



# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

As I write this there is a bit of snow on the ground and a blast of cold air from the north. I just heard a few days ago that Eido Shimano, who was instrumental in building [Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji](#), has died in Japan of pneumonia. He was 85 years old. We first met in Japan at Ryutaku-Ji in 1981 and I actively trained with him from 1996 to 2010. He named me as a Dharma Heir in the Rinzai lineage 10 years ago and I will be forever grateful for the inspiration he shared about the ancient Zen masters. Despite [the great harm he caused to many](#) in his own sangha and indirectly to me, who believed his denials, he was one of the greatest catalysts of growth in my life. Hence, I have very conflicted feelings about him.

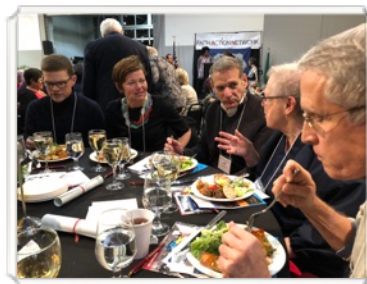


Eido Shimano has proved to be an enigma to me, which echoes what he said about his own teacher, Soen Nakagawa Roshi. I once believed he was sufficiently humbled and reformed by his past egregious behavior, but I was wrong. He was never able to sufficiently combust and compost his own suffering and the suffering he caused others; therefore, he remained caught by his sexual addiction and narcissistic personality. We are all mixed bags, and it is tragic when one's baggage dominates one's life and it's even more tragic when our own inner mess repeatedly harms others. And yet, this does not negate the good we have done. Please read Rev. Seiho's essay on his relationship to Eido Shimano later in this issue. We will hold

a 49<sup>th</sup> day memorial for him the evening of April 8.

Unfortunately, there is minimal oversight by the Maha Sangha in the USA. In Japan, whenever a priest has sufficiently embarrassed the hierarchy they are removed from office. Here in the USA, at least in Rinzai Zen circles, we don't even have the luxury of this much oversight. Eido's flaws repeatedly and inexcusably harmed the Sangha he led. I wish I had not been caught by my own admiration and idealization of him. Compassion and kindness were not missing in him, but in my view his own narcissism prevented him from exemplifying the appropriate balance needed between wisdom and compassion. It does fall to those who desire to foster Rinzai Zen to make major course corrections. Spiritual malpractice is a good term for Shimano's actions. Patriarchy must not go unquestioned and unexamined. Still I find room in my heart for the Rinzai Zen tradition. However, a much better balance between what is called wisdom and compassion must be developed for Rinzai Zen to survive or be relevant. We are working here at Chobo-Ji to foster a Rinzai Zen practice that nurtures kindness, compassion and to direct action in the world we live.

There was a whole table of Chobo-Ji members at the [Faith Action Network](#) Annual Dinner on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



It is great to see so many of us contribute and get involved in the progressive good works of this organization. Just last Tuesday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, Carolyn and I and a few hundred other FAN members from around the state were in Olympia to talk to our legislators about a slew of important issues from gun control to housing for the homeless. I sat in at the hearing of the House Judiciary Committee to abolish the death penalty, an issue on which I have been working with many others for years. The bill has already passed the State Senate and now has a chance to come to the House floor for a vote. Chobo-Ji's 100 Meals Program to make vegetarian meals for the homeless, directed by Sally Zenka and Sensei Dee Seishun Endelman, has temporarily been suspended, but I hope it will resume soon. Our efforts to reduce our temple's carbon footprint with new solar panels on our roof has earned us \$550 in City Light credit since September. Chobo-Ji has now become a Neighborhood Emergency Hub through the leadership of Edward Kyosei Beatty and other sangha members. Chobo-Ji has endorsed the [Real Rent to the Duwamish](#) Tribe movement to help support the ancestors on who's land our temple sits. We continue to work on our own inner preparedness to handle difficult conversations and situations through our NVC workshops, Ongo NVC Work Group and our newly revamped [Ethics and Restorative Practice Policy](#).

We had thirty-one people at our 2017 Rohatsu, Dec. 2 – 10. You can find pictures of this event towards the end of the [2017 Sangha](#)

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[Photos](#) slide show; we had people from six different states and two countries in attendance. It was a very powerful sesshin, and despite the fact that about a third of us got sick from either a virus or perhaps food poisoning towards the end of our time together, it was one of our deeper Rohatsus. Rev. Sendo Howells served as our Shika (host/manager) and she did a marvelous job keeping us organized. Sensei Josen served as Fusu; without her financial organizing everything would come to a halt. Rev. Kanko Kritee shared her wisdom in her Dharma Talk on “Ryutetsuma: The Old Female Buffalo” on fifth day. Rev. Tendo Kirkpatrick was a fine Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook), and was assisted admirably by Eddie Daichi Salazar. Rev. Seiho Morris served skillfully as Jikijitsu (time keeper), but got called away when his son fell and broke his knee. Our Jiki assistant, Gavin Ozan Mackay smoothly transitioned to this post in Seiho’s absence. Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez knocked it out of the park as our Densu (Chant Leader). Our Jisha, Rev. Gendo Testa and his assistants Chris Doelling and George Gibbs kept us warm and awake with plenty of tea and coffee. Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik was my Inji (Abbot Assistant), and gave a fine [Dharma Talk on second day](#). Sensei Scott Ishin Stalnack held up the background needs and left no trace. The last day we had three participants to Jukai (Precept and Dharma Name Ceremony); more about that later in this issue.

We had a fine Toya, year-end party to break all rules (we didn’t break so many), Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, and a very well attended New Year’s Day Celebration and potluck to ring in the new year with the intention to bust our collective delusions and go straight on serving all creatures great and small, animate and inanimate.



I recently returned from a very productive time and a strong five-day sesshin in Germany with 16 participants organized by [Monica Jion Winkelmann and the Bonn Sangha](#). Jion served in three posts during



sesshin, Shika, Jikijitsu and Fusu, which is a lot! If you would like to listen to my teishos from that time (recorded by Samuel Koelewijn) where I draw inspiration from the Mumonkan, Hekiganroku, Rinzaïroku and Hidden Lamp collection of koans, follow this [dropbox link](#) or email me and I will send it to you. After my time in Germany, Carolyn and I spent a week in Sicily exploring ancient [Greek temples](#), [Norman works of art](#) and my own heritage, as my great-grandmother on my father’s side was born there. We even stopped at a small seaside resort village named Marinello.



We just concluded our winter three-day Odayaka Sesshin with 20 participants. Rinzan was Shika, Daichi was Tenzo, George Kyoki was Jisha, Kyosei was Inji, Ozan was Jiki and Densu! The sesshin was smooth, grounded and strong. We had a large contingent from [Stone Blossom Sangha](#), and Qi Gong instruction from Kim Ivy.

