



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

Blue skies have at least temporarily returned to Seattle, but forest fires still rage nearby. If our nation does not turn itself around and rejoin international efforts to stem the increase of greenhouse gasses, Seattle summers will more often than not be burdened with air quality worse than Beijing. Fortunately, there is a major national election this November and the more people that vote, I'm confident, the bigger the change there will be.

In early June we had another very productive workshop with Marcia Christen to help our sangha develop an ever-deeper skill-set in Non-Violent Communication (NVC) and restorative practices. We worked on self-empathy, deep listening, and how to make clear, simple non-inflammatory observations and requests. Our NVC practice group has recently restarted and the times are posted on the [temple's Google calendar](#). Everyone is welcome to attend; however, if you have not previously participated in an NVC workshop, please first speak to [Zenka Sensei](#). She is coordinating our NVC practice, and may offer you some preliminary work in [The Ongo Book](#) before attending.

In late June we held our weeklong Summer Sesshin with 23 participants. I found it to be a very dedicated investigation of our deep nature. Tom Shodo DeGroot Sensei served as our Shika (host-manager) and did a fine job in helping to hold our rigorous form in and out of the zendo. Rev. Seiho Morris was our Dai Tenzo (chief cook) and sacrificed much for our good care. Gavin Ozan Mackay served as our Jikijitsu (time keeper) and very strongly and quietly set our pace. Rev. Gendo Testa continued in the position as lead Densu (chant leader), keeping the beat quick and steady. Eddie Daichi Salazar, assisted by Anil Seifu Singh-Molares and others,



was our Jisha (tea server) and kept us all hydrated and otherwise well-nurtured. Rev. Sento Howells served as my Inji (abbot assistant) and she coordinated the dokusan line and made sure I had everything I needed to fulfill my post. As usual, our garden samu (work period) was ably coordinated by Sally Zenka Sensei. At the end of sesshin we did a Jukai ceremony for Trevor Youngquist. You can read more about this later in this issue, along with a transcript of my Teisho from middle day and my closing incense poem.

The day after sesshin, June 30th, I was fortunate to attend two important events. In the morning it was the "Families Belong Together" rally to support detained immigrants at the SeaTac



detention center. I suspect at least half of our sangha was in attendance along with thousands of others from around our region. That evening Carolyn and I attended the Duwamish Longhouse Annual Dinner and auction. This is the first time I could attend because for many years the Annual Dinner has fallen during Summer Sesshin. Our temple along with many others makes a [Real Rent](#) monthly donation to the tribe, and in mid-July Chobo-Ji hosted the tribal Chair,



Cecile Hanson, as we showed the recently produced documentary [Promised Land](#).

Also in July Chobo-Ji hosted our annual Spiritually Based Gestalt Workshop run by my good friend and master psychotherapist

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Leonard Shaw, with the support of Trevor Youngquist (one of Chobo-Ji's four new residents). Rinzan Osho and the No-Rank Sangha from Portland ran this year's Summer Odayaka Sesshin from July 20-22.



There were 16 participants. Over the course of these last two events Carolyn and I were in Hawaii spreading my mother's ashes on her home island and celebrating Carolyn's retirement as an audit manager. It is very gratifying to know that the temple runs smoothly without us! We were back in time to join in with the Soul Collage workshop offered by Anne Senryu and Rinzan Osho, on August 4th. I'm positive that each one of us in attendance learned more about ourselves. It is my hope that this workshop can be offered annually; each time I attend, I see something new about my own history and my current state of unfolding.



As most of us know, another treasured Chobo-Ji resident has moved away. Gavin Ozan Mackay has gone off to Japan and hopes to continue his training at Ryutaku-Ji this fall. You can read more about his transition in this issue. At the same time I would like to celebrate and welcome our five new Chobo-Ji residents. Alexandra Gobeille has moved with Trevor Youngquist into unit 3. Parisa Monirzad and Stephanie Morales are currently moving into unit 2, and Rev. Sendo Howells is getting settled in unit 1. That brings the current residential gender balance to five women and three men, the first time the women have outnumbered the men in our residential program.

Perhaps very few people will remember the few sesshins that Ken Eklund attended with us, including a couple of Rohatsu Sesshins at Camp Indianola. I'm sad to report that Ken succumbed to ALS on August 6. He



and I have been friends for more than 30 years. We once lived in a collective house together. Ken was an environmental attorney and tenaciously lived life to the fullest right to the end. His picture will be in the zendo for 49 days.

