, face, be present for, and to be in the world in ways that I didn't think possible, completely open heartedly. Of course, we all think that if our heart is too open, we can get hurt. But I say, "What is there to hurt? It is so vast and wide ..."

In my life before Zen, I would walk to the store and see people on the street and think, "Oh. This person seems mean or angry. I have to protect myself." I thought that I shouldn't give things to people because they might not deserve them or appreciate them. Or I might think I should not care so much for the earth or the mistreated or the harmed because then I would hurt too much, and there was nothing I could do about it anyway. It felt like it was either me or them. But it's not that way. That was the way of delusion.

This is not to say I'm going to leave my wallet on a park bench and not worry about it getting stolen. I'm still sane. I still have boundaries. It's simply seeing someone who's asking for a dollar, and if I have one, I give one, and if I don't, I smile and say, "I'm sorry. I don't have a dollar" ... lovingly. It's simply seeing a little girl dancing in the aisle with her little mini-cart and being able to smile ... lovingly.

This may seem strange. Before coming to sesshin we don't understand, but after sesshin it makes sense. It's as simple and obvious as picking up a radish at the produce section of the grocery store and seeing the radish ... lovingly.

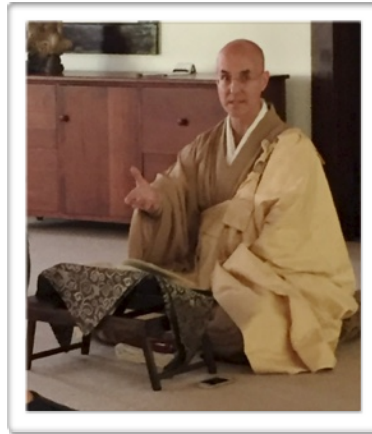
It's the difference between sweeping just to finish sweeping, or vacuuming just to finish vacuuming. Instead, with our hearts open, we love sweeping. It's simply sweeping and simply vacuuming. We do it lovingly. Just that.

And there's no corner that this tender heart-mind doesn't extend to. It extends to all parts of the strife stricken world. It extends to all those we struggle with or disagree with or are in conflict with. It extends to those who are angry, hurt and confused. It extends to and includes us ourselves as, in these turbulent times, we become mobilized

and ready to fight, ready to shout. Through all this, we can know, if we have allowed ourselves to be clarified, that our actions are rooted in love.

Think about it. Why might we, at the end of sesshin, be ready to fight? To shout? It's because our tender caring heart knows that the political language today harms people. We know, from our hearts, that so many of the policies that are being put into place are hurting people.

You might say, "Aren't we supposed to be free from opinion?" But I'm not talking about opinion. "Aren't we supposed to be free from beliefs?" But I'm not talking about beliefs. I'm talking about knowing and feeling when something needs to be done simply because it needs to be done. Ordinary mind.



What do we need to do? I don't know. But I will show up and face it, and maybe I can, for instance, turn to one of these fascists and appeal to their heart and say, "Hey. Stop. Slow down. Think about what you're doing. You're hurting people. Look." But that may not be the answer. I might have to shout. I might have to fight.

Nansen says: "If you really attain the Tao of no-doubt, so vast and boundless, how then can there be right and wrong in the Tao?" So how do we live in the Tao? How can we penetrate and be the Tao so completely that our tender caring heart responds to the world in a way that is authentic and true? How can we not get caught by right and wrong? But can't we get caught by no-right-and-wrong too?

If we think it is supposed to be a certain

way, we have begun to direct ourselves toward it, and it goes away from us. In koan study, we invariably try to direct ourselves toward the appropriate response. We think it's supposed to be a certain way. Person after person comes into the dokusan room and I can see — you already know the answer! But the mind says, "But I think I should have to figure it out. Shouldn't I have to direct myself toward it? And shouldn't it be serene, peaceful ... shouldn't it be a certain way?"

So we struggle and resist, and think we are doing it wrong, and then we get it, we think we had been doing it wrong. But there is no wrong. Nothing is waste. The answer is inside of us waiting. When we pass a koan, we often say, "That was the first thing that came to me!" This is what the Quakers call "the still quiet voice." The Tao is motivating us and compelling and moving our life energy forward.