In addition to what has already been mentioned, in this issue of Plum Mountain News you will read about the new calligraphy in the zendo (a gift from Sensei Tom Shodo DeGroot) notes from our latest Senior Student Dharma talk by Randal Daigetsu Tanabe, a transcription of my seventh day Teisho from Rohatsu, a list of new posts for Spring, and announcements for our upcoming Zen Post Workshop, Spring Intensive, Spring Sesshin and Spring Zen Intro Series.

Coming up in March there will be a Zen Post Workshop March 3<sup>rd</sup> and I will be traveling to lead a mini-sesshin in Wenatchee, where I will be conferring Sensei status for Sharon Meho Petit after 16 years of Zen practice. I’ll be leading additional mini-sesshins in Walla Walla and San Diego in April. We will celebrate the Buddha’s Birthday the morning of Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup> during our April Zazenkai, and our Annual Meeting will follow these events at 11:45 AM. You can find a more complete calendar on the back page. Please stay warm and know that I’m looking forward to training with you as the new shoots begin to spring up. Take care.

With gassho,  
*Genjo*

## Restorative Practices

update by Sally Zenka Metcalf

In January, Marcia Christen, our Restorative Practices advisor, lead a gathering of eleven Chobo-Ji folks in part two of the basic Non Violent Communication (NVC) training begun in our September workshop. January participants were intrigued with building upon investigations into feelings and needs; and boldly took on the other two essential NVC skills: observations and requests. They sound a lot easier than they are! This gave us the full groundwork for connected communication through self-awareness (self-empathy), empathy (listening), and speaking authentically. It also deepened our understanding of the way the NVC form supports compassion, shared power, and the awareness of interdependence.

Along with the workshops, a committed group of ten Ongo Group attendees and two additional Ongo Buddy Practice friends who aren’t able to attend the Thursday evening meeting times are just now finishing the twelve lessons in the Ongo Book. What’s next for this group? That’s up for discussion at our last meeting on March 1. We seem to be interested in more active role-playing. Ongo and Zen are a match in that they’re both about practice, practice, practice—in each case, this practice is profoundly transcendent and boldly opens the heart.



I don't know about other attendees to workshops and Ongo, but I was often in awe of the courage and dedication of the people in the room to reach for this deeply loving way of connecting with others. It takes a major shift in the fundamental way we see each other and ourselves. "It's a high bar to reach," as one participant pointed out. For the benefit of Chobo-Ji's community life, we will keep on reaching.

## Concerning Eido

Shimano

essay by Rev. Seiho Morris

On February 18th, 2018, Muishitsu Eido Tai Shimano, Roshi died of complications related to pneumonia. Almost instantly—reflexively— with the announcement of his death, there were the now common postings when Eido Roshi's name comes up anywhere. The links to the Shimano Archive— then article entitled the "Zen Predator of the Upper Eastside—" to note what begins as sexual misconduct— to the words- sexual predator— abuser— which I've often seen escalated the narrative— flawed— manipulative— vindictive— narcissist— pathological— one person online stated— "stabbed a knife into me (psychologically)—" and ego driven power and corruption. This culminated into one particular teacher referring to him as "evil." This pattern is familiar and something I've seen before. It wasn't uncommon— it wasn't unfamiliar. And as usual, it was open-ended condemnation without dealing with something extremely obvious— This went on for decades, like most people in positions of power— people knew— just like Harvey Weinstein, in the movie industry— but didn't know how to deal with it— intentionally or unintentionally didn't respond, because of being harmfully enmeshed with him— or simply confused which led to a kind of "frozen," reaction perhaps assuming "Some grown ups will step in and fix this broken situation."

The choice to write how I personally relate to Eido Roshi was sparked by a friend from another sangha. He wrote, "What a strange guy— years of dedicated Zen practice as well as a pretty bad habit of having sex with lots of emotionally unstable women. He might have stained the reputation of Rinzaï Zen in

the West, but maybe that's what he wanted." That was pretty speculative and kind of saying, "I don't know how to make sense of this." There's been a very singular perspective of Eido Roshi, but today I would like to share mine, based on my direct experience with him, that I hope is perceived as a wider view than what I've heard from others including some Zen teachers in the American Zen Teachers Association (AZTA).

Going from here, I ask— beg— that you read what I'm about to say in its entirety. I don't think I'm right or wrong— this is my perspective. This comes from a place of training with Eido Roshi, being a recovering addict for thirty years at this point, having worked with addicts and those with behavioral health issues professionally, and how I now relate to his life and what he left in his wake. This is my current— not final understanding. Please receive what I'm about to say in this spirit.



When I arrived at Dai-Bosatsu Zendo, I was pretty young. I was about twenty. I had been clean from drugs, in recovery for about 3 or 4 years. I hadn't heard about any of Eido Roshi's sexual acting out with students. In fact though I'd heard of him and looked forward to training with him, the people I dealt with the most was Junpo Denis Kelly who was the Vice-Abbott and my closer more inspirational relationship with Seigan Ed Glassing, who helped me a lot while I was there. There were many others I know, lived and practiced with there, but though those relationships were meaningful, they were also peripheral. I was a kid, just doing what I was doing. To dramatically abbreviate the time and story, one day it came up that Junpo now recognized as a "Roshi," we actually called him Junpo-shi was leaving DBZ. It came out... I can't remember the precise moment that Eido Roshi had an "Affair," with female student. I was

shocked— stunned— 100% confused. How could someone that I looked up too... revered— admired— respected without question— a monk— a priest— a husband to Aiho-san— someone of incredible influence and stature— a so-called "Awakened" person do such a thing? Then the same day, as things were swirling, I found out that it hadn't been the first time. There had been many others. For me it was a kind of meltdown. Eventually, unable to resolve the confusion, I fled. Down the road, I returned hoping for better, assuming things had been "Fixed." There was a new vice-abbot Jiro Affable and I expected— wrongly for things to be different. Sometime later another affair and I left again, totally shaken, and this time angry. Eido Roshi's behavior interfered with a personal life mission I held for myself to become a Zen monk.

Eventually I returned firmly on the path of Zen, through a chance interaction with Genjo Marinello, Osho who was a student of a "rehabbed," Eido Roshi. I'd done some checking and heard since that last particular go round, he'd "Gotten his act together." Despite this, I didn't have a particular comfort with him and was far more comfortable with Genjo Osho. For me and me alone, Genjo Osho was the only teacher I'd met during that long gap that expressed the elegance, clarity and clearness Eido Roshi could verbalize. It wasn't intellectual— I can only describe as intuitive. Some time later, KAPOW, Eido did it again. I found out from Kobutsu Malone directly, who blasted me for something positive I'd said about Eido Roshi. I called Genjo Osho crying and found out it was true and I hit a personal point of disillusionment and despair. On that day, I recall Genjo Osho saying to me, "If I ever do the same thing, you need to abandon me and leave me." I told him, if you have sex with one of your students, don't worry, I won't be walking— I'll be running."

