



# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

It has been another rich quarter in the life of Chobo-Ji. Today it is rather cool, but we have had some days of record-breaking heat. As the world turns, average world temperatures are climbing because we collectively fail to adequately address global warming. School and mass shootings continue; I just heard about the latest one in Southeast Texas, where ten people died. In most countries it only takes one such tragedy to bring about legislative change. When will we wake up sufficiently as a nation to do what needs doing and significantly strengthen gun control laws? Fortunately, our young people are insisting on some simple and essential changes, and hopefully enough people will follow their lead.

We had a very strong and stable Spring Sesshin with twenty-four participants from Washington, Oregon, California, Connecticut, and British Columbia. Our Dai-Tenzo (Chief Cook) was Rev. Seiho Morris; he kept the meals simple, on time and nourishing. Our Shika (Host-Manager) was Rev. Tendo Kirkpatrick. He worked to keep us organized, occupied and efficient in our samu (work) tasks. After sesshin, Tendo decided to leave practice at Chobo-Ji to explore other Zen venues. You will read more on this later in this issue. Gavin Ozan Mackay kept time in the zendo as our Jikijitsu. Ozan too may be leaving Chobo-Ji to study further in Japan and Edwin Kyosei Beatty, who attended sesshin part-time, has left our residential practice program and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Impermanence is a fact; nothing is constant. I hope everyone leaving our home temple finds blessings at every turn. Rev. Gendo Testa was our Densu (chant leader) and did great, especially considering this was his first time at this complex post. Eddie Daichi Salazar, assisted by Anil Seifu Singh-Molares



Spring Sesshin 2018

kept us properly hydrated with coffee and tea and provided just enough snacks to keep us going between meals. Rev. Sendo Howells served me well in her post as Inji (abbot assistant) and kept the dokusan (Dharma Interview with the Abbot) line moving along and orderly.

Concerning the dokusan line, I want to point out that it is fine to show one's enthusiasm by racing to be in the first few positions in line, but after the first few positions have been filled, please demonstrate a more leisurely approach to joining the line. There should be no need to hurry because the Inji will work hard to see that everyone who wants to participate has adequate access. Also, there is no need to run from the front of the line to the dokusan room or back to the zendo. On the other hand, please don't dawdle to and from the zendo. In the zendo, move to your position and take your seat as quietly as possible.

On the last day of sesshin we held a Sensei Ceremony for Sally Zenka Metcalf. Zenka has deeply demonstrated her commitment to Zen training over these many years and has been at the

forefront of many important temple endeavors, including gardening, meals for the homeless, and Non-Violent Communication training, for which I am very grateful. I'm sure you will enjoy her own words about this later in this issue.

In mid-March I traveled to Wenatchee to do a zazenkai with the [Stone Blossom Sangha](#) and install Sharon Meho Petit as Sensei for the group. Meho along with her partner Todd Daiko Petit founded and have been at the heart of Dharma practice in Wenatchee for many years.

April 8<sup>th</sup> was a very full day. We started out with a zazenkai (half-day sit), which we began with a celebration of the Historical Buddha's birthday. Each participant poured sweet tea over the icon of the Baby Buddha



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sitting in a bowl of flowers from our garden, symbolizing the ambrosial rain that is said to have fallen at his birth. We went on to have our Annual Meeting. As is our habit in the spring some board members retired after long years of service; other sangha members were elected and Board officers selected. Our new board president Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez shares her report of the meeting in this issue, and our perpetual Fusu (Temple Accountant), Carolyn Josen Stevens gives her annual financial report. We concluded this auspicious day with the 49<sup>th</sup> day memorial celebration for Eido Tai Zenji Dai Osho. As I explained that evening, all that remains of Eido Shimano, after 49 days, or for anyone who dies, is dust and light. Any of his misdeeds that have not already been processed remain for all of us, especially his closest senior associates (Dharma Heirs), to digest and release through careful reflection and investigation. Together we must move forward in our tradition with redemptive acts of kindness, understanding and the establishment of vigorous dynamic policies for better oversight and accountability.

From April 13-15, I had a wonderful time with the Walla Walla Sangha, spending time with inmates at the penitentiary, leading a one-day zazenkai, and speaking to students, faculty and staff at Whitman College. The next weekend I was in San Diego to lead a three-day sesshin with many seasoned Dharma practitioners, followed by a quick trip to Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) Kongo-Ji for Kongo Soken Muishitsu Eido Tai Shimano's formal funeral on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The head officiant was Sogen Yamakawa Roshi, Abbot of Shogen-Ji, Gifu, Japan. I sat a sesshin with him at DBZ in the summer of 2006 and you can read more about this sesshin in the teisho transcribed for this issue. You can also listen to some of my thoughts about the funeral by listening to my first Teisho after my return, which has been posted as a podcast: [Mu and the Diamond Sutra](#). Attending with me were Rev. Joriki, Rev. Rinzan, Rev. Seiho, Rev. Gendo and his wife Candice, who I met for the first time. There were also three of his five principal Dharma Heirs in attendance, Junpo Kelly, Shinge Chayat and myself. As Eido's successor at DBZ, Shinge wrote the following verse:

*Dreaming the impossible dream  
You rooted Zen in American soil  
Now freed of the founder's yoke  
Nothing left but your endless vow!*

Back in Seattle, on April 28<sup>th</sup> we held our annual all-day zazenkai for Seattle University students, faculty and staff. Eddie Daichi Salazar, who has long worked at SU, organizes this each year. As always it was delightful to sit and investigate our deep nature together. The teisho and dialogue that followed it are published as a podcast (see above).