And when we see it, we break out in laughter or we break out with tears. There's a release of pent up energy that the conceptual mind is holding back. The conceptual mind thinks, "I have to solve this," but what koans point to is learning how to respond from our deep innate wisdom, letting the Tao express itself through us which, ironically, it's already doing anyway. We just have to get out of the way.

For some reason this is imprinted in my memory. When I was a kid, a lady dropped a bag of coins, and my impulse was to pick them up for her. It was a generous impulse. I didn't want to keep them. I wanted to get them for her. But I doubted myself. I must have been five, but I remember this vividly. There was a feeling, just a felt concern that this might not be what one does in the world when an adult has dropped her coins. It might not be proper. So I hesitated, and then my mom scolded me. I had the wrong answer to this koan because I hesitated, and my mom rung me out!

We have this impulse all the time: to give the guy a dollar, to help somebody up, to care for a wounded, smelly, awful dog. It really struck me about two years ago when I saw a [video on YouTube where a shark had been beached](#), and it was barely alive, and these people were struggling to get it back to the ocean so it could live. What a strong

impulse to save and protect life. This is a shark, one of the most primitive and menacing creatures in the world. It just swims and eats. Usually we think, "Keep away," but this shark was suffering and people's tender hearts responded. They cheered as it made its way back out to open water.

Then I saw [another video of people who saw a beached porpoise and they took selfies](#) with it, this narcissistic endeavor to be recorded and to be seen. We all have it, the need to be seen. There's nothing wrong with it, but when it rules us and clouds the tender heart, we cause damage. This porpoise died. It's sadly ironic. Members of our species both saved a shark but then also killed one of the most intelligent and playful, most connected of marine creatures because their narcissism clouded over their compassion, and they took selfies with it until it died in their arms.

We can all be caught by that narcissism and selfishness and delusion. None of us wants to be caught, but it happens. I've worked intimately with murderers, gang leaders, people who've done some of the worst crimes you can imagine. If when I am working with them they are still caught, they are pretty scary and hard to work with, but as soon as there's a spark of a tender caring heart that wakes up, they are very easy to work with because the contrast is so remarkable. They see how clearly they don't want to be cruel anymore. They know it's wrong. It's not easy to work with the knotted karma. It's a painful journey back to the source, but not hard to convince that this tender heartedness exists because once they taste a glimpse of it, they say, "Onward," and hopefully, they can stay on that path.

Of course, sometimes you can be loving and gentle with a murderer and help him see his own clouded heart, and sometimes you have to shout at him, and sometimes, you might have to fight him to keep him from harming others. There is no one way. There's no right and wrong. But there is a kind of rightness that moves us forward. It's like paddling with the stream rather than across or against it. Anyone who has done kayaking like I have knows you have to do a little navigation, but you have to let the river guide you too. You have to learn how to ride the river. And how do you learn it? Practice. You practice learning to feel the

river and just being the river. Then you are one with the river, one with Tao.

In sesshin we have experiences that shape us. What we leave with is more of what flows naturally from our source, our tender caring hearts. We can respond more naturally and spontaneously so our tender caring heart can function in this suffering world.

But be careful, as I've been saying, the mind wants to make it a certain way. Oftentimes at the end of sesshin, we feel so at peace and loving and full of kindness and we think, "I want to just bring this home to my family. I'm going to bring peace and calm into my family, and it will be wonderful. We'll all have our jihatsum sets, and we'll eat rice porridge every morning, and they'll all love it, and we'll all be peaceful. I can't wait to bring my peace to them so I can make them be peaceful." It never works that way. Our task is not to go out into the world to change the world into our idea of how the world should be. Rather, our task is to be in the world in a very ordinary way with our tender caring heart wide open.

What is more likely is that, when you go home, the kids are screaming at their video games and your spouse is exhausted and the dog just threw up on the couch. You think, "You're bumming my Buddha vibe! You're supposed to be all eager to see me and we'd all sit together and just be peaceful! This is not the way I thought it would be!" but you have to drop this too.

With practice comes maturity and wisdom. We learn we have no idea what it's going to look like when we get home, and it's not our job to make it be a certain way, it's just our job to show up daringly. Ordinary mind is Tao. If you try to direct yourself toward it, you go away from it. I guarantee if you go home saying, "I'm going to bring peace and calm to my household, and it's going to be just so," you are going to go away from it. For one, they won't want to play along, and then you will tighten. If you are not in flow, the waters work against you no matter what your intention is.

