



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

The colors of this autumn have been particularly bright as summer transitions to winter. The Chobo-Ji sangha has also



been going through some significant transitions. We had a very well-attended Autumn Sesshin the last week of September that concluded with a Jukai ceremony. On October 5, Bodhidharma Day, as I entered my 40th year as an *unsui* (cloud and water person – ordained Zen priest/monk in training), many Chobo-Ji sangha members traveled down to Portland to attend the Dharma Heir Ceremony for Rinzan Osho at [No Rank Zendo](#). After he passed through five koan gates, I formally acknowledged Rinzan Osho as one who can pass on our Rinzai Zen koan lineage. Back in Seattle, four of Chobo-Ji's sangha residents departed and three sangha members have joined our residential practice. There have also been some significant passages of friends or family members of our practice community. And these are just some of changes we have experienced as a sangha. Impermanence, in all its forms, is clearly evident at this time.

Thirty people participated in our Autumn Sesshin, most full-time. The majority of attendees came from Washington and Oregon, one person from California, two came from BC, and my friends Reiner and Didi came all the way from Germany. It was very gratifying that good health allowed Sharon Meho Petit Sensei from [Stone](#)



Autumn Sesshin 2019

[Blossom Sangha](#) in Wenatchee to attend a full sesshin again, and sad that, because of an injury, Joriki Osho from [Blue Mountain Zendo](#) in Pennsylvania had to cancel his flight.



Didi & Reiner

Rinzan Osho gave an inspiring Dharma Talk on the second day. The middle day Teisho is transcribed for this issue and all of the four *Book of Equanimity* Teishos can be heard on [Chobo-Ji's podcast channel](#). Our *Dai Tenzo* (chief cook) was Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez and her principal assistants were George Kyoki Gibbs and Calvin Gimpelevich. As usual the meals were scrumptious. At one

point, Tom Shodo DeGroot Sensei, who did not attend this sesshin, came from home to prepare a lunch for us. Thank you so much Shodo! The *Shika* (Host/Manager) for this sesshin was Eddie Daichi Salazar assisted by Rev. Sendo Howells. Daichi and Sendo managed our sangha *samu* (work meditation) assignments and worked hard to help sustain a wholesome sesshin atmosphere throughout the week. Sally Zenka Metcalf Sensei graciously oversaw our outdoor samu projects. Rev. Gendo Testa served as our *Jikijitsu* (Time Keeper) and held us all to the strong form needed for deep practice in the *zendo* (meditation hall). Rev. Seifu Singh-Morales was our Densu (Chant Leader) who kept the beat for us and blossomed further into this post over the course of the sesshin. Elijah Seigan Zupancic, assisted by Ben Barnett, Sam Tullman and others, kept us buoyed with snacks and well lubricated with coffee and tea as our *Jisha* (Tea Server). Kathryn Zenpo Krane served as my *Inji* (Abbot Assistant) and managed the *dokusan* (dharma interview) line. Zenpo was tapped for this post at the last moment, and I'm grateful and impressed by how she adapted to her role like a duck to water. On the last day of sesshin Calvin Gimpelevich took the precepts and received a Dharma Name in our

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Jukai ceremony, more on this later in this issue.

Rick McDaniel has written a new book titled *The Story of Zen* that has just been published. Rick asked me to write the forward, which I have included in this issue. Rev. Sendo Howells is writing a proper review, which she says will be ready by the winter issue of Plum Mountain News. As I say in my forward, "If someone asks me for just one reference book on Zen, this is the one I will recommend." If you don't already have a copy I hope you consider getting one. It includes interviews with two *unsui* ordained at Chobo-Ji, Seiho and Rinzan.

Speaking of Rev. Seiho Morris, he recently returned to Seattle to visit his son and our sangha, and sat with us for a few days. Seiho is now a regular resident at [Dai Bosatsu](#) and spends at least half his time there. He continues to work at his job back East as a network specialist. He will be returning for an extended visit as guest resident at Chobo-Ji most of February and part of March, 2020.



Also in February I'll be gone about ten days traveling to Germany in part to lead a five-day sesshin outside of Bonn, 2/10-15. If you have friends in Europe who may want to attend please refer them to this link: (<http://ohne-rang-und-namen.de/sesshin2020/>). To all my friends in Europe I hope you be able to join me, it would be great to see you.