On August 13th, Dr. Glenn Kangan Webb with his wife Carol, son Reg and granddaughter Jessica all came to visit Chobo-Ji for the first time. Kangan founded the Seattle Zen Center and invited Genki Takabayashi from Japan to be the resident teacher, who later went on to become Chobo-Ji's first abbot. I did my first sesshin at the Seattle Zen Center with Kangan and Hirano Osho-san in the summer of 1977. Kangan has been a mentor of mine since before that time. It was wonderful to have them here at the temple, and I hope to travel to see him in southern California next year.



Beyond the items that have already been mentioned you will find a remembrance of Dave Gordon's Jukai ceremony. Dave asked for the chance to further introduce himself to our sangha. He originally trained with Darlene Cohen in California and now sits with us many evenings. Also in this issue you will find announcements for our upcoming Autumn Sesshin, Fall Intensive, a listing of new Temple posts, a note requesting support for Daichi's annual [Buddhist Global Relief](#) walk to feed the hungry, and a book review of [The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin](#).

Early this November, Rinzan, Daichi and I will travel to Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland to do a five-day bearing witness retreat with [Zen Peacemakers International](#). This will be my fifth Zen Peacemakers retreat and my third in Auschwitz. It is important for me to better understand just how convoluted and corrupted we can become as humans to treat each other so horribly. Without such investigation how can we hope to discern our steps forward? As we all realize that genocide in our world has not abated, we must come to understand ourselves better in order for history not to perpetually repeat itself. There is still time to [register](#) and join us if you have the time and inclination to deeply explore the human condition in this way.



With gassho,
Genjo

Walk to Feed the Hungry

Saturday, September 15, 2018

Good friends,

The walk is sponsored by [Buddhist Global Relief](#), which funds hunger relief projects in Asia, Africa, Haiti, and the U.S. I would like you to join me with your financial support by sponsoring me for this walk. Your donation is fully tax deductible. Here is the link: <https://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/edwardsalazar/2018-Seattle-WA>



Many thanks, and gassho,

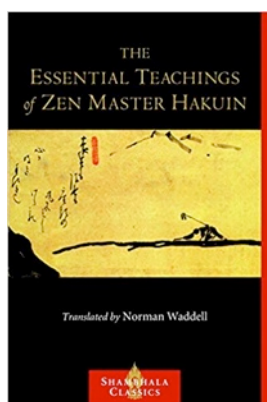
Eddie Daichi Salazar

The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin

review by Gavin Ozan Mackay

“True teachers, are harder to find than stars in a midday sky.” This statement by Shōju Rōshi, related to us by Hakuin, explains the state of the Zen school during the time in which Zen master Hakuin (1686-1769) lived. Hakuin is further warned by his teacher, Shōju, that if he does not successfully produce an heir, the Zen school will “fall into dust”.

By Hakuin’s time Zen was well established in Japan but in Shōju’s opinion there were few who had a shred of understanding and by spreading false teachings monks were bringing about the extinction of Zen. It is in response to these monks’ false teachings that we hear the roar of the tiger from deep within the jungle and then witness its mighty fangs and claws. While

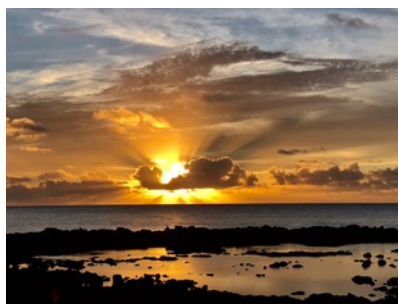


taking on and dismantling some of the popular Zen misconceptions of the time Hakuin urges us to lick up the poison drool left for us by the ancients and penetrate their words that he describes in one section as “angry bolts of lightning striking against a granite cliff, tearing it apart”. Only by taking on this terrifying task can one hope to accomplish the first and most important task of seeing into one’s true nature. This only being the start we are implored to then immerse ourselves in the hard to pass koans until they penetrate us to the marrow. Hakuin is unrelenting in his demands that we completely and utterly resolve this great matter with the attention one would give to putting out a fire burning on one’s own head and wants to make sure all of us take great care in finding a teacher who can help guide us in this quest.