"But if we do not try, how do we know that it is the Tao?" Again, Tao does not belong to knowing or to not knowing. So what does it

belong to? Nothing. Knowing is illusion. Not-knowing is blankness.

Another trap returning home is putting on the stink of Zen and being unaffected by everything. You go home and your spouse asks you what you would like to have for dinner, and you say, "I'm not attached." "Well, does pizza sound good?" "We could have pizza or not." "Well, give me some idea." "I'm not caught by ideas." "Okay. You're really starting to annoy me!" "Who's the me who's annoying you, and who's the you that's annoyed?"

If Rinzai were in the room, I know what would happen. Smack! Show up! And the world will smack us if we try to maintain a kind of knowing how things should be that separates us from life. It is not Zen to be removed. In Zen, we go home, the wife asks, "Do you want a pizza?" and we say, "Pizza would be wonderful. Delightful. Delicious!"

We embody our lives. "If you really attain to the Tao of no-doubt, it is like the great void, so vast and boundless."

I hope everyone here has gotten a taste of how tiny our lives are, not in a diminished or dismissive way, but just tiny against that which is so vast and boundless. Can we carry that out into the world with us so that there's no longer a question of right or wrong or this or that but just respond from our everyday, ordinary mind? It is said, "Before enlightenment? Carry water, chop wood. After enlightenment? Carry water, chop wood." How is it different? Don't think. Just throw your whole body into it just as you threw your whole body into sesshin, throwing your whole body into the next thing, showing up, being present, and letting your heart crack open and never stopping looking, looking, looking and responding, responding, responding.

In coming to sesshin, we've ascended the peak, but our practice is not about staying on the peak. We move beyond the peak and descend, go to K-Mart, buy the supplies, smile at the clerk.

"If there's no vain cloud in your mind, this is a good season." This sesshin has been a good season for me, and may we all have a good season departing sesshin.

Closing Incense Poem

Autumn Sesshin 2017

A tranquil wind rustles the trees

Autumn leaves not yet descending.

*Facing the Great Matter
on the sublime peak*

Who hears the dying chorus?

Crow caws. Lightning flashes.

Jukai Ceremony

Jukai (受戒 – *Precept Receiver*) candidates need to petition in writing to the Abbot 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 weeklong sesshins), taken two precept classes or completed a course of equivalent study, must be regular financial supporters of the temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha), working to live our Great Vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate. At the ceremony candidates take the [Precepts and Four Bodhisattva Vows](#), and receive a rakusu and a dharma name.

On the first full day of Autumn Sesshin, Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017, Anil Singh-Molares did Jukai (Precept and Dharma Name Ceremony). He began training with Eido Shimano in 1982, practiced on his own for many years and has been training at Chobo-Ji for more than six months.

Here are some of Anil's own words on why he felt ready to do this ceremony:

My story with Buddhism dates back 37 years, to a freshman class at the University of Rochester called "Gods and Buddhas" where I read Walpola Rahula's [What the Buddha Taught](#), to this day the single most influential book of my lifetime. As I leafed through it carefully, at the tender age of 17, I recognized myself in it and the teachings of the Buddha. I had found myself.

Everything made sense: the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Buddha's analysis of Dukkha. Following this Path made eminent sense.

Another book that I read in that course, immediately following "What the Buddha Taught," was Philip Kapleau's [The Three Pillars of Zen](#), which completed my initial introduction to Buddhism.

I promptly took to researching and investigating the history of Zen with a vengeance, consuming and devouring every book on the subject I could get my hands on, dozens and dozens of such books in a very short period of time. And then, imagine my surprise when I discovered that Philip Kapleau was based in Rochester and ran a Zen Center there! Having tried unsuccessfully to meditate on my own, off to the Rochester Zen Center I went. Bodhin, one of Kapleau's chief attendants, sat down with 5 or 6 of us and taught me how to sit Zazen.



Since that day in the fall of 1980, I have missed but a handful of days of sitting. I count Zazen as the most constant discipline of my entire life, and one that has helped me pull through every thicket, large and small, that I have ever encountered: depressions, addictions, heartbreaks, professional challenges of all kinds, fears, loss, hurt, pain...all have been made right by this singular practice.