For years, though I've done many koans, there was one that I've come to again and again that I couldn't penetrate with clarity— Eido Roshi. During Zazen one day, the insight was this— "Eido Roshi is an addict. His addiction expresses itself through women. This is more than a "blind-spot—" It's his addiction spot. If the woman is 'his type,' he's triggered like an alcoholic or addict. His cycle— there's an urge... a craving starts— there's nothing in the way to stop the obsession— he loses control of this thoughts,

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that leads to setting up scenarios to support his “using,” finding ways and means to get more. People’s responses are that of an alcoholic family— some are enablers— some disablers— this results in lies and secrets. Over-moralizing and self-narration prevented his own and other’s ability to heal. Allowing for openness allows for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual integration and healing so we can live forwards, instead of always re-litigating what is “backwards.” There was crispness and clearness in my heart. Anxiety and worry dropped. I could respond to him as I would respond to any other addict. It was from a point of not caring about a person being so-called “good”, but someone with a chronic illness who needed to manage their illness like a jigsaw puzzle instead of the one trick pony... stop having sex with students. The issue was far bigger than that for Eido Roshi and he was profoundly inept at dealing with his addiction, evidenced by the path of harm he left in his wake.

Looking at the actual diagnostic criteria pertaining to addiction— especially what could be described as “sex” or “process addiction,” this is how this sort of person can look and show up: Displaying a lack of ability to set limits or boundaries on sexual urges. Experiencing negative consequences as a result of sexual behavior, such as the loss of a job, the breakup of a relationship. Experiencing a sense of shame, guilt, or self-loathing about one’s sexual (or other self-destructive) behavior, yet still being unable to stop. Engaging in frequent attempts to stop the behavior and relapsing during times of tension or distress. Disregard for right and wrong (personal values and vows). Demonstrating persistent lying or deceit to exploit others. Being callous, cynical and disrespectful of others. Using charm or wit to manipulate others for personal gain or personal pleasure. Manifesting arrogance, and a sense of superiority. Acting out sexually, without regard for how the behavior impacts others in a sincere way. When people try to interfere with activities hostility, significant irritability, agitation or aggression is expressed. Displays unnecessary risk-taking or dangerous behavior with no regard for the safety of self or others. Often find themselves in broken or abusive relationships. Fails to consider the negative consequences of behavior or learn from mistakes, being consistently irresponsible and repeatedly failing to fulfill professional obligations.

All the adjectives that I’ve personally thought, heard, shared and spoken by others at the beginning of this writing... “Sexual predator— abuser— which I’ve often seen escalated the narrative— flawed— manipulative— vindictive... narcissist... pathological— evil—” were his personal “symptoms,” of his addiction. They led to incredible harm, personal and other unmanageability that’s described in “Step One,” of the Twelve Step Programs. Like Step Two of the Twelve Steps, did he have a relationship with a power greater than his ego that could restore him to soundness of mind? I could say absolutely. I can say this based on direct experience. The problem was, it was very inconsistent. In Step Three where it’s talking about making a decision to turn his will and life over to the Dharma, his ego kept taking it back, thinking it would be different. He wasn’t taking a consistent and clear inventory and was disconnected from the exact nature of what was wrong with him, as Twelve Step or Refuge Recovery describes. These causes and conditions, left him in a personal position that he was solely responsible for his oftentimes being in “Strategic retreat,” instead of authentic surrender— defined as making himself available to the process of healing and integration.



Like I said before, addiction is a jigsaw puzzle. There wasn’t a structure like Twelve Step Programs being accessed that could help, manage and maintain what is known in recovery programs as being “right sized.” In this his board of directors and students either failed to help him or simply didn’t understand what was being seen, looked at or experienced. Given that when he was acting from his addiction, he was very actively circumventing any safeguards or agreements

put in place. There was a lack in the skill-set to help him and/or the structures were not significant enough to limit or stop him, when his addiction was active and he was on a run. Put another way, people might have been trying to hide the bottles, take his car keys, block the door by sending him off to Japan for extended periods of time (which I know factually some tried to do), but the problem was, he also had some secret tunnel to pursue his behavior (sex/process addiction), even when people did try to intervene, doing the so-called “right,” thing. In Twelve Step recovery we call this a reservation. The person says that they want to get clean, but they haven’t been fully honest or truthful about where they’re at or what’s going on. The parts that they hold back and aren’t transparent about usually have the effect of being a pulled pin on an old grenade that blows up on the person and others.

Looking back, it would seem that as a person with a very poorly treated disease, his potential for continuous and sustained recovery, if it was being measured by not sexually acting out with students was basically extremely low. I distinctly recall, Genjo Osho describing his addiction as a boulder in the stream of Dharma. Miraculously, for a time you think the boulder is moving in the “right,” direction, but at some point the boulder would get stuck and stop moving, ending up in the same scenario as before, with different names but the same kind of harm.

The above said, it’s not enough to be able to throw around inflammatory, incendiary, knee jerk nouns and adjectives. If we don’t learn to effectively deal with the nouns and adjectives, when they present themselves, we’ll find ourselves right in the same spot. In the Zen world alone just look at Maezumi Roshi, Sasaki Roshi, Baker Roshi, Genpo Roshi just to name a few off the top of my head. Where I currently train there was a fellow ordained that began a relationship with one of his students... while married... while actively working on some sort of project ironically that would out teachers who slept with their students. We have work to do, or the problems will continue. It left many people stunned.

I worked in the field of behavioral health and addictions treatment in the State of Maryland. There are many facilities, both inpatient and outpatient, including therapist, counselors, doctors and nurses within; we all



subscribe to a universal code of conduct and ethics. If you break those codes, there is a board you meet with. Issues are examined and discussed and decisions are rendered. One particular counselor I knew had his license pulled and could no longer move around to facilities and prey on patients. The person died last year, but to this day, if you mention his name, you will hear two very distinct things. The first is that he was a tremendous counselor that could reach the most difficult of patients and help them on the path to recovery. The second is, if he ran into a woman that was his 'type,' even if she had one day clean, he could not help himself to not chase after her, unless he was seriously "working," and applying a program of recovery. He left his clinical teams consistently sad and disappointed, until the board pulled his license.