Full of relevant anecdotes and poignant metaphors Hakuin is not only a Zen master but also a master storyteller and a joy to

read. Well acquainted with the masters of the past, Hakuin illustrates for us the struggles that those before us faced, the doubt they encountered and the determination they maintained, all ultimately remembered through their presence in the Zen lineage. Examining important phrases and koans of the Zen ancestors throughout the book a forest of steep cliffs and jagged ledges are left for the reader to contemplate. Hakuin makes sure to point out time and time again that even after some awakening and much training how easy it is to be misled to thinking our training is over or that there is nothing left to clarify and implores us not to stop or waiver in our searching, insuring our efforts don’t end up a waste. It is Hakuin’s sincerest hope that after you have bored your way through the claws and fangs of the dharma cave and have found yourself covered in white beads of sweat, then and only then will you help the Zen school from “falling into dust” by breathing a fresh wind into the ancestral Zen garden.

Ozan Leaves for Japan



After two years of living on Beacon Hill as a Chobo-Ji resident I have decided to move back to Japan. I’ve tried asking myself many times why but no suitable answer emerges. Nothing concrete or logical that one enjoys when receiving an explanation. So without logic or reason why would I leave my family, friends, community, job and everything familiar and comfortable? The conclusion I came to was because it terrifies and tickles me. Japan offers me endless numbers of opportunities to be outside my comfort zone and as daunting as living in another country can be it’s also very exciting with the right perspective.

Just the decision to go, pack up my things and buy my plane ticket, took some gusto. I have no guarantees, no promises made, just some dreams of possibilities and belief or faith that they are indeed possible. A giant leap into the unknown. Yet as soon as I made my decision support in various forms came to my aid — totally unpredictable and beyond any of my best planning. Now after arriving I continue to receive support and a path is beginning to open. Starting in mid-September it looks as though I will begin priest training at the temple Ryutaku-Ji. After that possibilities open again but if I can dream, keep faith and be true to what excites me, surely anything is possible.

For better or for worse (you can choose your own perspective) I am on this path due in part to Chobo-Ji. Chobo-Ji not meaning just the temple or the abbot but everyone who is a part of this community in whatever facet that may be. Thank you for allowing me to show up grumpy, angry, stubborn and cross and allowing those feelings to transform into seeds of softness, kindness, compassion and love.

With warm regards,

Gavin Ozan Mackay
Tokyo August 19, 2018



*Ozan outside of the downtown ICE office on
July 13, 2018*

Temple Posts

beginning September 8, 2018

Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik Osho
Carolyn Josen Stevens Sensei
Shika (Host - Manager)

Rev. Seiho Morris
Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook)

Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez
Eddie Daichi Salazar
Jikijitsu (Timekeepers)

Rev. Gendo Testa
George Kyoki Gibbs
Peter Shinke Ilgenfritz
Densu (Chant Leaders)

Anil Seifu Singh-Molares
Eric Dee
Trevor Heishin Youngquist
Jisha (Tea Servers and zendo care)

Rev. Sento Howells
Sally Zenka Metcalf Sensei
Inji (Abbot Assistants)

Carolyn Josen Stevens Sensei:
Fusu (Accountant)

Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez, Eddie Daichi Salazar, George Kyoki Gibbs, Trevor Heishin Youngquist
Introductory Zazen

Autumn Sesshin

Sept. 21st - 28th

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a **deposit (\$75)** and **application by Sept. 17**, 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, 9/21, 5:30pm with informal supper, introductions and orientation. Sesshin runs from Saturday to the following Thursday 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, 9/28, begins at 5am and concludes around 10am.

Fall Intensive

An intensive covers roughly the same time frame as the traditional temple kessei 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. *All unsui are strongly encouraged to participate fully.*

Chobo-Ji's Fall Intensive will start Sept. 9, with mini-sesshin, and conclude on Dec. 9. 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 to:

1) ZAZEN: 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.

2) Do a minimum of five hours of samu (working meditation - gardening or cleaning) per week. Most of these hours can be in your own home, garden or community, but at least one should be at the temple.

3) Read one book of your choosing from Chobo-Ji's [Zen Bibliography page](#) (or consult with Genjo about an alternative selection) and write a review of what you have read.

4) Keep a journal about your practice, at least one paragraph per week, and email a minimum of one paragraph per week each Friday to Genjo Osho on how the intensive is working on you.