And although I have explored many manifestations of Buddhism, I have never wavered from my dedication to the Zen form. In 1982, I began sitting at New York Zendo with Eido Shimano Roshi's sangha. I became quite dedicated to that group, and its upstate New York sister Zendo, Dai Bosatsu, and started sitting quite intently

and with great zeal and determination, through several sesshins, retreats, and morning practices in tandem with my martial arts training.

I resolved to become a monk, and announced my intention to Eido, and then went off the deep end at Rohatsu in 1985. The rigor of endless 45 minute sits, the pain, confusion and hallucinations of those times led me to leave the monastery in the middle of the night on what I believe was the fourth day of Rohatsu. I will always remember the startling clarity of the many miles walk back to Livingston manor, the drops falling off leaves, my footsteps as I walked the road, and my heightened sense of everything.

I had also grown uncomfortable with many of Eido's indiscretions, well known even then (though I had always thought of them as consensual so wasn't aware of his very serious transgressions in this area until much later). So as I walked away that morning from DBZ, I also walked away from any form of "institutional Zen" for well over 30 years.

I preserved the form in my own solitary practice, sitting diligently and assiduously for those three decades, reciting my vows every morning, and chanting sutras. And it preserved and protected me. I tried to live by those ethical tenets, sometimes with great fluidity and alignment, and sometimes with enormous difficulty and much struggling...

Then three years ago, I committed and resolved to cleaning myself up completely, and decided to go on a 1000 day campaign, forsaking various beloved mood enhancers. I disciplined myself, lost 45 pounds, renewed and deepened my vows, and my practice started to get even more intensely focused, as I started to fall into greater and greater alignment.

This corresponded with my growing morning visits to Chobo-Ji, and to my "testing" what being involved with a Buddhist community again after so many years in happy solitude might feel like. After playing with that for a while, I decided to take the additional step of going back to a sesshin, which felt reasonably comfortable to me. From this I have

rediscovered my commitment to the more traditional Zen form, to the awareness that we are all interdependent and that I might be able to benefit more people by engaging more intimately with a particular sangha beyond the one I normally connect with (my own large family, and the spiritual directors I am privileged to encounter in my professional role).

Joining Chobo-Ji as a member 6 months ago, however, was hard. Putting the application in the bowl over there initially filled me with great doubt and queasiness. But my aversion and reluctance has been overcome, so here I am today.

I trust Genjo, and I don't trust easily. But after a five year evaluation, I appreciate his steadiness, focus, commitment and kindness. I like ritual and I believe there is great value in the traditional Zen form, and I am ready to engage more deeply with it. To help others, and to help myself thereby. To fulfill my longstanding vows. To ideally be able to benefit a few other beings in greater measure. And to enter into some greater communion with all of you.

When asked about what sentiment Anil would like for his Dharma name he talked about how the word *Anil* in Sanskrit means "wind" and that he always heard the Universe first and foremost in the wind. Genjo Osho gave Anil as his new Dharma name: Sei (静) - Fu (風), Tranquil - Wind.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Dec. 2 - 10

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a *deposit and application* by Nov. 25, 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.

The cost of sesshin is \$440 (less one month's dues for members). We will leave from Chobo-Ji, on 12/02, by 3pm with informal supper, introductions and orientation to follow upon arrival at the

[Gwinwood Conference Center](#) in Lacey, WA, near Olympia (6013 30th Ave SE Lacey, WA 98503). Sesshin concludes the morning of Sunday, Dec.10 around 10 AM. Departure flights should be made for no earlier than 3 PM, 12/10. Please bring a sleeping bag, toiletries, sitting clothes with layers, work clothes and a towel.

From the North:

Take I-5 South to Exit 109 Martin Way. Turn right onto Martin Way and take immediate left onto College St. Turn left on Lacey Blvd (One Way). Follow directions below.

From the South:

Take I-5 North to Exit 107 Pacific Ave. Turn right onto Pacific Ave. Proceed through round-about as Pacific Ave becomes Lacey Blvd. Follow directions below.

From either direction:

Turn right onto Ruddell Rd. Turn left on 25th Ave. Turn right on Hicks Lake Dr follow to end and turn left onto 30th Ave. Gwinwood is at end of 30th Ave on the right.