Recently, I attended a five-day Gestalt workshop with a mentor of mine, Leonard Shaw. Leonard will be offering a two-day workshop here at Chobo-Ji July 28-29. You can learn more about Leonard and his work by listening to his Youtube offering on [Love and Forgiveness](#). One of the insights that became newly clear to me after this workshop was that zazen is not enough to untangle the complexes that most of us carry from our upbringing. We must be careful to understand that zazen alone can lead to a kind of spiritual bypassing of the knotted up shadowy corners of our psyche. To reach enlightenment is relatively easy, to achieve maturity takes lots of work.

Also coming up soon in our schedule is our next NVC workshop, Summer Sesshin and a showing of a new eye-opening documentary on the plight of the Duwamish peoples on whose land we reside. You will find announcements for each of these events and other offerings further in this issue. I hope you will strongly consider attending all of these great offerings. Please take care and be sure to enjoy the spring weather wherever you are.

With gassho,  
**Genjo**

## Walla Walla Zazenkai Spring Kínhin Poems

written by Chris Howard, 4/14/18

*One step behind the head shaved monk  
In a long line of meditative walkers  
We step in unison into the wind  
His black robes billow like the sails of a 4 master  
His brow cutting through the waves of samsara  
Robins serenade our slow mindful passage  
Meadowlarks sing their uplifting praise  
We move forward step by step  
Going nowhere, in no hurry*



*Meadow Lark sings  
Pheasant squawks  
Tree rustles  
Sunshine warms cool breeze  
Clouds drift through blue sky  
We walk slowly through time and space  
Tulips nod with every step*

## Heart Sutra, Abridged

written by Polly Trout, PhD

On Sunday evening, April 28, Polly Trout gave the Senior Student Dharma Talk, which was deeply appreciated by all in attendance. Polly has practiced occasionally at our temple, but has mostly practiced with other teachers. She sits on the Chobo-Ji Board of Directors and is the founder of [Patacara Community Services](#). Below is her take on the Heart Sutra that she shared with us that evening and a list of meaningful resources that have informed her own deep inquiry:

*Hey, my darling:  
All this bullshit  
Is secretly free of bullshitness.  
There is no dumpster fire.  
Also, no lack of dumpster fires.  
There is no monkey, no circus.  
But you can enjoy the show.  
Or not.*

*You can still have kindness  
And compassion  
And joy  
And liberation  
After you let go of that drama  
You are clinging to  
Like a life raft.*

*You think you will lose what matters  
When you let go of everything  
But it doesn't work like that.  
When you let go of everything  
What matters comes to find you.  
Chant this over and over*



*So you don't lose your way  
In the hall of mirrors  
In the make-believe circus  
That's spinning you out:*

*Gone, gone, all the way gone.  
Home again, Hooray!*

### Resources

#### The Dhammapada

**The Way of the Bodhisattva**, Shantideva  
Lam Rim Chenmo, Tsong-kha-pa.

**37 Practices of Bodhisattvas**, Gyalse  
Tokmé Zangpo.

**Lion of Siddhas: The Life and Teachings  
of Padampa Sangye.**

**The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-  
Five Centuries of Awakened Women.**

**Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine  
Principle in Tibetan Buddhism**, Judith  
Simmer-Brown.

**Feeding Your Demons: Ancient Wisdom  
for Resolving Inner Conflict**, Tsultrim  
Allione.

**Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree: The  
Buddha's Teaching on Voidness**,  
Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

## Chobo-Ji Annual Meeting 2018 Recap by Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez

We gathered on April 8, 2018 for our Annual Meeting and Potluck. It was a delicious potluck and if you haven't been to a Chobo-Ji potluck, you should definitely consider attending. There is always a selection of fresh vegetarian salads, soup, and desserts, in addition to good sangha company!

We voted to elect Jonathan Swift and Jeff Chozen Skolnick as new Board members for 2-year terms, and elect Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez, Anne Sendo Howells, and Chris Zenshin Jeffries to new 2-year terms. (The remaining 4 Board members, Daichi, Seiho, Sally Zenka Metcalf, and Polly Trout, are in the middle of 2-year terms so were not up for reelection.) Sally moved and Carolyn

seconded these elections – members assembled unanimously voted in favor.

The Board then elected its officers: Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez, President; Anne Sendo Howells, Vice-President; Eddie Daichi Salazar, Secretary; Chris Zenshin Jeffries, Treasurer. Sally so moved, Polly seconded, and the vote was unanimous. The members then profusely thanked outgoing Board members Scott Ishin Stalnack and Bob Daigan Timmer for their many years of service. Carolyn (temple Fusu – account manager) gave a financial “year in review” and reported the general financial health of the sangha (her report follows this one).

### Sangha Diversity:

Those present entered into a member wide discussion on the topic of Sangha Diversity facilitated by Genevieve Hicks. The discussion was lively. No decisions were made about next steps - that's for the May Board meeting – but Genevieve was asked what her recommendations were for our next steps. She suggested the first thing is for us *as individuals* to commit to doing this work on an ongoing basis and to say out loud, to ourselves and each other, that we commit to doing this work in ourselves. Genevieve also suggested that we consider a book group on the topic –she had great selection of book recommendations (see below). She also suggested that we keep our eyes open for opportunities to engage with others doing this work, look for sanghas and other faith groups actively working on this, look out for workshops etc. Someone suggested we offer the zendo to host events for those groups and happenings, which people agreed was a good idea. Further action was referred to the Program and Practice committee and the Board.