I know that the idea of setting up a similar type board or function came up in the AZTA, some time ago. They decided to do nothing about the issue of sexual or other misconduct, refusing to come up with a unified standard for dealing with such challenges. This refusal has the potential result of leaving students and people simply interested in Zen Buddhism vulnerable to arbitrary predilections of Roshis and Oshos, strikingly similar to that of Eido Roshi and people who have untreated addictions or behaviors that could harm sangha members. This is a koan that these spiritual leaders are currently failing with regards to Zen in America. This is something that can be rectified in numerous ways. It requires more than talk, which is perfect for Zen. It's not what we can say. It's about what we are determined to do, not just as individuals, but as a collective Maha Sangha—entire spiritual community, in support of authenticity and integrity.

Afterward: On the day, Genjo Osho gave me my ordination vows as a monk and priest, we were sitting alone, in the dokusan (private meeting) room at Chobo-Ji. My mother was in the zendo with my two children, ex-wife, friends and sangha. It was a day for completing some promises that I'd made to myself, the day I entered Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji, more than twenty years prior. He looked me in the eye. He asked, "Seiho... do you know whose robe this is?" I responded, "Yes. It once belonged to Eido Roshi. I recognize it." Genjo Osho replied, "Know that this robe represents what is best in him and not his worst." Hearing this I felt a

shudder move through my body. I resolved to deal with the DNA and karma of Eido Roshi much in the way of dealing with my own alcoholic father who abused me physically when I was a kid. I remember the day my dad showed up like a dad and played baseball with me at a place called Frick Park in Swissvale, where I grew up in Pittsburgh, prior to moving to Maryland. In the time after Eido Roshi, when I faced a lot of temptation to go against my value system, I would actively talk with my recovery friends but also say inwardly— "Make your choice 180 degrees opposite of what your dad and Eido would choose. That was usually the "right," answer. That served me well. I hate neither my father, Eido Roshi or anyone else for that matter. I hate and despise some of the things that they've done, but remember they did some things right too— much like myself, when I was in active addiction related to drugs as a teenager.

You hear a lot about the people that were hurt by Muishitsu Eido Tai Shimano, Roshi. It would not be an honest story, if we didn't have the capacity to admit that there were some people that he helped too. I am one of those people.

## Spring Sesshin March 23<sup>rd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a **deposit (\$75) and application by March 18**, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Please drop it by or mail it.

The cost of sesshin is \$250 (less dues for this month). Sesshin will start Friday evening, 3/23, 5:30pm with informal supper, introductions and orientation. Sesshin from Saturday to the following Thursday runs from 5am-10pm. 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. The final Friday, 3/30, begins at 5am and concludes around 10am.

## Khujjuttara Teaches the Dharma

### The Hidden Lamp

*India, Six Century BCE - Genjo's Teisho  
7th day of Rohatsu Sesshin, 2017*

CASE: Khujjuttara was a slave woman in the palace of Queen Samavati. Every day the queen gave her eight coins to buy flowers to decorate the palace, but Khujjuttara would only use four of them for flowers and would keep the others for herself. One day, at the place where she bought the flowers, she happened to hear the Buddha give a discourse. His teaching penetrated her heart and she became a stream enterer, the first stage of awakening. Full of joy, she spent all the money she had saved and filled the palace with flowers. The queen asked Khujjuttara why there were so many flowers that day, and Khujjuttara told her of hearing the Buddha speak. Then she preached to Samavati and to all her women attendants, and every single one was converted.

STUDY QUESTIONS: How can a limitation become exactly your liberation? After the queen asked her to return to the Buddha, did Khujjuttara go as a slave or a free person?

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The other day, I talked about different ways to ground ourselves during zazen. Each one of us probably has our own toolbox. I will share some of my tools, which you may find helpful in developing your own skillful means for plugging in to something beyond our narrow egoistic view and our attachments to a separate sense of self.

You and I are each just a lump of clay atop this planet, Mother Earth. Often as I take my seat for zazen, I feel naturally a part of the earth. There's no separation. As I have said many times, I encourage those doing zazen to feel their tailbone plunged into the center of earth, at least that's how I envision it. Also taking our seat, I advise each of us to stretch our spine towards the heavens, like raising an antenna. Then we can begin to notice the nexus created between heaven and earth at our center of gravity or lower *tanden*. From this resting, attentive position,

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I've talked about how we can encourage our mind's eye to look beyond our narrow egoistic focus about yesterday, today and tomorrow, to expand outward and embrace first the zendo, then the region, the planet, the solar system, the galaxy, and finally the universe. Using this expanding visualization, we arrive to what I've come to call the Tathagata's view. On the occasions when this pathway works for me, the sentiment that bubbles up is exactly what's found in the concluding four lines of the Diamond Sutra. I've found similar verses written by Jewish, Sufi, and Christian mystics. All mystics seem to say the same thing. It doesn't matter what time or culture, whether it's an indigenous aboriginal religion or one of the great world religions, mystics speak the same language. In my view, they all come to the same insights.

We can also work to expand our awareness inward and downward. We are, after all, seamless and inseparable from an indivisible multi-dimensional reality inclusive of heaven and earth, form and formlessness. The outward relative forms of the universe are sometimes thought of as masculine, and the inward absolute dimensions of formlessness as more feminine, but they're different sides of the same coin. We can direct our mind's eye deep into the dark, moist, womb-like mother earth. While doing zazen before falling away into the vast void that is bottomless, there is a place where I feel as though I become conscious of the earth. I know this is anthropomorphizing, but it feels as though I can sense what she's saying. Is this just my imagining or am I really feeling something? The planet does feel motherly, very accepting, and my sense is that she sees all her kids (naked apes) running around and says to herself, "I hope they survive their adolescence!" My sense is that she is very, very forgiving, but every now and then she cautions, "Really? You are injecting liquid at high pressure into subterranean boreholes to force open existing fissures to extract oil or gas? Not a good idea!" or "Really? You are loading the oceans with used plastic? Oh dear!" Or "Really? You are adding all that carbon dioxide to the atmosphere? Don't you see you're going to cook yourselves!" In addition, I sense that she also says with reluctance and forgiveness, "I've seen worse."

What does she think of our deep sea oil drilling? I hear, "Oh Please ..." and then a sad moan. And yet I sense she is without any judgment. She is like any mother who wants her offspring to succeed. We are her children. She waits for us to grow up and realize our potential to be the voice of the dharma, and she's seen some examples.

The earth has been around for four and a half billion years. As a species, we've been around for maybe two hundred thousand years. Our species left the continent of Africa from forty to fifty thousand years ago. We began making "permanent" structures around twelve thousand years ago. It took a long time to give birth to us, and we're still so young. The second influx of humankind on to this continent saw the first humans on this continent and thought these natives were savages. They knew nothing about owning land. The "savages" said, "owning land? What kind of crazy upside down idea is this?"

A couple of years ago I was in South Dakota doing a Zen Peacemakers council with the Lakota indigenous people and guests from all over the world. Some guests came from as far away as Australia and Europe. We were gathering on land that was purchased by the tribes, land that even the Supreme Court says was rightful theirs.