Three Crows Dialog on the Pāramitā of Zeal: A Story of Zen Inquiry by Rev. Tendo Kirkpatrick

The sun sank between the peaks; dusk falling like a hood slipped over one's head. A small, rocky stream flowed down from the north, alongside which there was a trail. It split, one fork running west the other east, a narrow path alongside each. Where the three roads met there was a shrine to travelers and a small hut for those following the way. In the gloaming the dancing stream

echoed off the valley walls, augmented by the clacking of an occasional crow. A jingling sound up from the west fork punctuated this soundscape. A moment later it was echoed by a duplicate sound up from the east. For a time there was a jingle from the east, shortly followed by its twin from the west. When yet another similar jingling began to be heard coming from the north, the pattern was broken.

Around the bend, following the river from the north a conical straw hat bobbed into view, shortly revealing a grey robe on a man carrying a staff with seven rings. The crows that flew up as he rounded that corner would have seen coming up from the rise to the east a figure that could have been confused for his brother. The hill descends a little sharper to the west, which perhaps accounts for the delay, but shortly thereafter a third monk hove into view again hat first. The three met at the travelers' shrine. They bowed to each other. They bowed to the Bodhisattva of Travelers. They made their way into the small hut, and the sounds of the valley returned to the chatty creek and the twilight birds.

Inside there was a single room. The only feature was a central brazier above which hung a battered kettle. The three men took off their packs and sat cross-legged each in a corner of the tiny space. After some time one of them got up and built a modest fire. Taking the kettle that hung over the fire pit he exited the hut and made his way to the river. Shortly he reentered the hut and hung the kettle over the fire on a blacked iron hook. He returned to his seat. When the kettle began to sing he again rose and silently made a pot of tea. While it steeped he retrieved a bowl from his pack and his companions did likewise. The three of them placed the bowls in front of them and bowed. Getting back to his feet the monk picked up the kettle and with a bow filled each bowl with tea. He returned to his seat and with a final bow they picked up their bowls and drank.

Another of the monks rose, retrieved a small pot from his pack and poured water from the kettle and hung it from the hook over the fire. When it had reached a boil he threw in a handful of rice, raised the hook and covered the pot. He knelt by the fire frequently stirring the pot, occasionally

Continued on next page...

adding more water from the kettle. After some time he removed it from the flame and let it stand covered. When the rice had cooled sufficiently he arose and efficiently distributed it amongst the three bowls in front of each of the monks. He sat; again the three bowed and deliberately ate every grain of rice in their bowl. The first monk rose a second time and prepared tea. He poured a measure into each bowl and with a bow they drank. They set their bowls down together and made a final bow.

A few minutes later the third monk rose, gathered the bowls and made his way outside to the river. He washed each bowl, drying it on a cloth he had tucked in his sleeve and returned to the hut placing the bowls and cups behind the monk who had used them. He returned to his seat. The monks sat in silence. The fire grew low until it was only a red glow outlining three still forms.

After some time one of the monks stirred and reaching into his sleeve pulled out a small book. He opened it toward the back and with head bowed over the book read. Raising his head he began to close the book, paused and read again. With a slight shake of his head he closed the book and returned it to his sleeve. The monk, who had earlier cleaned the bowls, stirred and spoke. “You did not seem to have found much solace in your reading, brother Jisha. What was it that so confounded you?” With a quick glance at the speaker, the monk sighs and says: *Carry out a detailed investigation of dharma principles, taking awakening as your sole standard.* (p. 166)

“Ahh the *Whip*. Master Guishan’s words are well worth heeding. What brought you to turn to that specific entry and what difficulty did you encounter?”

“At times during zazen when my mind is assailed by divergent thoughts I will turn to a page by chance. Often the words will give me renewed vigor and allow me to return my mind to a single point. What Master Guishan says is all well and good, but *how?*”

“Just a few entries beyond the one you stumbled upon, is it not written: *Redouble the whip to practice zeal. Diligently seek without stopping. This is called the faculty of zeal.*” (p. 167)

Brother Monks, these are all the words we truly need. Those who have roused the aspiration for awakening, must hold on to that spark that lit the fire within. Our task is merely to rekindle that fire time and time again until we are entirely consumed. When you find yourselves distracted, unable to concentrate, that is when you bear down, doubling your efforts. This is the water that feeds all of your practices. Recall that: *The first three of the six perfections are contained within morality training. Dhyāna is contained within mind training; and prajñā is contained within wisdom training. Only zeal pervades all six perfections.* (p. 163)



The monk bows, pauses a moment, and then asks, “How is it though that we maintain such zeal? I remember well when my head was first shaved you couldn’t keep me off my cushion. I sat and sat, and sometimes my mind would settle; I’d calm down and seem to merge into my surroundings. But then the thoughts creep in, the distractions slipped past my breath and rarely would I lose myself.”