### Book Recommendations

**The Way of Tenderness: Awakening  
through Race, Sexuality, and Gender**,  
Zenju Earthlyn Manuel.

**Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to  
White America**, Michael Eric Dyson.

**Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love,  
and Liberation**, Rev. Angel Kyodo  
Williams, Lama Rod Owens, with Jasmine  
Syedullah.

**Living in the Tension: The Quest for a  
Spiritualized Racial Justice**, Shelly  
Tochiuk.

**Awaking Together: The Spiritual Practice  
of Inclusivity and Community**, Larry  
Yang.

## 2017 Financial Report by Carolyn Josen Stevens Sensei

I'm happy to report that 2017 was a stable year financially for Chobo-Ji. Our total income was \$167,840 compared to \$156,666 in 2016. Our largest source of income is rent paid by building residents, followed by dues, sesshin fees, guest accommodations, and donations. The residential rent receipts underwrite our mortgage payments, and we are very fortunate that the stability of our 15-year mortgage allows us to keep rent at a reasonable rate, which is sadly rare in Seattle these days. We've had good success with our guest apartment, reserving it for Zen practitioners during sesshin and renting it through AirBnB the rest of the time. We also received generous support for 100 Meals during 2017, and although the program has been in hiatus, it's set to restart this summer.

Expenses in 2017 totaled \$61,080, compared with \$59,839 in 2016. In addition to these operating expenses, we reduced our building mortgage from \$538K as of 12/31/16 to \$468K at year-end 2017. This reduction of \$70K was a combination of regular monthly payments plus a \$50K special payment that the CBJ board authorized in March. We hope to retire our mortgage by 2027, so the board plans to make additional principal payments as our means allow.

Our major capital improvement in 2017 was the installation of solar panels on our roof. It's been exciting to see our electric bills drop, though we expect to see the biggest effect this summer once the clouds of our Seattle spring start to clear away.

As always, I am deeply grateful to everyone who supports the Temple. Your steady devotion of time, love, and financial sustenance keeps our doors open, the garden blooming, and the deep quiet of zazen practice alive.

## Stone Blossom Sensei

**Sensei:** (先生 – Teacher) candidates must be lay members in good standing who have completed at least 40 weeklong sesshins or an excess of ten years of practice with Chobo-Ji, served as the lead in every temple post at least once or served for many years supporting a satellite meditation group associated with Chobo-Ji, done Jukai, attend at least one weeklong sesshin a year, and be prepared to renew and deepen their vows in the Sensei ceremony. Sensei may give dharma talks and in a pinch lead rituals in the absence of an unsui or Osho.



Nicolle LaFleur of the [Stone Blossom Sangha](#) writes about the March 17 Sensei Ceremony: “Yeah!! The Wenatchee Valley has an official Zen SENSEI! Our little Stone Blossom Sangha is so fortunate to have Sharon Meho Petit Sensei guide our practice. I was so honored to watch this meaningful ceremony today between two of our beloved teachers. [Genjo Marinello](#)



Roshi's words of wisdom reminded us all that we learn from each other and every situation. The form and practice is our best teacher. And Meho's important role is to guide us in the form, and be open to continuous learning. Love that! So beautiful. Thank you all for coming to



celebrate with us today! **Congratulations** our beloved and honored Sensei Meho.”



## Summer Sesshin

June 23<sup>rd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a **deposit (\$75)** and **application** by **June 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, 6/22, 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, 6/29, begins at 5am and concludes around 10am.

## Rinzan Osho will lead Summer Odayaka Sesshin July 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>

This sesshin is less arduous with more dialogue than our weeklong sesshins - \$100.

## Let's Become Enlightened Together

*[The Hidden Lamp](#)*

*Korea 20th Century - Genjo's Teisho  
6th day of Spring Sesshin, 2017*

CASE: The Australian nun Chi Kwang Sunim had the opportunity to meet a 102-year-old Korean nun, Kye Jeon Sunim, who had meditated for years. When Chi Kwang came into her presence, the old nun was sitting upright with a rosary of black beads and a rosary of white beads twirling together in her left hand, silently repeating her mantra and gazing into space in front of her. The old nun grabbed Chi Kwang's hand and pulled her close.

When Chi Kwang yelled in the hard-of-hearing nun's ear, “I'm a foreigner!” the old nun held up the mingled black and white beads and said, “Let's practice together.”

When Chi Kwang asked the old nun about her past, she replied, “What past?” Then the old nun smiled and said, “Let's become enlightened together.”

STUDY QUESTIONS: What is the past, with its stories and apparent reality “back there somewhere?” For that matter, what is the present? How old do you have to be in order for the past to lose its interest? What does it mean to be a foreigner anyway?

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This question, “What does it mean to be a foreigner,” strikes a chord for me. In the Zen tradition, when we speak of “The Foreigner,” we are referring to Bodhidharma, who made an arduous journey from India to China in his eighties. The most traditional Zen question is “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?” Buddhism was already well established in China before he came and Bodhidharma was just one of the many sages who made the long journey. So why did he come? For us it is like asking, “What is the essence of Zen?”

Bodhidharma was known as the foreigner because he came from India and looked very different from the Chinese. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of us treated every



foreigner with the same high regard we have for our distant Zen ancestor.