Nevertheless, the tribes had to pool their money to buy back a bit of the land that legally should have already been returned to them. At one of the councils, there was a scholar of the Lakota who had translated a letter from the tribes written about 100 years ago. Paraphrasing what I recall the letter said, "We are being displaced by this invasion of colonizers, and all seems pretty hopeless right now, but surely they can't last. These invaders cheat, steal, rape women and the land. They don't know how

to tell the truth and they lay waste to everything. They're like locusts. They just can't last. Surely a hundred or more years from now our nations will rise again."

I think the first wave of humanity to reach this continent was more conscious of, and in communion with Mother Earth. Somehow our Western Culture has lost our deep communion with the environment. Of course I recognize that the first peoples and nations fought each other and had many foibles and shortcomings, but in general, they communed more holistically with Mother Earth than we colonizers are doing.

I'm excited about the Zen stories I find in [The Hidden Lamp](#) because it's much easier to hear the sacred feminine in them. These stories, of course, have always been a part of our tradition, but some have been difficult to find, and the fact that they are collected here together warms my heart. The story we are reading about today goes back to the 6th Century BCE, right back to the time of the historical Buddha. It is my hope that this book is bringing some balance to our particular, peculiar, heavily patriarchal lineage, and more widely to Buddhism and the whole planet.

In 2014 I visited Rwanda, which, as you know, was racked by genocide just over twenty years ago. One of the important steps the Rwandan people have taken to facilitate recovery is to constitutionally mandate that at least 30% of the parliamentary legislators be women. Their current Parliamentary elections ushered in a record-breaking 64 percent of seats won by women candidates. Of course, anybody male or female can be an asshole, but what a great idea, and when I was there it was easy to see and feel how women in power have had powerful positive influence.

Khujjuttara was a slave in the palace of Queen Samavati. She was given eight coins to buy flowers to decorate the palace every day and would only use four of them for flowers and would keep the others. Evidently, as we learn later in the story, she saved all the ones that she kept. She didn't spend them. Obviously, she wasn't in any way frivolous with what she stole. So what was she saving them for? Perhaps she was saving them with the thought that one day she would have enough to run away and support herself. Was she saving them in the



hope of buying her freedom? Or was she saving them as a safety blanket in case the queen died and no one would take care of her? We don't know. But we do know she kept them all; she must have been saving them for some purpose.

Then, one day while out buying flowers, she heard the Buddha give a discourse. She was so moved that she not only became a follower of Buddha, but she became a "stream enterer." That is to say she had a kensho, a sudden breakthrough or awakening. There was a shift in her consciousness, and even though she remained outwardly a slave, she found she was inwardly free. Anyone who has encountered the Way feels free. No question about it. Over time this sense of freedom wears away, which is why we come back to sesshin. But at the time of a kensho, we feel totally free, one with the universe and fearless. It's a wonderful feeling, and a number of people have broken through this Rohatsu sesshin. These kinds of breakthroughs are actually fairly common; in our tradition we say that enlightenment is as easy as picking up a bit of dust or touching the ground. Someone came to dokusan and said, "You know I think you're wrong about something. I think in two hundred years, the core of this practice and training will not have changed a bit." It is true that the practice we have right now works. Of course with time our practice must change, but it is my hope that the core will not change much. Why? Our practice brings us into a communion beyond our attachment to our ideas of self and other. Here, right where we are, we can encounter the sacred masculine and the sacred feminine and transcend all dualities. And when we do, we feel totally free and fearless. As Zen Master Mumon tells us, we become ready to snatch the sword right out of the hands of General Kahn.

Feeling free and confident in her experience, Khujjuttara no longer needed to cling to all the coins that she had stolen. She was not worried about the future anymore. She no longer needed to buy her freedom, because she already had it. So she took her savings and flooded the palace with flowers. "What's this all about?" asked the queen. Khujjuttara related the joy of hearing

the Buddha's discourse. At this point we find out who's really free and who isn't. The queen couldn't leave the palace. Being the king's consort, she was restricted to the palace grounds and asked Khujjuttara, "Oh will you please go outside and listen for us?" Khujjuttara happily went to hear more of the Buddha's discourses. She listens so carefully that she can repeat every word. One might say, she listens passionately enough to capture or steal the Buddha's understanding and she becomes renowned for her knowledge of Buddhist canon and for her own ability to preach the Dharma.

I have to say this reminds me of my relationship with our founding abbot Genki Takabayashi. I stole a lot from him. To the extent that you enjoy my teishos, please remember that I learned the art of it from



him. I learned how to cook from him. I learned how to sweep and tend a garden from him. I learned how to whisk a bowl of tea from him. I learned how to do calligraphy from him. And it's probably also true I picked up some bad habits from him.

I stole a lot from him, and I freely give it back. I don't have to save any of it. The same thing is true with Eido Shimano. His ability to see into the heart of the ancestors of our lineage was incredible. And his ability to translate it into colloquial English was miraculous. I stole what I could from listening year after year to his teishos and doing koan study with him. Now I work to freely share it and give it to you, but I hope without the great harm he also caused his own sangha. When you hear me say in

dokusan, "Isn't there anything more?" "Could you look at it another way?" "Putting that aside, how about this?" these kinds of prompts for more inquiry come from Eido Shimano.

Undoubtedly, I picked up some bad habits from my teachers, mentors and parents, and, to the extent that I am aware of them, I've been sorting through and combusting them. Moreover, we all bring some bad habits from our own family of origin. For better and worse, we are all a compilation of every significant other that we've ever been with. Everyone who has ever been significant in our lives is a part of us in so many ways. Of course, we're seamlessly a part of each other anyway, but undoubtedly we absorb through osmosis more from those most significant in our life, and we all have to be careful about what we take in!

It's our job to try and sift and sort through what we have absorbed from our most significant relationships. We all must work to discern what can freely be passed on, and what must be processed, combusted and not passed on. It falls to us to do the best we can to properly digest what we have absorbed from our lineage of significant others. It is easy to pass on what has already been well digested to the next generation. It is much more difficult not to pass on what is not yet sufficiently processed.

Our whole life is but a brief bubble of time. Our species is extremely young. We've got a lot of learning to do. Each of us must do our best and sort through what should be passed on and what should not. This is our responsibility for this generation and the next. If enough of us are not taking this responsibility seriously, our adolescent species will never reach adulthood.