“Dear Brother Jisha it sounds as if you have not heeded Master Puyan Duan’an instructions to the sangha. Let me refresh your memory: *Do not do ‘dead’ cross-legged sitting where you fail to keep your eye on the cue [koan], where you maintain a ‘solitary stillness’ And do not do cross-legged sitting where you are minding the cue but have no sensation of indecision-and-apprehension. If you have torpor and distraction, no need to give a thought to thrusting them away. Quickly lift the cue to full awareness, shake off the defilements of*

body and mind—and be ferociously tenacious.” (p. 118)

“Brother monk it is not a matter of ‘merging with our surroundings’ or ‘settling our minds’ or forgetting our feelings in silence and illumination! We are involved in the investigation of this great matter. In order to see into this matter you must relentlessly pursue this investigation. Great Master Daihui makes quite clear how to undertake this great endeavor: *Just keep on at all times pulling the cue into full awareness. Even when conceptualization arises, it is not necessary to employ the mind to stop it—just keep your eye on the cue. When walking, pull the cue into full awareness; when sitting, pull the cue into full awareness. Continuously keep pulling the cue into full awareness. When the cue no longer has any tastiness for you at all, you’ve hit the good spot. You must never release the cue.*” (p. 78)

“This my brothers is the *paramita of zeal*: never releasing the cue. When stray thoughts arise, it isn’t a matter of squashing them down; it is a matter of returning to the cue. When you are distracted by pain, feelings, sense objects and so on, you return to the cue. As you become more mindful you will notice these wanderings before they have gone too far afield and without mental commentary return to the cue. This requires a deliberate effort for quite some time and this effort both depends upon and cultivates zeal. I am reminded of Master Guzhuo admonishing his sangha: *Great Worthies! Why is it that you don’t produce the great zeal, and deeply generate the solemn vow before the three treasures? If birth-and-death is not clear to you, and you have not yet passed through the barrier checkpoints of the patriarchs, make a vow not to come down from the mountain. Face your seven-foot sitting portion on the long platform, hang up your bowl and bag, and assume a cross-legged sitting posture like a wall thousands of feet high. For the whole of this single birth, practice the Way until you penetrate. If you do your utmost with this mind-set, you’ll never get taken in.*” (p. 120)

Silence descended over the room. The fire burned low suffusing the room with a low red glow. The only sounds are the ever-present babbling of the stream beyond the hut, and occasional pop or hiss from the fire. The monks are just shadows in the

room, indistinguishable from sacks abandoned in three corners of the room. With a start one of the monks jerks his head and blinks rapidly.

“Brother Tenzo, what is the matter?” With a hangdog expression the monk replies, “I have become overwhelmed by drowsiness and am unable to maintain focus. I’ve pushed myself for years, never slacking off, but for all my efforts I still succumb.”

For a spell the monk said nothing. He scratched the back of his head. “Hmmm”, he finally said. “Hmmmmmm.” Looking toward the sky, he continues, “Your statement brings to mind the tale of Master Xueyan Qin and his long struggle for awakening. Like you he spent years and years devoted to his practice, engaging in myriad austerities: *...for two years I hadn’t slept with my body in a horizontal position, and I was suffering from being dazed and fatigued. Thereupon in one fell swoop I gave up all of these painful practices. Two months later my prior state of health was restored due to this giving up — I was in full vigor.*”

There is a lesson here that has come down all the way from the World Honored One to the present day. To penetrate this great matter requires dedication, zeal, forbearance and letting go of many things. But we must always stay on the middle path between austerity and excess. Too far in either direction and you will not see into this great matter. Each monk must find the middle path for himself; some will require greater austerity, some less. After recovering his health Master Qin recounts an encounter with Head Monk Xiu: *Xiu said, “The true practitioner of the Way doesn’t even bother cutting his fingernails. So why would I find time for a useless conversation with you!” At that I raised an issue: “Right now I’m trying to clear up my torpor and distraction, but with no results.” Xiu said, “It’s because you’re still not fierce enough. Make your sitting cushion high, straighten up your backbone, and merge your whole body into oneness with a single cue — what torpor and distraction will there be to make into a problem?”* (p. 89)

“Heed well these words Brother Tenzo! You need to be fierce; you need to not be led astray by externalities. Start with ‘*Straighten your backbone*’ — recall Master Guzhuo instructs us thusly: ‘...assume a

cross-legged sitting posture like a wall thousands of feet high’. If you feel yourself nodding off sit even straighter! Sit wide eyed if need be and when torpor fades into the background raise your cue.”