5) Come to Dokusan at least once a week or if out of town try to schedule a Skype call with Genjo Osho. Skype calls can be short, 5-10 minutes maximum per week, or up to 20 minutes every two weeks, or 45 minutes once a month.

6) Be of service to this sangha or the wider community through some direct manifestation of our Great Vow.

Anoja Seeks the Self

The Hidden Lamp

*India, Sixth Century BCE
Middle day of Summer Sesshin, 2018*

CASE:

Anoja was a great queen at the time of the Buddha. Her husband, King Mahakappina, journeyed to hear the Buddha's teaching and became a monk, along with many of his attendants. He sent a messenger back to his court with the news, and when Anoja asked if the king had sent a message for her, the messenger said, "He gives all his royal power to you; enjoy the glory and pleasure."

But instead Anoja said, "The Buddha could not have arisen only for the benefit of men, but for women as well." So she and her attendants also made the journey to hear the Buddha and to ordain. Mahakappina, now a monk, was present, but the Buddha, using his magic powers, made the king invisible. When the queen and her attendants heard the Buddha speak, they all became "stream enterers," the first of four levels of Buddhist realization. The Buddha asked Anoja "Would you rather seek the king or seek the nature of the self?"

Without hesitation she replied, "The nature of the self."

STUDY QUESTIONS:

What do you seek, truly? And what are you willing to renounce for it? Is it necessary to leave your home in order to find what is within you?

.....

In one way or another we have all left home to come to sesshin. We've left our daily schedule, responsibilities and relationships. We may not have set them aside entirely, but at the very least we have put them on a shelf so that we can do sesshin together. I know of three people in this room that currently have significant trouble in their family systems. No doubt it's hard to be here at sesshin and not at home dealing more directly with the problems at hand. Nevertheless, here we are traveling together engaged in this deep inquiry of "what is our deep self?"

When we investigate our depth, we discover that what we call “mind” or our “self” is not limited to this physical form or this lifetime. With deep investigation of this matter, we realize that we are seamless with the vast void, or the multidimensional Mu that is beyond time and space and yet somehow is vitally here, alive, fragrant and life-giving. By this point in Summer Sesshin, I hope everyone has had at least one breath of this deep soundless Mu. This being middle day, we are at the peak of our weeklong journey together. A breath of beyond the beyond is at the edge of what we can explore with our mind’s eye. Seated here on the cushion, I’m sure we’ve all felt at least a bit more connected and in communion with the seamless ground of being.

Of course there have been plenty of times when we’ve been sleepy, confused, conflicted, or caught in our desires, likes, dislikes, judgments and preferences. It happens to all of us, but with some determination and perseverance, we can again and again dive below these surface waters into the depth of the still, dark, bottomless source of self that is actually no self at all. The depth of all being has no boundaries, no beginning and no end. Everything is connected, and when we are in touch with the ground of our own being, we feel seamless with everything. This communion generates peace of mind and a caring heart towards everyone. Over time we start to realize that everyone and everything is an extension of what we can call “self.” Everything is an extension of our true nature and closer to us than our biological siblings. Any sense of separation is an illusion.

Anoja was a great queen at the time of the Buddha. Her husband, the king, went off to hear the Buddha and then decided to give up his throne and riches. No doubt, the Buddha gave some wonderful teishos, starting with the Four Noble Truths or simply holding up a flower. Even if everyone didn’t understand what the Buddha was pointing at, most of those listening were so moved that they were happy to follow him. Receiving the message that the king would not be returning, Queen Anoja rightly thought, “Someone that enlightened, caring and compassionate couldn’t be so prejudiced as to be just accepting men. If my husband is

willing to give up all his royal power, I must check it out for myself.”

We are told the Buddha was initially hesitant about accepting women into the sangha. He foresaw that there would be potential complications and distractions in having a close-knit mixed gender sangha. Of course there are always going to be complications and distractions anyway, and he was eventually convinced to accept women into the sangha. Anyone willing to leave home, live a life of mendicancy, shaving one’s head and taking on robes, was accepted.

I visited India in the autumn of 2016. I was worried, having read a lot before my journey, that I would find significant prejudice toward women and the Dalit (people of lower castes). Furthermore, I worried that I would feel overwhelmed by the poverty, prejudice and pollution. Indeed,



I observed much poverty, prejudice and pollution. I also met great sincerity and serenity. What a mix! India today is an amazing, crazy, wild mix. Even though I was there in late autumn, it was very hot and humid. I was mainly based in Nagpur, in the central India state of Maharashtra. I only had what I was wearing, one samugi, one pair of underwear, my glasses and my zori. That’s because my suitcase never made the transfer in France to India and never followed me to Nagpur. The suitcase did eventually make it to Mumbai and waited there until I left India. I literally only had the clothes on my back, which because of the heat and humidity, I had to wash every night. Fortunately they dried by morning.