The historical Buddha joyfully said, "Take what works and leave the rest. Don't swallow it whole." As you may know, I've been a practicing psychotherapist for 25 years. I've studied Freud, he got so much right, and he was so insistent about the stuff he got wrong. It's really annoying. He would say something like, "If you don't

*Continued on next page...*

accept all of my theory, you are missing the boat.” In my view, at least a quarter of his theory is complete crap. But there was so much he got right: what happens to us in our very early development matters a lot; dreams are a royal road to the unconscious; deep listening is really helpful; and spontaneous free association from a gentle prod can produce a lot. Koans are like this. We are given a koan and then we start to free associate about what the koan might be. With time we usually have a clear insight to what the koan is pointing at.

Koans prod us into having insights. Some insights are directly related to what the koan is pointing at, others are obscurely related, but all insights tell us something about the human condition or the nature of reality. I try to never reject anyone’s insight. I might say, “That’s not what this koan is pointing at, but you found a perfectly good way to make use of this koan. Great! Wonderful. Now, let’s keep using the same tool until you are able to turn the rock over in another way.” Koan training is like learning another language, and a different and hopefully more flexible way to view the world. As we grow more flexible through our own careful exploration and inner investigation, the heart-mind of the sacred masculine and feminine, form and formlessness, absolute and relative becomes wonderfully bright and clear.

How can a limitation exactly become your liberation? When we learn to find liberation in the midst of our limitations that is our liberation! After the queen asked her to return to the Buddha was Khujjuttara a slave or a free person? Khujjuttara was free from the moment she had her own shift.

It’s okay to steal if you give it all back. Please steal insights from these stories and koans. Steal freely from the tradition, form and from me. Take what you can, and give it back freely in your daily life. Khujjuttara broke through her need to steal and save money; she realized she was already free just as she was. Moreover, she was free to give what little she had away without worry because, realizing her innate inner freedom, she knew that we are all plugged in to something vast and boundless.

## Closing Incense Poem

Rohatsu Sesshin 2017

*A full moon rises above the misty lake.*

*Raven inquires,  
“Who is deeply sitting?”*

*Elder trees softly dripping dew.*

*Cat prowls the forest path.*

*Fog adjoins the earth.*

*The veil lifts with the break of dawn.*

## 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 eight day of Rohatsu Sesshin, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2017, three sangha members did Jukai (Precept and Dharma Name Ceremony). First was David Eraker, who has been training on and off for some years with us.

After David’s first Rohatsu in 2016 he wrote: “the bottom fell out for me and a substantial, deep, emotional release occurred. The residue included something along the lines of a new permission to not give a shit about what I could not change in the past and an invitation to dig into the richness of what I was actually experiencing in real time instead. My summery of the second to last day was:



Strong rain;  
Long Past;  
Washed away;  
Essence remains;  
Now THIS!

...I’m just at a novice stage, but certainly emboldened to continue based on a faith in the Rinzaï process.” About six months later he wrote: “it’s amazing how sitting still and not moving starts to make a whole lot of sense. And as far as the various flavors of sitting that one could latch onto, the strong form of Rinzaï practice resonates with me. I heard a Chobo-Ji talk one time where getting introduced to Zen was likened to drowning in a deserted ocean, struggling to stay afloat and then coming up for air in the middle of a discarded life preserver. How miraculously lucky indeed.”

I gave David the following Dharma name:  
Tai - Za (泰座): Great Peace - Sitting.

Second to receive Jukai was Chris Doelling. She has been practicing meditation since 1996 and started studying Tibetan Buddhism in 1997. Eventually she traveled over to Nepal and India where she was able to study more traditional forms, ritual and do retreat. She also has done Vipassana retreats. She writes in her Jukai petition letter:

*When it comes to Dharma, call me superstitious, but I have had a lot of luck finding access to it again and again, maybe it is auspicious circumstance? I feel that this auspicious circumstance applies to Chobo-Ji appearing on Beacon Hill when I needed it. After I returned from my last trip in Asia, I found out that Beacon Hill, the*





*neighborhood I called my home since 2001, had a small Buddhist center and not only this it was a mere 2.5 minutes from my house. So, if I was serious about focusing on the practice side of Dharma, well here was a place I could get to in a blizzard, that had daily morning meditations; something I think is pretty rare...*

*I came to Chobo-Ji pretty regularly that first year, but then my discipline started slipping again. I recommitted myself last year, and then the elections happened, and I found new motivation to practice. It feels like there is a lot of uncertainty now around the USA and the world... I hope to gain control of how well trained my mind is and my perception of the basic nature of reality. I am sure it will take a few lifetimes, but the more I work on my mind, the less I will add to the confusion and disturbance around me, maybe the more help I will be.*

*I am particularly drawn to Chobo-Ji, and feel I've formed a connection with the center because there is such a clear focus on practice. And the more I learn about the forms, I realize how much power they have when upheld to create a safe space and a reliable space to sit and practice. It is also the only center I've gone to in the USA where there were so many people who'd been doing Zen practice for 30 years or more...*

*So far with Chobo-Ji I have done two Rohatsus, 2017 will be my third. I did not expect a retreat that was only eight days long to pack such a punch. I learned it really is a group retreat in the full sense of the word. I was surprised that almost every waking moment we participate as harmoniously as we can doing everything together...*

*So this is why I would like to apply for jukai, to make a public commitment to the Mahayana path, but also because I feel particularly connected to Chobo-Ji. I am grateful for the opportunity you Genjo and the senior students of the center have given me, creating such a stable, safe and comforting container, to work on my mind. I have not only been able to sit here and work on personal issues and struggles with the support, but I have also been able to push beyond this into deeper levels of what my experience as a human on this planet is. Thank you for your consideration.*

When I asked about an image for her Dharma name she said, "The image of Buddha touching the earth, and that needing to be his only witness, seems really powerful." I gave Chris the Dharma Name Do - Setsu (土 接) meaning Earth - Adjoined.

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The third person to do Jukai on this day was George Gibbs. Here is some of what George had to say in his Jukai petition letter:

*I see Jukai as a celebration of a budding spiritual life. Further, Jukai will serve as a formal statement of my commitment to the Chobo-Ji Sangha and to Zen. Doing Jukai certainly is not a personal requirement, but rather a wonderful demonstration of commitment that I wish to make before my family and my community... It feels natural to practice with the sangha, and Chobo-Ji feels like home. It's been a wonderful comfort to find refuge in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma. Though I must say that at first it all felt very foreign to me, full of mystique, and at times somewhat intimidating.*

*Over the last many months I've off and on wondered just how I ended up finding Zen, or how Zen found me. I like to think of Zen as a path, a path that continues to open up through the brush or thick forest understory once having made the decision to place one foot in front of the other. It's as though the path has always been there, waiting to be discovered...*

*At times the Dharma has seemed difficult, difficult, difficult. At times studying the Dharma is as easy as getting out of bed in the morning and feeling the soft wood floor beneath my feet. But the question before me now, doesn't seem to be a question answered in terms of difficult or easy.*