Evidently, the Korean nun Kye Jeon Sunim would notice when someone came into her room even though she was blind. She would pull the person close and say, "Let's practice together. Here you can share one of my prayer beads." In this story, Chi Kwang Sunim, the visiting nun from Australia, thought this must be a case of mistaken identity. "I don't want to give you the wrong impression. I'm not your attendant. I'm a foreigner." And the 102-year-old nun had the same response, "Let's practice together."

We try to have Chobo-Ji be open to anyone and everyone. Even if Eido Shimano were still alive, with his long history of misuse of power and authority, I hope we would truly and genuinely welcome him with an open heart into the zendo to sit amongst us; "Let's do zazen. We'll sit together." I want the same to be true for someone who has a very disturbed history as a convict, an addict, or even a crazy person. If anyone is willing and able to practice, I hope our door is open. Granted, with this kind of open door policy we risk the possible disturbance that someone's instability might cause the rest of us.

There are people in this room who are concerned about disturbing the sangha, and perhaps some of us will be disturbed by them, but if that's the case, we must work to transcend our own disturbance. Of course it is also true that each us has room to improve our behavior and it is our practice to always be stretching towards more compassion for all. Only as a last resort should we consider excluding someone from training here. When we realize someone has some sort of distressed and troubled history, I hope that we can feel empathy and say, "Welcome. Let's practice together. Through our mutual effort we will ground each other." Even if for the moment you or I or they are the weakest link, together the chain is strong.

This koan is also about suffering. The old woman is blind, and I think of my old dog Anna who is also blind. Anna goes about bumping into walls, especially when its dinnertime and she's coming from one side of the apartment to the other. In general, she knows the path, but she keeps bumping into

things and occasionally gets lost and confused. I try to guide her by snapping my fingers so that she has a sound trail. When we go for a walk, I become her Seeing Eye person. She allows herself to be guided by the harness and leash with some trepidation. You can see her shaking at the beginning of each walk. By the midway point of our walk, she's done shaking. She has to trust that I'm going to run interference for her and I'm not going to pull her into a bush, a bench or off a curb, and I must admit, I'm not perfect at it. When I make a mistake, she'll look both disturbed and disgruntled. When we come to a curb, I'll say, "Step. Step. Step. **Step!**" and she'll step down, and when we get to the other side of the street, I'll say, "Step. Step. Step. **Step!**" and she'll step up. We get by, and I carry her up and down the stairs. When she was first going blind she was willing to go up the stairs, but not down. As the blindness progressed she would find the stairs and then wait for me to pick her up. It's a bit of a chore, but the love and care we have for each other easily compensates for any difficulty.

One of the byproducts of our zazen practice is that it generates open-heartedness towards our fellow beings, great and small, animate or inanimate. We're all full of shortcomings, faults, idiosyncrasies, imperfections and sometimes sickness and disability. Perhaps many of us have convoluted histories that are not yet fully untangled, as is true in my own case. I hope that we are welcoming to even the most tangled, disabled or distracted practitioners. Let's practice together. With a deep sangha accepting patience, we can support, ground and perhaps heal each other.

One of the two Japanese priests who are leading the funeral services at Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) for Eido Shimano this April is Sogen Yamakawa Roshi, perhaps Eido Shimano's closest friend and peer. I did sesshin with Yamakawa Roshi at DBZ in 2006, and during one of his Teisho's he told a very interesting story. It was Yamakawa's lot, being the eldest son of a Zen priest, to be a Zen priest himself. In Japanese culture he had no choice in this matter. He was stuck going to sesshin and being in a monastery. Once he was in the monastery he quickly concluded this was an awful, painful fate, and a tragic waste of his life. He thought if only he could be sick enough or somehow disabled, then he would no

longer be required to be a Zen monk. Most of us who have done a few sesshins have concluded at one time or another that sesshin is not only fatiguing but sometimes excruciatingly painful, and have thought, "If I continue the pain will do one of two things: it will either kill me or I'll be so broken they'll have to carry me out on a stretcher." Yamakawa endeavored to make



this happen! He made a plan to do zazen all night every night, not to become enlightened, but to either die or be taken out on a stretcher, never to return. His plan failed, and decades later he finds himself to be a highly regarded Roshi in Japan. His plan did kill him in a way; one night during yaza (unstructured seated meditation) he broke through to his deep nature.

At my very first sesshin, in the summer of 1977, I thought my knees would explode, and it felt like I was sweating blood. It was the third day of a weeklong sesshin, and I was quite convinced that I couldn't possibly survive seven days. So, I had two choices. I could either run away, or I could die. As a young man, I thought, "Well, I'll never get anywhere by running away from pain and fear; it's been an interesting life, so I guess I'll die." I was sitting with what was then known as the Seattle Zen Center, and the Roshi at that time was Hirano Osho-san from Eihei-Ji in Japan, a Soto Zen priest. Those of us participating in sesshin knew we were going to have a long sit when Hirano put the kichin (timing bell) over his pocket watch, when he didn't want to be bothered about how long the sit was going to be.

On one such sit, after I had just come to my conclusion that I wasn't going to run away, that I thought, "Oh hell. Now I'm really going to die." Somehow, my commitment

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prepared me to become just a pile of melted cytoplasm on the cushion, and I thought, "It will make a mess in the zendo, but at least sesshin will be over for me." Because I was no longer afraid or fighting the pain, during this long sit I fell into a deep samadhi (harmonious timeless activity). That long sit, which had to be at least fifty minutes, but could have been much longer, went like a flash! It felt like it had only been a few minutes and then the bell rang! Of course, when I began to move my legs just after the sit, the pain was intense! But I managed to get up for kinhin (walking meditation), and oddly I felt really light. As we walked around the zendo together, which was located on Vashon Island not far from here, I looked out a bay window. It was a very dense foggy morning. I could see a tree branch dripping dew and only barely make out the trunk of the tree. The fog, though



dense at ground level, must not have been very thick, because the fog was bright and nearly white. Seeing this tree-limb dripping with dew, tears began to flow down my face, and I wanted to shout to everyone, "Don't you hear it? Don't you see it?" But, I had no words for what it was I was hearing and seeing because there wasn't anything different to see or hear that hadn't always been there.