In Nagpur I stayed on a campus that was organized by a Buddhist order centered in England, which followed the teachings of Dr. Ambedkar, who was one of the principal



fathers of India’s modern constitution. He was also a Dalit, and in his life suffered much prejudice and abuse because of it. Before my journey, I read books and saw films about him. Even when he was given a high regional governmental post in pre-liberated India (he had two doctorates, one from England and one from the United States in economics), his subordinate co-workers wouldn’t allow him to drink from the same cistern because he was from an “untouchable” caste.

Today there are many intense events of abuse and prejudice reported daily against the Dalit. We have the Black Lives Matter movement here, and in India there has long been a comparable movement, which might be called in English “Dalit Lives Matter.” This struggle has been going on since at least the time of the historical Buddha. Still in much of the country, especially in rural areas, the Dalit are to this day considered “untouchable” and are the recipients of humiliations and physical abuse.

At the campus where I stayed, rural Dalit from around the country came to be educated. It felt a bit like the junior college campus I attended in L.A.. More than one



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student said to me that coming onto campus was the first time in their life that they were treated as human beings. They reported that in their rural village, their families were still excluded from drinking from the village well. They were regularly beaten in the streets for something as simple as walking in front of someone of a higher caste or having their shadow fall across somebody. And, as in the time of the historical Buddha, woman especially of a lower caste, were treated more like livestock, to be used and discarded at will. In India today, it's still so intense. Everything is so in your face. For the historical Buddha to accept women and people from the lowest castes into the sangha was the most radical thing you could possibly imagine and is still radical today.

When meeting with Dalit who grew up in the cities, I heard stories which were not as bad. Nevertheless, they all reported discrimination in jobs and advancement. Even professionals from the lower castes still talked about how much prejudice they faced every day.

In our country, the amount of prejudice one must face as a minority depends a lot on the color of your skin. However, nearly everybody I saw in India had the same color of skin. There are no definitive physical traits that reveal what caste you belong to. When in doubt, I'm told that people from the higher castes will ask someone's name because very often the origin of one's name will reveal one's caste. If one's name is associated with a lower caste, they were immediately treated with less respect and deeply imbedded cultural prejudice. "Oh. You have that name."

Prejudice directed at one's gender, sexual orientation, family heritage, geographical origin, disability, religion, skin color, etc. is undoubtedly the most insane, stupid kind of painful discrimination we can possibly inflict on each other. Yet, as we are all well aware, it's going on throughout the world, all the time. Moreover, from what I have read, there are more people who are living the life of a slave today ([30 million](#)) than at any other time in the history of the planet, people who are literally bought and sold, kidnapped, manipulated or forced into the sex industry or kept as indentured servants. What is it about our species that allows us to treat each other so poorly?

Here in this zendo we try and be open to everybody, no matter what their personal history, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or one's ability to sit on the floor. Anyone willing to explore their deep nature by facing their fears and transcending their greed, anger and internal prejudice is welcome here, provided they adhere to our form and precepts. Even someone who has in the past profoundly harmed this practice, sangha or lineage is welcome, if they are sincerely working to turn over a new leaf. I'm thinking of the recently deceased Eido Shimano and Joshu Sasaki, both gave so much, and both greatly harmed so many. If they were still alive I hope they would be welcome to do zazen with us, as long as they were making a sincere effort to embrace maturity. After all, as master Hakuin says, we all are already primarily Buddhas. We just have to work at unlocking and blossoming this innate potential. We are here to explore our deep nature, and if we manage to do that, we're bound to feel communion with the ground of being that we all share. In the midst of this communion, we can't help but feel an open heart and a loving attitude towards each other. We need only to get past our own defenses, delusions and karmic crud. Easier said than done. Let's face it, we are often caught in our own conscious or unconscious prejudice, preferences, concerns, fears, and dark or conflicted family of origin history.