*Rather the choice of whether or not to deepen my commitment as a student of the Dharma, and a student of Rinzaï Zen in particular, is as easy as coming home. I feel that I'm coming home to the one (or the place) that's always been there for me, even if it's gone unrecognized or been neglected.*

*I remember describing my first experience of Zazen as a kind of cleansing or a stripping away, or a homecoming. I was almost immediately struck by a profound silence that seemed to sit under the stillness of the Zendo. A silence that sits between the altar and the rows of seated practitioners, amplified by the bell, and between the beats of the drum. It is in this stillness that I hear the voice of the one who's always been there for me. I hear it in the trees, in the fountain, in the sound of a hummingbird's wings, and the sound of a mountain stream. I hear it in the laughter of my son, and in the voice of my wife...*

*I feel strong and secure in my practice and wish to give back to the community of teachers and practitioners that have guided me. I would like to promote the cause of deep spiritual inquiry and faith-based non-violent direct action through my ongoing participation and financial support of Chobo-Ji...*

*I wish to be a visible member of this community, celebrating faith-based work, spiritual investigation, and promoting non-violent direct action to achieve social justice, promote environmental stewardship, and work for peace.*

*Zen feels natural to me, like an explanation or way of describing a world I've always intuited... My sincere hope is that I can hold and care for the practice container that we share, and share it with others. I wish to do my part to keep the candles lit, the incense burning, flowers at the altar, and the doors open for those who seek understanding, clarity and wisdom. I wish to extend this practice, to reach out and to receive – to meet newcomers and to welcome old friends, to invite and to share insight. I think it's natural, appropriate and correct to do Jukai. I wish to affirm commitment to the dharma, add stability to the Sangha, and share this precious jewel with others...*

*I am beginning to see my life realms not as separate spheres but as a seamless whole with the Dharma at the center of it all. Family, work, fiends and hobbies all seen as*

*Continued on next page...*



*components of an all-encompassing Zen practice, with each day presenting opportunities for discovery and fresh insight. Each day, regardless of the activity, I strive to meet others with understanding and care...*

*The truth is a complicated matter. Not telling a lie is easy enough, but so is not telling the truth. Seeing the truth, learning to cultivate deep Truth, it seems is a complex, life-long endeavor that is often clouded by misperception, family of origin bias, and ego. I'm reminded of this when I learn of hate speech and the politics of war. When I'm filled with self-righteous indignation it's perhaps most difficult to see my role in these affairs – the ways that I perpetuate the status quo, or allow the stars to take center stage, to define the “real world.”...*

*As I imagine the future I like to imagine myself as an old tree with thick, deep roots. Perhaps I'll be like an old oak, transpiring. I'll gather up nutrients from the soil and give off oxygen – soaking up the sun and water and changing the world in small, immeasurable but positive ways. This old tree sends posi-vibes out into the world. With strong roots, the old tree laughs at storms, this storm no worse than the last. The tree provides shade for those who are hot and worn out - coolness. The tree provides fresh air to the breathless and energy to reinvigorate the tired body, mind and spirit. The big old tree stands proud like a mountain, sometimes shrouded in mist, but still there amidst the storm clouds, solid, free and self-reliant. Inviting understanding, providing insight and stability is the job of the old oak tree. I think the tree probably has a lot of moss on it – deep, deep green in the spring. The tree is just part of the forest.*

*I am so grateful for the Chobo-Ji Sangha and I'm so very thankful for your guidance. I sincerely wish to extend the essence of this practice into our community and the broader world. I've found peace in Chobo-Ji along with beauty, wonder and wisdom. The world needs more Chobo-Ji and more Zen. The world needs the ongoing practice of contemplation, and our community needs individuals and institutions committed to non-violence and social justice.*

Reading these comments I was inspired to give George the Dharma Name: Kyo - Ki (兄木) meaning Elder Tree.

## Senior Dharma Talk

by Randal Daigetsu Tanabe  
January 7, 2018 - Talking Points

Fyodor Dostoyevsky: “The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lies, comes to such a pass that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love, and in order to occupy and distract himself without love he gives way to passions and coarse pleasures, and sinks to bestiality in his vices, all from continual lying to other men and to himself.”

In my life I have found that I am my own greatest fool, if other people lie to me a lot, I will eventually figure it out and will cease to believe them. But when it comes to me, I can lie to myself daily and I will still believe in my lies.

I grew up in the slums of Hawaii, in a very dysfunctional family. I struggled to rise above it, but for many years it proved to be a losing battle. To compound my self loathing in 1989 at the age of 35 I was diagnosed HIV+, in 1989 being diagnosed HIV+ was a death sentence, there was nothing that could stop the progression of the disease. I would hear from friends about people who died of AIDS and how they died of AIDS. The prognosis was death from 1 to 10 years from the time of infection. Sad to say I did not handle it well, and went into denial, and self-destruct mode.

I was the man that Dostoyevsky talks about. My life was a maelstrom, like a dark storm,

I was being devoured by my hungry ghosts, wrapped up in self-pity, and playing an Oscar winning role of “The Victim”. At 45 years old still blaming my mother and father for the unhappiness in my life. Facing a death sentence that I dared not share with anyone.

In the end I ended up going to prison for two years, it is sad to say that this is what it took to save my life. The timing was good, as the “cocktail” had just come out and the prison paid for it, at that time it was 30,000 a year for the medication. In the beginning it was the most horrifying experience of my life, the shame, the humiliation, the losing of everything. I felt like my head would explode. I started to meditate daily. After all I had the time. I read a book called the “The Crooked Cucumber,” it is the biography of Abbot Shunryu Suzuki. From his beginning until he dropped his body, I wept in the end. Another book that I read while I was in prison was “Be an Island” by Ayya Khema, it is discourse of her dharma talks. I believe we have a copy in our library here at Chobo-Ji. In prison they had a meditation group that met daily. I would sit with them and every so often we would have a monk or Buddhist practitioner visit. Although I do not recommend prison as a form of Zen practice, in the end it was like staying in a very strict restrictive monastery, and helped to set me down the path. It took going to prison for me to admit that maybe I was wrong, that maybe I should take responsibility for my life. Of course the group therapy helped. I slowly got off the cross, and began to accept responsibility for my life. It was a very, very painful thing to do.

When I got out of prison, I knew that I needed to continue my practice so not to fall back in to animalistic behavior. I visited several temples and felt comfortable with Osho Genjo and the sangha. Looking back, in my earlier years of practice, they must have thought “what a train wreck this is.” So I sat and sat and sat at Chobo-Ji. Somewhere along the line, I just let Genjo and the Buddha guide my life, one day after a couple of years, Osho Genjo gave me a dharma name. Dai Getsu or Vast Moon. It is a tough name to live up to, every time I look at the moon I think to myself, how can I be that Vast. Like the moon, giving of itself free, and not for reciprocity. I am grateful to Osho Genjo for giving me the name Dai Getsu, for every time I see the



moon at night, it shows me what it is to be Dai Gestu.