Later in dokusan with Hirano Osho-san, I said, "What is it when the fog and tree and dew speak, but say no words?" and Hirano said without missing a beat, "That's the beginning of your practice." There had been some kind of shift in perspective for me. It was as though the world went from black and white to color or from a two-dimensional one-eye view to a three-dimensional, binocular view of the world. There was nothing magical about this shift in perspective, but all of a sudden, I was seeing more than I had seen before. Everywhere I looked, even in a mirror, everything appeared more vibrant and alive.

I can identify with Yamakawa Roshi, as I have been doing sesshin after sesshin ever since. Practicing together in this way cultivates our potential to transcend self and other, life and death, hot and cold, joy and sorrow, and rigid right and wrong thinking. So of course, a 102 year old nun sitting in her hermitage says to someone who intrudes into her space, "Let's practice together." What she is really saying is, "Let's open our hearts together."

At this same sesshin with Yamakawa Roshi in 2006, I was struggling mightily with Eido Roshi wanting me to become his Vice Abbot. He never made me his Vice Abbot, but it was clear for a time that I was his heir apparent. He had already exhausted two Vice Abbots, and I thought, "No way! I have a sangha in Seattle. I have a wife in Seattle who has told me she won't move to New York. I'd have to give up my psychotherapy practice. How would I take care of our then retired founding abbot, Genki Takabayashi. I'm not doing it!" When I repeatedly expressed deep reservations to Eido Roshi, He said, "So you aren't willing to follow the Dharma where it takes you?" This query of his led me to have a dark night of the soul. It was the last night of this sesshin and I was very disgruntled and unhappy. I decided to sit through the night in the zendo. I was depressed and angry. I was angry with him, the world and myself. Late that night, I experienced another shift in perspective. One more artificial wall protecting my ego collapsed. All of a sudden, I felt resigned, relieved and released. That night I realized, "I will go where the wind blows me." The next morning I told Eido Shimano about my breakthrough and I told him, "I won't be coming to DBZ so you can retire, but if the circumstances arise where I really need to be here, then I will follow where the wind takes me."

He just nodded, and from that moment forward our relationship changed. I was no longer in anyway dependent on him or his approval. This was very freeing for us both and I realized that he had been waiting for

this shift in me. I continued to train with him, and slowly preparations began for me to be acknowledged as one of his Dharma Heirs. We both knew that I would likely be the next abbot of DBZ. However, this avenue collapsed after Eido got caught once more indulging his sexual addiction with students and I resigned from the ZSS Board.

We all have suffering – historical suffering, physical suffering and spiritual suffering – mostly arising from our inability to go with the flow of impermanence. In our practice together, we cultivate a rich communion with our deep nature, which blossoms with openheartedness, equanimity, and shifts in perspective that keep us



coming to sesshins. I have a friend whom I used to live in a collective house with 30 years ago, and we have stayed in contact over the years. We have had steady, but infrequent contact. He has done some sitting and has come to sesshin. Recently he called and said he would soon be in Seattle and could we have lunch. I could hear in his voice something was wrong. His speech was somewhat slurred, and I immediately had three guesses. One, he's on serious chemotherapy that is affecting his brain, he's had a stroke, or he's got Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). I said, "What happened? What's going on?" I'll call him "Bob." Bob said, "I'll tell you at lunch." When Bob arrived at the neighborhood café, his gait immediately gave away that this was more than a stroke or chemo. I thought, "He's got ALS." Bob confirmed this over lunch, as I watched him have difficulty drinking and feeding himself.



There are so many ways to deteriorate and die, but for me ALS and Alzheimer's produce the most fear. For ALS there is currently no cure, it is a chronic progressive nervous system disease that weakens muscles and impacts physical function. If you are able to survive very long, eventually every function of your body will have to be done by someone else because you can't do anything, and yet your brain can be fully awake. People with ALS often die because they can't even take a breath. Carolyn had a friend who died from it. So I have been close to it in that way. It's awful. There's no way around it. For all his troubles, Bob still wanted to do things himself, and I had to be careful not to offer too much help because he wanted to exercise all his motor skills for as long as he could, which is completely understandable.

Bob said to me, "I have a trip planned to South America." I said, "Really?" and he said, "Yeah. I'm afraid I might have to carry oxygen with me to help me breathe in the plane, but I really need to go on this trip." I said, "Wow. Okay." A few weeks later, I got a text from his wife. She said, "39,000 feet. Doing okay." They were on their trip to South America.

At lunch he asked me a very interesting question. He said, "Genjo, is this a blessing or a curse?" And immediately out of my mouth ... it wasn't like I planned to say something, I said, "Both." He just nodded and said, "I thought so."

I've been through lots of suffering in this life. Undoubtedly, you've been through suffering. If we survive it, we're stronger for it. One day we will not survive! Nevertheless, surviving and learning from our suffering is often our greatest teacher. Yesterday, I talked about the old woman with a poker who would poke any monk that didn't pass her test. What happened to the nine out of ten monks who didn't pass her test? I don't know. But I'm sure some of them, hopefully most of them, redoubled their efforts, and in spite of some rejection, correction and put down, just went straight on.