Yes, there's a lot of crap to get through; however, some of it we can transform into compost that fosters our growth and maturity. If we are able to sit here patiently enough the compost becomes great fertilizer. Moreover, in the process we often work through or combust much of our muddled karmic history. To cultivate this kind of patience, our zendo must be a very welcoming place of sincere, kind practice. Unquestionably, we all have a lot of work to do. If we think we have arrived, we are fooling ourselves. Undoubtedly, there will be some missteps, blowups and blowouts along the way. Nevertheless, we've got to risk it; as we are all a part of one fabric. Without sincere and dedicated practice we will hand off any unprocessed karmic knots to the next generation.

Queen Anoja believed that the Buddha could not have arisen only for the benefit of men and not women, only for the benefit of those able bodied rather than disabled, only

for those heterosexually oriented, only for the benefit of the higher castes, only for the benefit for those who have never been in jail. No, a Buddha must be naturally open-hearted and welcoming to everyone.

However, this case shows how the Buddha tested the queen. He investigated whether or not she was there to recover her husband, the king. We are told he used his magical powers to hide the king. In other words, he probably said to him before the queen arrived, "stand behind that post," and all of a sudden the king became invisible! Amazing use of magical powers! When the queen arrived the Buddha asked her, "Would you rather seek your husband so you can bring him back and rule together in great glory and pleasure, or are you ready to give up all that, shave your head and put on the robes of a mendicant?" Without hesitation, she said, "Yes!"

Recently I was asked, "What was the time that you most felt like a Buddhist priest, and when did you most doubt this path?" Some of you know, I was once a software engineer and had my own software company called Satori Software. At least \$100,000 of the money that went into this property came from my ex-partner, who went on to be a multimillionaire. If I had stayed with my own company, I'd be a multimillionaire. And I often thought, after shaving my head and following Genki Takabayashi around from house to house because we didn't have the money to buy a place, "What the hell have I done? I've decided to live a life of sesshin after sesshin? What a fool!"

The time I felt most like a Buddhist priest was getting past my own fear about sitting, chanting and eating with the people residing in a leper colony in Japan. I was training at Ryutaku-Ji in 1981 and after sesshin the monks would go to the leper colony to be



with the residents for a day. Most were severely deformed by the Hansen's disease bacterium, with bandages around appendages and face. Of course, antibiotics had halted the disease, but the deformity was not reversible. During these visits we would chant the heart sutra together, do zazen and share a meal. It was only just over a year after my ordination, and I thought, "Being a Zen priest is about the care and acceptance of all beings, and the dedication to train with anyone willing to chant, bow and sit together."

What are we really seeking when we come to sesshin? For me, it is peace of mind in the midst of this crazy world. When I'm able to open to my deep nature, I get clear about what needs doing and how to proceed in a loving manner. None of us should do more or less than our part in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. In the course of sesshin I get clear about my part. And what am I willing to renounce for this "peace of mind?" In my case, probably millions of dollars, because I left the software company that I founded which subsequently got bought out for big bucks. Did you know Chobo-Ji once had a beautiful sailboat? My former software partner generously gave it to the temple to sell to help us with the down payment for this property. My former partner said to me, "I don't need this boat anymore. I'm selling my home in Seattle, as I now have homes in New York and London."

Is it necessary to leave home in order to find out what is inside you? No, but one needs to leave home in order to mature. Maturity requires relinquishing layer after layer of "home." We all begin adult life by leaving our family of origin home. Then depending on our circumstances we leave school, the military, or the monastery. Eventually we must learn to leave all of our mentors behind, including the Three Treasures. However, this doesn't mean that we have to leave our family or our practice entirely. I wasn't a monk in a monastery for very long, and even when I was, my first wife, Diane, was pregnant. Frankly, I was afraid of leaving home. On some level, I think we all are. When her pregnancy was in trouble, I came home from Japan a month early. We lost that baby, and I was there with her when our newborn died in our arms. I came home to Seattle, because that's where I needed to be, but I also had lost some of my fear of leaving home. Before I

left Japan, I was confident I could stay in the monastery for years if need be. Undoubtedly, I have fear about whatever home I will leave behind next. Will I leave Carolyn, Chobo-Ji or this body first? I don't know.