Zen practice of zazen has helped open the dark doors where my hungry ghost hid, rattling the chains of my life. Yes zazen and Osho Genjo's endless dharma talks, and guidance have helped open the doors and set free my hungry ghosts and goblins.



In the morning February 14, 1953, in Honolulu Hawaii, my mother gave birth to a baby golden Buddha. Somewhere along the line the little golden Buddha got lost in the bottom of a outhouse. As time passed the little golden Buddha was buried in the shit, so deep he no longer knew which way was up. After years of swimming around in this swill, the baby golden Buddha somehow floated to the top and it's head rose above the shit. Slowly with the guidance and support of Chobo-Ji and zazen. The golden Buddha began to rise out of the shit, the gates began to fall, and Buddhas and bodhisattvas began to appear everywhere he looked.

For me Zen practice has not been an event, more of a process, a slow process. When I first started sitting I could not wait for the bell to ring. Now I simply sit, when it rings it will ring, I still do wonder sometimes if the bell ringer has fallen asleep, but it no longer bothers me. When we did sesshin at our old temple the kids next door used to play basketball. The thumping used to irritate me, one day I thought to myself, "the young kids are having fun". From then on when I heard the bouncing basketball, joy rose in my heart. Couple of years later, they moved and no longer did we have the sounds of kids playing basketball. And now and then when I sit I yearn to hear the sound of kids playing basketball.

For those of you who come here seeking answers to life, to your self-doubt, to calm your abused soul, heal your scars, Zen is not a short cut, Zen is not a magic pill, for it is you that has to do the hard work, it is about opening those doors and looking through your hungry ghosts, your deep dark painful

secrets that haunt you. Facing your most painful memories, that lay buried deep in you, festering like a steaming pile of dung. Zen practice is about opening the locked doors of your soul one by one and letting your hungry ghost go, lancing a boil and draining the puss. Your baby golden Buddha cannot shine in the darkness of fear, in denial, in self-victimization. Have patience, life takes time, love and embrace yourself. You cannot wipe out a lifetime of pain suffering in a few months. I have seen people come and go here, looking for the answer, only to give up when it is all so close.

Zen practice has helped me become a better friend to the dogs that share my life; they have taught me to be patient and forgiving. Have you ever tried staying mad at a dog? My dogs have permitted me to love unconditionally. My dogs are my bodhisattvas, the sangha my Buddhas. Hit me with the keisaku, and ring your bell, but my answer is: Yes, yes, yes dogs do have Buddhist nature. Chobo-Ji has helped me become a better human being, to forgive my poor mother, father, most of to love myself. In truth there was nothing to forgive, everything was done out of love, as misguided as it was. It was simply karma.

## Spring Intensive

An intensive covers roughly the same time frame as the traditional temple Kessei or Ongo period, beginning with the first sesshin for that season and ending with the second. It's a time for concentrated study and practice. Chobo-Ji participants receive dokusan twice weekly between sesshins. Chobo-Ji's Spring Intensive will start March 11 with the zazenkai, and conclude on June 30. The purpose of the intensive is to give students the maximum opportunity to release entanglements by giving one's self to the Dharma. To participate one must commit minimally to: five hours of zazen per week, most, if not all, mini-sesshins, and full-time (or nearly full-time) attendance at two weeklong sesshins. This is the most important ingredient of the intensive. Other ingredients include samu practice, reading one book on the Dharma, a weekly journal and coming to dokusan at least once a week when Genjo is in town (if out of town a Skype call). Please email [Genjo](#) if you plan to participate. *Unsui are expected to join in.*

## New Posts - 3/4

Rev. Tendo Kirkpatrick  
**Shika** (Host - Manager)

Rev. Seiho Morris  
**Dai Tenzo** (Chief Cook)

Gavin Ozan Mackay  
Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez  
**Jikijitsu** (Timekeepers)

Rev. Gendo Testa  
George Kyoki Gibbs  
**Densu** (Chant Leaders)

Eddie Daichi Salazar  
Anil Seifu Singh-Molares  
Chris Dosetsu Doelling  
Eric Dee  
**Jisha** (Tea Servers and zendo care)

Rev. Sendo Howells  
Sally Zenka Metcalf  
**Inji** (Abbot Assistants)

Carolyn Josen Stevens  
**Fusu** (Accountant)

Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez, Eddie Daichi Salazar, George Kyoki Gibbs  
**Introductory Zazen**

## New Zendo Calligraphy

A gift from Shodo Sensei

This calligraphy now hanging at the back of the zendo was done by artist Tomoko Shiraiwa and references the first line from the Tao Te Ching which in one translation reads: "A good walker leaves no tracks" or with the help of Gavin Ozan Mackay might better read "Benevolent deeds leave no trace." It is my hope as abbot that when we exit the zendo that we take this message with us into our daily life, walking the path, doing kind actions that leave little or no wake or disturbance.



## 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: 3/4, 3/18, 4/1, 4/15, 4/29, 5/13, 5/20, 5/27, 6/17

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45pm (except 3/27)

**Zen Post Workshop (all are welcome) ...**

**Zazenkai - 1/2 day sit with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Board Meeting ...**

**Precept Class (part 1, required for Jukai consideration) ...**

**Spring Sesshin (weeklong Zen intensive) ...**

**Precept Class (part 2, required for Jukai consideration) ...**

**Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) & Buddha's Birthday ...**

**Annual Meeting (everyone encouraged to attend) ...**

**SU Zazenkai (whole day sit) ...**

**Eight Week [Zen Intro Series](#) begins on Tuesday nights ...**

**Zazenkai - 1/2 day sit with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Board Meeting ...**

**Grief and Loss Workshop (all are welcome, potluck lunch) ...**

**NVC as a Spiritual Practice Workshop ...**

**Zazenkai - 1/2 day sit with meal, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Summer Sesshin (weeklong Zen intensive) ...**

**March 3, 9:30am - noon**

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

**March 11, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**March 15, 7:30 - 9pm**

**March 23 (5:30pm) - 30 (10am)**

**April 5, 7:30 - 9pm**

**April 8, 5 - 11:15am**

**April 8, 11:45am - 2:00pm**

**April 28, 7am - 8pm**

**April 10, 7:30 - 9pm**

**May 6, 5 - 11:15am**

**May 6, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**May 19 10am - 3pm**

**June 3, 9:30am - 4:30pm**

**Jun 10, 5 - 11:15am**

**June 22 (5:30pm) - 29 (10am)**

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To learn more about membership see: <http://choboji.org/membership-and-no-ranks/>



*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

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