I had a turning point, in my first sesshin, which took place in the summer of 1977, when I agreed to go straight on, even though I thought it might kill me. Similarly,

I had another breakthrough at DBZ in July of 2006, when I surrendered to the possibility of moving to New York, and agreed to follow the Dharma winds wherever they took me. Part of our work here at sesshin is to learn to go straight on in the midst of suffering.

Yamakawa Roshi said to himself, "I'll just sit until it kills me." Often going straight on in the midst of suffering has some very positive effects. Anna, my blind dog, stops and sits on her walk every so often and stares at me with a look that says, "Do we have to?" I'll jiggle the leash, and say, "Come on." She takes a breath and steps forward. We go straight on together and we are better for it.

The Korean nun, at a 102 years of age, blind, and obviously close to her physical death, was untroubled by her condition and said to everyone she met, "Let's practice together." May we all continue to do the same.

## Sensei Ceremony

On the seventh day of Spring Sesshin, Sunday, March. 30, 2017, Sally Zenka Metcalf reaffirmed and deepened her commitment to her Jukai vows and became sensei. After the ceremony Zenka Sensei gave the following Dharma Talk:



How I came to practice at Chobo-Ji is by wanting, more than anything, to be truly helpful. But my helpfulness often backfired. I was mystified, and thought Buddhism, with its Great Vow to help all sentient beings, everywhere, always, would be a good practice for me to learn true

helpfulness. So, I found Chobo-Ji on Capitol Hill and started coming as much as I could. Now, fourteen years later, here I am receiving a brand new Sensei Rakusu at the end of Spring Sesshin; and, quite honestly, I still feel like a beginner.

There are many people in the room I'm deeply grateful to whose example and teaching have helped me grow over the years. Among them are two of our senseis. Tom Shodo DeGroot and Scott Ishin Stolnack whose thirty years of practice shines the way for us all. And, of course, there is my gratitude to Genjo Roshi for so much, but particularly for his deepening kindness.

When I first started practicing here, Chobo-Ji was not as welcoming as it is now. The Japanese style Rinzaï Zen we inherited from the East can be somewhat harsh. I tend to be rather fearful, so it was unnerving for me. However, over the years Genjo Roshi's voice has become kinder. Correction and instruction are gentler and limited to essentials. Sangha members greet newcomers and help them settle into the community. It's a warmer Chobo-Ji altogether.

This emphasis on kindness seems like a wholesome change and might be a good direction for American Zen. Many of us have very critical inner voices to contend with. I read an article once about an American monk describing to the Dalai Lama the heavy internal self-criticism many Westerners live with. His Holiness was stunned! He found it incomprehensible and assured the monk that Tibetans don't have such negative inner voices. Abiding kindness may be a good remedy for us Westerners.

For most of my life I've had a voice inside that tells me I'm not enough—not smart enough, fast enough, good enough. Imagine how challenging it was for me to be helpful, operating from the crazy core belief that I'm not enough. I tended to irritate people instead of help them. I hadn't noticed this "not enough" voice in my head, but Osho had.

When I was first given the Jisha post, I felt so afraid that every time I poured Osho's

*Continued on next page...*

tea, I spilled it on his zabuton. When I laid out my first afternoon sarei (tea and snacks) at sesshin, Osho came to me and quietly said, “Zenka, everything you’ve provided is wonderful. Everyone is enjoying it. You’ve done nothing wrong. And tomorrow I want you to do a little less.” Less!!! I thought the sky would fall! The next day I screwed up all my courage and did less. Miraculously no one revolted! Again, Osho asked me to do less. In this kind way, over the years he showed me my “not enough” voice and patiently helped me free myself.

For someone who thinks they’re not enough, being OCD is a natural. I can be like Gollum with our complex Rinzaï form. Remember Gollum from *The Hobbit*? He would clasp the evil golden ring of Sauron close and rasp out, “Oh My Precious!” That can be me with the form. I call it Form Sickness. It’s when the form becomes more important than the people practicing it. It’s actually a common stage people go through in Zen. When we’re in it, we can be insufferable. I was.

Even worse, people like me with negative not-enough voices can project that outward onto you; and see **you** as not enough, not fast enough, not perfect enough. When in this state, I alienated a few sangha brothers and sisters. I’ve spent years cleaning up the mess. Sincere apologies go a long way toward healing. Even more helpful was to improve my conduct. Since my first venture into form sickness, I’ve taken every communication workshop Chobo-Ji offers and am dedicated to our Ongoing Non-violent Communication Practice Group. It’s all helping, and I’ve earned back some precious friends.

**Y**ou may have been spoken to judgmentally here. When it happened, you might have said, “I would **NEVER** treat anyone like that!” But, “**LOOK OUT!**” The very zazen you devote yourself to is designed to bring up this kind of craziness in all of us, so it can be burned through. These core crazy thoughts such as “not enough” create what is known in Buddhism as aggregates in our mind. Think of aggregate concrete, the kind with bumpy rocks imbedded. Aggregates are contracted lumps of assumptions, judgments, inferences, and emotions, mortared together with attachment and resistance. Some aggregates are small and manageable; some are huge and dense with accumulations

over decades. Discovering them in ourselves and breaking them down can be very painful.