After my first long-term relationship dissolved, I married Carolyn about five years later. At that time, 27 years ago, I said, "You know, I'm married to Zen first. I'll put your needs and my needs second, but Zen practice and training will always come first." She married me anyway! Together with Diane, we raised my daughter, Adrienne, who is now in her mid thirties and lives close by. As much as I say



that I have put Zen training first, when I began to recall my pre-verbal abuse history, I thought I would die anytime I was a way from Carolyn for more than a day. Though I understood that leaving home was necessary for maturity, for awhile I became very dependent on her caring love to mitigate the terrors that were popping up in dreams and during meditation as my abuse history surfaced. Without her constant love and support, I don't think I would be here today. I suspect I would have succumbed to addictions. Today if Carolyn or even my daughter died, I know I would be okay. So there is some evidence that the practice works in helping us leave layer after layer of "home." As we continue to train together, we should be able to shed at least another couple of onionskins of our fixed sense of self.

Closing Incense Poem

Summer Sesshin 2018

The Tathāgata does not come or go.

Who sits sesshin after sesshin?

Clouds pass through a peaceful sky.

A Blue Heron leaves no wake.

Crows squawk loudly.

Jukai Recollection

by Dave Gordon

That morning I didn't suspect that anything was amiss. It was a beautiful morning at Work Circle at Tassajara in early May 2010, and Mako, my friend and administrator of the monastery, was announcing rakusu (a symbolic portion of the historical Buddha's robe) sewing classes would begin on Saturday. No big deal, right? But suddenly I was overwhelmed by an insistence that I needed to get to sewing classes and begin the arduous task of hand-sewing my rakusu. I was finishing my twelfth year practicing zazen.



Joseph Campbell, the myth guy, had warned about the perils of hierarchy, esp. patriarchal. He predicted that many people, when they've ascended far enough up the ladder to see over the wall, would feel anguish: "Oh, no, I've got my ladder against the wrong wall!" I'd felt great reluctance to get on that ladder.

But after Work Circle, instead of going directly to the kitchen, I called my dying root teacher, Darlene Cohen, at Russian River Zendo in Gurneyville, CA. I left her a question: should I begin the sewing lessons?

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A couple of days later, I received a message from her: “Dave! What are you doing? We’ve never discussed Jukai!” A couple days later, she added another message: “Go to the sewing classes. I’ll see you in June.” There was no sense trying to answer her question; I definitely didn’t know what I was doing.

One “NKB stitch” (“Namu kie Butsu”; “I take refuge in Buddha”) at a time my rakusu was almost finished by the time I left in early August. Mako handed me proof that I had completed my scholarship to do a Practice Period at Green Gulch Farm, in Marin County, starting in early October. As soon as I got home and finished it, I mailed my rakusu to Darlene. That August and September were tumultuous as my wife and I split up. I arrived at Green Gulch not knowing, again, what to expect.

I managed to visit my dying teacher in Gurneyville, CA while I was at Green Gulch. She died of ovarian cancer in January 2011.

Tony Patchell, her widower, a Zen priest, was devastated by her death, so my Jukai ceremony was postponed from April to October 15th, 2011. When I saw Tony I inquired about his health. He told me he didn’t recommend his method of losing weight to anybody. At his teisho that morning I asked him if the Grave Precepts (a.k.a Ten Precepts) are questions we need to ask ourselves to understand what should be done to meet the circumstances of the present moment. He affirmed that. It was a fragile morning as the sangha gathered around their distraught teacher: many tears. Their love for him was palpable.

On the silk panel on the back of my rakusu Darlene’s calligraphy names me Dai Ki, Etso Gyo, “Vast great energy opportunity, joyful practice”.



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, or an affiliated temple, 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 middle day of Summer Sesshin, Tuesday, June 29, 2018, Trevor Youngquist did Jukai (Precept and Dharma Name Ceremony). He began training with Genjo Osho more than five years ago when he was an undergraduate student at Seattle University.

Here are some of Trevor’s own words on why he wanted to do this ceremony:

I wish to do Jukai at this time because I am ready to formally commit myself to the precepts and to become more engaged in the Chobo-Ji community. I’ve considered doing Jukai for the past five years or so, but it never felt quite right to me. In prior years, the precepts sounded like a set of

limitations that I would place on myself in the interest of getting more serious about my meditation practice. These limitations were attractive to me in some ways, but also felt like a quiet “should” in the back of my head: “I *should* do Jukai because it will help me take my practice more seriously and give me a deeper sense of belonging at Chobo-Ji. I *should* take these precepts to not kill/not lie/avoid intoxicants/use right speech/etc.” Yet I wasn’t sure I really wanted to commit myself to doing these things. I was at a point in my early twenties where I wanted to push limits, I wanted to be free, I didn’t want to be burdened by guilt when acting in ways that might be indulgent or not of my highest moral integrity.