Other offerings you will find in this issue are a report on the current doings at Blue Mountain Zendo, NVC Corner, a Dharma Heir Ceremony report, the closing Autumn Sesshin Incense Poem, and announcements for our upcoming Rohatsu Sesshin, Toya, Holiday Schedule, and please note Winter Odayaka will be Jan. 24-26. May everyone have a joyous holiday season.

With gassho,

Genjo

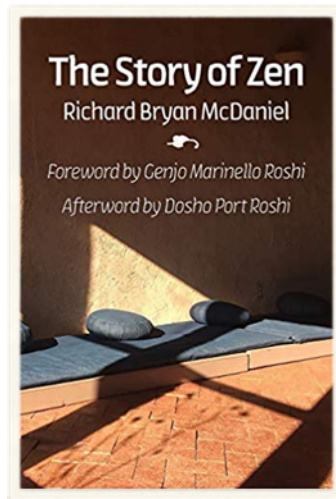
The Story of Zen

Forward by Genjo Marinello

Rick McDaniel has done something extraordinary by writing a book that traverses the evolution of Zen Buddhism from the historical Buddha to the present. Relating moving traditional and mythological stories and compelling personal accounts, and without sugarcoating pitfalls and shortcomings, he brings the whole scope of the tradition alive for the reader. As *The Story of Zen* chronicles the flowering of Buddhism from India through Asia to North America, you can immerse yourself in myths surrounding the previous lives and birth of the Buddha, his core teachings and career, his struggles, insights, the lore around his death, and how his *sangha* (community) struggled to survive without him. Reading further you will find a succinct account of the beginnings of both the Theravada and Mahayana branches of this world religion, and watch how Mahayana blends with Taoism and some elements of Confucianism to become the foundation of the Zen tradition known as Chan in 5th century China. Within a few centuries, Chan explodes in a manifestation of human genius as great as the much later European Renaissance. Reading on you will learn how Chan leaps to other countries in Asia and is called Zen in Japan. In the 12th century, two principle branches of Chan Buddhism take root in Japan as the Soto and Rinzai schools. Early in the 20th century Zen makes its way to North America and Europe, and the very first seeds of American sangha begin to take root with the works of D.T. Suzuki and Nyogen Senzaki. Arriving at post-war America, *The Story of Zen* explores how Beat Zen and Alan Watts begin to popularize the tradition. Then the major Japanese emissaries such as Shunryu Suzuki, Eido Shimano, Taizan Maezumi, and Joshu Sasaki start Zen centers in San Francisco, New York City and Los Angeles. What follows is an unhealthy idealization of Zen masters who, in turn, abuse their roles and tragically end

up harming the very students whom they are meant to nurture and serve. Today, after much consternation and some major breakups, a healthy revisioning and reseeded is taking place, and the book concludes with a look at the third generation of American Zen teachers.

When I read *The Story of Zen*, it is like reviewing my forty-four years of Zen practice. I began my study of Buddhism in 1972 when I first read the Buddha's *Sermon at Benares* in my college freshman English class. I took my first course in Buddhism at UCLA in 1975, and read *What the Buddha Taught* by Walpola Rahula. I must have underlined at least half the lines in this book, and I was hooked. *The Story of Zen* recaptures all the fundamental points of Rahula's book, and then takes the story much further.



I had my first encounter with Zen when I met Brian Daizen Victoria, a Soto Zen priest who was at that time a UCLA graduate student in East Asian studies. He turned me on to meditation, and I soon devoured the following books: *Zen Flesh* by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki; *Three Pillars of Zen* by Philip Kapleau; *Zen Mind Beginners Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki; and *Zen and Japanese Culture* by D. T. Suzuki. As McDaniel reports, these authors were

of seminal importance to my generation. After I graduated, I moved to Seattle and hooked up with the Seattle Zen Center. I did my first Zen sesshin with Dr. Glenn Kagan Webb and the Soto Zen Master Hirano Katsufumi Osho-san in the summer of 1977. After three days of intense hardship, I had my first breakthrough realizing that my limited idea of self was really only a transparent phantom, seamless with all of reality. *The Story of Zen* explores how these breakthrough experiences (*kensho*) can both aid and fool our egos about enlightenment. For one thing, "enlightenment" is not a static condition: sometimes we are clear, other times we are not, sometimes we feel like a nut and other times we don't. Moreover, seeking an emotional catharsis or a breakthrough experience can get in the way of awakening, and we must remember

that awakening is a process of natural unfolding; we never arrive.