It’s springtime. The rains have been heavy this year. I grew up near the Cascade Mountains on the Skagit River. In this season, the river runs deep, swollen by rain and snow melt. It roars! —a sound so powerful you can’t hear the voice from your own throat. Part of the roar is the water, tangling and pounding. Then there is the song of the stones: clattering, dragging, rolling, and thundering in the current. Even

grateful to Genjo Roshi for his growing gentleness. Please, let’s follow his example, listen to that kind voice and emulate it, inside and out.

Finally, I’d like to express my gratitude to Genki Takabayashi Roshi, our founding abbot. He taught us everything about how to conduct our practice: zazen, bowing, walking, the tea service, the sutra books, the calligraphy. All our forms and conduct spring from his teaching. You may even be drinking from one of the teacups he made. What a gift!



giant boulders skid along in the full force of flood water. These stones being worn down by the flow are like our inner aggregates. For me the dharma is the flow—the flow of endless-dimension universal Life. This current meets our hardness and resistance, and inexorably wears it away, shattering, smoothing, crumbling, until sometime in the future we tumble out onto the vast delta of our True Nature as soft as silt.

Can we find it in our hearts to be patient and kind to ourselves and to others when we pass through these flood seasons? Regardless of how we may appear, we are so tender when the self we’ve known is carried away, and we’ve not yet discovered who we are. For this reason, I am deeply

We got our altar Buddha from Genki Roshi. He found it in the back room of an antique shop on a throw-away shelf. It was cracked, with a bit of stuffing coming out. Even so, it’s a very old, and fine statue. Come take a close look at it when next you’re in the zendo. It speaks to how I feel at the end of a sesshin—a little cracked, with my stuffing tumbling out.

In addition to our altar Buddha, Genki Roshi found our Kannon Bodhisattva statue which sits in the small altar on the other end of the room from Buddha. This is the Kanzeon Bosa we chant about in the *Lotus Sutra*—the very long, fast chant we do every afternoon. When Genki Roshi first



came to the United States, he made a living at Japanese gardening. A family hired him to put in a new ground cover beneath their trees. He began to dig, and clink! His shovel struck something unusual. He uncovered it to find Kannon buried in their garden. No one knew how the statue got there. The property owners gave it to Roshi, and it's been with us ever since.

I heard a wonderful story about Kannon recently. Originally, in India, Kannon Bodhisattva was Avalokitesvara the Bodhisattva of Compassion, one of the Buddha's principal disciples. It is he we chant about daily in the Heart Sutra. Probably because of pronunciation difficulties, in China, this same bodhisattva is named Quan Yin, in Tibet Chenrezig, in Japan Kannon. It is said that Avalokitesvara wanted to help sentient beings so ardently, that he could hear all the voices of the world crying out in suffering. He felt his head might explode with longing to free them!

The other bodhisattvas gathered together to support him. One made him ten thousand golden arms to help the world. Each hand had an eye in the palm to see just what was needed. Another bodhisattva made him ten thousand tools, one for each hand, helpful tools such as a vial of medicine, a sword, a lotus flower. Maybe today, the Bodhisattva of Compassion has a smart phone or a car jack on hand. When I was in Kyoto, I stumbled upon a wooden, open-air temple, dark with age, in which were displayed 1000 carved plaques. Each depicted a hand holding a bodhisattva tool. I can't imagine how long it took the monks to carve them all!

The last bodhisattva made Avalokitesvara eleven heads he could select from, each with a different face. Online, you can see ancient statues with these faces piled atop the head. Some of us, when suffering, feel safe with a helper who looks like a motherly old lady such as me, while others need a man with a strong back. Traditionally, one head is an animal—often a horse. When suffering, many of us turn to animals we love for comfort.

I read about a woman who has a horse farm just north of here in Snohomish County. She offers horse therapy to soldiers with PTSD. A specific horse is assigned to a particular person. The caregiver rides only if they're so inclined, but they are asked to feed,

water and brush the horse, and clean its stall. They can take it out on the trails or into the arena, or just sit with their horse in the quiet barn and read a book—whatever they like. In most of the soldiers' testimonials, they credited their trusty old quarter horse, or little Arab mare with saving their lives.

Why am I telling you this quaint myth about Avalokitesvara? We might think of Kannon Bodhisattva as a fairy tale and can't see a relation to ourselves. There are so many voices in the world calling for help it can be hard to know what to do. Our wonderful sangha is filled with people dedicated to bringing their practice into to world to ease suffering. I'm so grateful for their constant inspiration to me to live our Great Vow. I urge us all to start helping wherever we are, with whatever we can do, however small. In this way, we begin to discover that, together, we are the ten thousand arms of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, reaching out to connect, to care, to lend a hand, or to offer something useful such as a handy tool or a hot meal.

When we stretch out our fingers to help another, right in the palm of our hand is an eye that perceives just what's needed. Don't be shy. Reach out, because we—being the unique people we are—may have the very understanding that will make all the difference in that moment, the difference that lightens suffering and helps another know, at last, that someone truly cares. We may also discover that the very hand we reached out to help is shining, and in that palm is an eye seeing directly into our heart. So, in hoping to heal, we ourselves are healed in the end.



## Closing Incense Poem

Spring Sesshin 2017

*Climbing up Dai Bai Mountain,*

*Who can miss the spring meadow?*

*Flowers bloom abundantly  
in the rich soil.*

*Holy fools trek back to the village.*

## Tendo's Departure

Dear Chobo-Ji Sangha,

The time has come for me to move on from the residency and unsui program at Chobo-Ji. I have really loved living here over the past years and have been grateful to spend time with all of you. Being able to serve the wider sangha and visitors through working in the temple, filling posts, helping in events, cleaning, fixing things, talking to people, cooking food and on and on has been a real joy. I'm glad to have shared all of this with every one of you.