I’ve now lived enough years to begin to understand the hollowness of many of those things the precepts guide us to avoid... In such a time, my life is calling me to see the parts of myself in pain and struggle and to attend to them like a loving parent, rather than to abandon them. I’ve had similar lessons reveal themselves over time regarding lying, over-indulgence, being quick to blame, and being righteous in my opinions. When practiced, these actions sow seeds of complexity, constriction, and isolation from myself and others.

I now feel that I’m ready to take the precepts because I’m of a new mind. It’s become increasingly clear to me that my primary aspiration in life is to live with love for myself (and all parts that comprise me) and for others. As I’ve aligned with this intention and began to make actualizing it a





recurrent theme each day, I've found myself acting out the precepts because such wholesome action is what feels best in my body and simply makes intuitive sense. They are no longer a "should" or an obligation, they are a means of being true to a deep calling inside of me, and I believe the precepts will serve as a friendly guide for reference and support when life poses its inevitable challenges.

It was helpful in the precept classes to discuss with Seicho how there are exceptions to every rule. Inevitably, there will be times in which I do not act in accordance with the precepts, or I have to use my discernment to interpret them in situations where there is no good choice. For instance, we made the decision to kill hundreds of ant visitors that had come to inhabit our kitchen just several months ago. This did not feel great, but I felt certain it needed to be done. In order to best keep these vows, I believe intention and mindfulness will be key when consciously straying from the precepts. Due of human conditioning and the bumpy journey of life, I will sometimes act out old patterns or react unconsciously in ways that are not aligned with these precept vows. At times in which I do not act from my highest honor, I hope to maintain awareness, have kindness and compassion for myself, and to learn from the experience so I may continue to grow on my journey.

I'm also ready to do Jukai as a way of more fully committing myself to the Chobo-Ji community and the gifts of practice that are nurtured here. Ever since I first came to Chobo-Ji 5-6 years ago, I've felt a sense of

home, belonging, and naturalness here. I received many gifts in my time here and to me, Jukai, along with becoming a Chobo-Ji resident, represents a means of becoming more supportive of, and integrated with, this place of practice and those who practice here.

Regarding a dharma name, I would love to have it be something that connects me to my highest aspiration, to be loving and to embody heart-centered consciousness.



Genjo Osho gave Trevor the Dharma name: Hei (平) - Shin (心), Tranquil (easy going) - Heart-Mind.

Introduction to Zen

Eight week exploration
starting October 2, 7:30 pm

Please come and join us for an 8-week exploration of Rinzai Zen practice. Tuesdays - 7:30 to 9:00 pm, beginning October 2nd and concluding November 20th.

A \$50 donation is suggested for the series, but any amount you care to give is accepted. No one will be turned away because of lack of funds.

Each class can be taken as a stand-alone. No prior experience with meditation practice is required and old-timers are also welcome to attend and share their thoughts and questions.

As a bonus with the full fee, you may attend either the October or November Zazenkai (half-day sit) at no additional cost.

October 2nd will concentrate on *zazen* (seated meditation) instruction.

October 9th will explore *mindfulness practices*, such as chanting, walking, bowing and tea.

October 16th will explore the *expanding circles of meditation* practice that bring us more fully into our daily lives.

October 23rd will dive into the use of *koans* (Zen parables) as a way to explore our own deep nature and how to juggle and harmonize the relative, absolute and transcendent.

October 30th will explore the *Four Noble Truths*.

November 6th will explore the *Noble Eightfold Path*.

November 13th will explore the *Four Great Vows*.

November 20th will explore the *Ten Precepts*.

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: 9/2, 9/16, 9/30, 10/7, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11, 11/25

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-9:00pm (except 9/25 & 12/4)

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

Board Meeting ...

Autumn Sesshin (weeklong Zen intensive) ...

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

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

Board Meeting ...

Rohatsu Sesshin (weeklong Zen intensive) ...

Sept. 9, 5am - 11:15am

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

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

Oct. 14, 5am - 11:15am

Nov. 18, 5am - 11:15am

Nov. 18, 11:30am - 1:30pm

Dec. 1 (3:00pm) - 9 (11am)

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Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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