“Is there not also a comment in the *Whip* that a certain monk stabbed his leg with an awl to keep himself awake?”

“Thus so! Some may need to go to such extremes, yet many have not had to resort to such methods. In our investigation into this great matter we must do what is required. Both of you now take heed: Your struggles are not just your own; Followers of the Way in every land throughout every time have faced the same issues, have faced the very same problems and have surmounted them. The records of the Masters of old have addressed these issues time and again. Consider well their words. Your efforts fortify your zeal and it should always be increasing. This then is how you practice: fully engaged, entirely immersed in your inquiry. This is how you shake off torpor and distraction: rouse all your zeal, put in all of your effort, be fiercely tenacious. Master Puyan Duan’an describes the fruits of such unrelenting, uncompromised practice: *If you practice in this tenacious manner, suddenly, where before the cue was not raised without your effort, now it is raised of its own accord; where before the indecision-and-apprehension did not arise without your effort, now indecision-and-apprehension arises of its own accord. When walking, you won’t know you are walking; when sitting, you won’t know you are sitting.* There will only be the probing of the sensation of indecision-and-apprehension—*solitary and distant, clear and bright. This is called “the locus of cutting off the defilements.” It is also called “the locus of the loss of self.”* (p. 118)

He clapped his hands once and with that the three of them bowed and resumed sitting with no further interruptions.

The sky was a slate grey, matching the weathered wood of the travelers’ hut. Slowly the grey lightened and edges became more defined. A beam of light from the sun broke between two hills touching color to the scene. Atop the hut three crows roused themselves, spread their wings and flew off, each following a different path into the mountains.



Bibliographic Information

All quotes taken from: [The Chan Whip Anthology: A companion to Zen Practice](#)
Jeffery L. Broughton with Elise Yoko Watanabe

The *Whip For Spurring Students Onward Through the Chan Barrier Checkpoints*, was a Late Ming Dynasty compilation by Yunqui Zhuhong. It was a small book to be kept in a monk’s sleeve and read when they find their zeal flagging. The book contained quotes from across the history of Chan and concluded with a section of sutra quotes that provided a historical basis for the Chan teachings. The book contained much in the way of personal anecdotes, stories, exhortations, sayings and the like intended to, as the translator puts it, “...address practitioners directly, providing not just method, but morale.” (p. 2)

Holiday Notes...

**Zendo closed for holidays
Dec. 25 - Jan. 1st**

**Toya (Winter Solstice party to
“break all rules”) Saturday,
Dec. 30th, 6-9pm**

**New Year’s Day Celebration
and Potluck, 10am - noon**

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, 7:30pm: 11/19, 11/26, 12/17, 1/7, 1/21, 2/4, 2/18, 3/4, 3/18

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45pm (except 12/6 & 12/27)

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

Board Meeting ...

100 Meals a Month for homeless – cook party ...

Faith Action Network Annual Dinner ...

Rohatsu Sesshin at [Gwinwood Center](#) (Zendo CLOSED) ...

100 Meals a Month for homeless – cook party ...

Zendo CLOSED for Holidays ...

Toya Party ...

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

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

NVC as a Spiritual Practice Workshop ...

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

Winter Odayaka Sesshin ...

Nov. 12, 5am - 11:15am

Nov. 12, 11:30am - 1:30pm

Nov. 18, 9am - noon

Nov. 19, 4:30-8:30pm

Dec. 2 - Dec. 10

Dec. 16, 9am - noon

Dec. 25 - Morning Jan. 1st, 2018

Dec. 30, 6-9pm

Jan. 1, 10am - noon

Jan. 14, 5am - 11:15am

Jan. 20, 9:30am - 4:30pm

Feb. 11, 5am - 11:15am

Feb. 16 - Feb. 18

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Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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