I'm sure you all have questions as to what has brought this on. The basic answer, I am truly driven to do everything I can to help bring the dharma to people. For me there is no more important work. But I know that to be forthright and effective in one's sharing

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you have to truly embody the dharma. So there is a lot of work that has to be done. I've made a lot of leaps and bounds in this regard in my time here and for that I am truly grateful to Genjo Osho and all the others in the sangha who have taught me so much. I am so grateful to the form, which has been my greatest and most severe teacher. But I have reached a point where I need to be engaged in this practice at a much greater degree of intensity. I need a period where training is nearly all that I do. I need to engage in the kind of work where I can be in a mindful state that allows the deep inquiry to continue. I am driven to do this by my great vow to liberate all beings and a genuine heartfelt desire to share the joy that comes from our deep nature.

I don't particularly have set plans, I had an insight a few months back that taking risks, that casting your fate to the dharma is important. Playing it too safe risks stagnation and I've felt that to some degree. I am driven to go deep and thus I need to take more risks. I'm going to try sesshins at various places — places I've been before but want another taste, and places I've long been curious about.

It has truly been an honor and a pleasure sharing this wonderful place with you all. I am certainly saddened to leave and will miss you all but I am also excited for the future.

With great affection,

*Tendo*



## Annual Two-Day Spiritually-Based Gestalt Workshop at Chobo-Ji, July 28 & 29 with Leonard Shaw, MSW, ACSW (a deep friend and mentor of Genjo's)

Hours	Fee for Sangha Members
9:30am-5:00pm	\$50 - \$150 (sliding fee scale)

Participants will learn the blending of Eastern and Western methods, to empower and educate themselves and others. (Some didactic materials and handouts will be provided to reinforce this learning.) The workshop is almost entirely experiential with exercises, art therapy, and Gestalt Therapy practices.

You will also learn:

1. How to transform medical issues into powerful consultants.
2. How to deeply heal traumatic experiences.
3. How to break through intransigent difficulties with someone, when each person thinks the other is missing it.
4. Three powerful communication tools for discussing loaded subjects.

Contact Leonard at 206-322-5785  
for more information and registration.



This is the intense healing experience that Leonard created in our state prisons and with therapists from the USA, Canada and Europe for over 25 years. Partial scholarships are available.  
80% of fees return to the temple.





This workshop, with **Marcia Christen**, *Certified Trainer: The Center for Nonviolent Communication*, is designed to further our skills with Restorative Practices and Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Practice will be emphasized, especially in the form of dialogues and role-playing to help us when we meet inevitable communication challenges. We'll **strengthen our commitment** to, and facility with, truly **connecting with others**, **self-empathy**, and **deep listening**, as well as making objective observations and loving requests. In addition, we'll continue to deepen our understanding of interdependence, compassion, and shared power. Finally, we'll explore ways to bring NVC as a spiritual practice into our community, as well as into our individual lives.

While this workshop builds on Chobo-Ji's past NVC/Restorative Practice trainings, **we welcome not only participants from earlier workshops but also sangha folk who have not attended our NVC workshops so far, but who find this work compelling.**

There will be a one-hour lunch break. Bring a sack lunch or eat out. Snacks, coffee, and tea will be provided.

The workshop is **free of charge** in order to encourage sangha participation. **Please register at [bit.ly/2lurCIC](http://bit.ly/2lurCIC).**

NORTH BEACON HILL - FREE SEATTLE SHOWING



**Promised Land** is a social justice documentary that follows two tribes in the Pacific Northwest: the Duwamish and the Chinook, as they fight for the restoration of treaty rights they've long been denied.

In following their story, both in our region's shared heritage and in their modern struggles for federal recognition, the film examines a larger problem in the way that the government and society still looks at tribal sovereignty.

**Saturday, July 14th, 1PM**

- Optional **FREE** lunch at 12 PM
- Discussion with tribal members to follow movie

**Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Temple**

1733 S. Horton St (downstairs rear entrance)  
Seattle, WA 98144  
206.328.3944 | [bit.ly/2rZ3J58](http://bit.ly/2rZ3J58)



[www.choboji.org](http://www.choboji.org)

## 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: 5/27, 6/17, 7/1, 8/5, 8/19, 9/2, 9/16, 10/7, 10/21

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45pm (except 6/26)

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

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

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

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

**Board Meeting ...**

**Free Lunch, Showing of "Promised Land" & Discussion ...**

**Summer Odayaka Sesshin lead by Rinzan Osho ...**

**Spiritually-Based Gestalt Workshop with Leonard Shaw, MSW ...**

**Soul Collage Workshop lead by Anne Senryu & Rinzan Osho ...**

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

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

**Board Meeting ...**

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

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

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

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

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

**July 8, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**July 14, noon - 3pm**

**July 20 - 22**

**July 28 & 29**

**Aug. 4, 9:30am - 4:30pm**

**Aug. 12, 5 - 11:15am**

**Sept. 9, 5 - 11:15am**

**Sept. 9, 11:30am - 1:30pm**

**Sept. 21 (5:30pm) - 28 (10am)**

To subscribe to Plum Mountain News or our weekly Temple Happenings email bulletin write: [subscribe@choboji.org](mailto:subscribe@choboji.org)

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



*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

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