After our small Zen center hosted the Dalai Lama in October 1979, I petitioned to be a Zen *unsui* (Zen priest in training) and did my *tokudo* (ordination ceremony) the following October. My ordination teacher was the recently arrived Rinzai Osho, Genki Takabayashi. I traveled to Ryutaku-Ji in 1981 where I trained with Sochu Suzuki Roshi and met both Soen Nakagawa Roshi and Eido Shimano. Noticing that *The Story of Zen* refers to Ryutaku-Ji many times, I realize that this Japanese temple has been one of the most important stepping-stones for bringing Zen to America. Besides my apprenticeship with Genki Takabayashi, I trained briefly with Joshu Sasaki and completed my koan study with Eido Shimano, who named me as one of his Dharma Heirs in 2008.

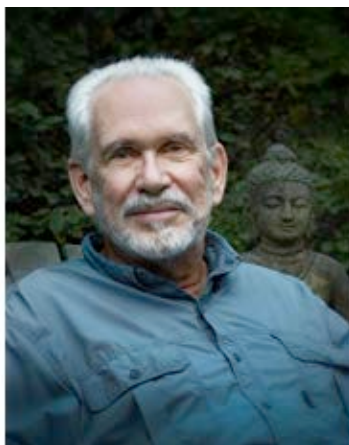
As McDaniel describes in the chapter “Things Fall Apart,” these two Zen teachers of mine, Joshu Sasaki and Eido Shimano, abused their authority and repeatedly harmed their own sanghas more than any other first generation founders. In 2010, it became clear to the whole world that Eido Shimano had not for some years, as many others and I had foolishly supposed, stopped his abuse of his position of authority with students. Upon hearing these new revelations, I was the first member of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) Board to ask him to resign. I also asked him to get treatment for his sexual addiction, which he declined. In December of 2010, I asked members of the American Zen Teachers Association to write letters to Eido Shimano and ZSS asking that he permanently desist from all teaching roles. When it was clear to me that Eido was trying to teach again after his official retirement and I thought the ZSS board was not putting enough restrictions on him, I resigned from the ZSS board in early 2011.

Two of my most significant teachers were responsible for the worst kinds of transgressions one could make with their own sanghas, and my beloved ordination teacher also had problems. Sickened and discouraged I persevered and began work with the late Roshi Bernie Glassman. The “Revisioning” chapter of *The Story of Zen* covers Bernie’s Three Tenets and his Zen Peacemaker Bearing Witness retreats. So far, I have done five of these retreats, three

in Poland, one in Rwanda and one in South Dakota. In Seattle I have worked to establish a Zen residential practice center, Chobo-Ji, with appropriate and workable checks and balances, and community service and social justice outreach. Here the only thing separating ordained from lay followers of the way is the robes they wear and the degree of commitment they have made to Zen training with the intention of perpetuating this slowly evolving form for future generations.

I consider myself a teacher of Zen form, but not a teacher of Zen; the practice is the teacher. I have no disciples, and want nothing to do with being a Zen guru. On the other hand, as a senior, and hopefully a relatively mature follower of the way, I’ve dedicated my life to propagating this form for future generations. The greatest gratification I’ve had as a Zen teacher is to serve as a catalyst for fellow followers of the way to see deeply into their original nature and more fully live our Great Vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate.

Most of the books, teachers, and all of the most significant experiences in my life related to Zen are covered in *The Story of Zen*. Now if someone asks me for just one reference book on Zen, this is the one I will recommend. Rick McDaniel has taken four



of his previous books – *Zen Masters of China*, *Zen Masters of Japan*, *The Third Step East*, and *Cypress Trees in the Garden* – and synthesized them into one volume that gets to the heart of the transmission of this tradition from East to West. I’ve only met Rick once, when he traveled through Seattle and visited Chobo-Ji, but I can tell you that he has a better grasp of the ups and

downs of this stream of Buddhism than anyone else I have met. He has interviewed more than a hundred Zen teachers trying to understand and convey the richness of this tradition with which he long has been associated and practiced. In my over forty years of training there is almost nothing here that I haven’t been previously exposed to, but I was constantly amazed with how he wove it into one seamless tapestry, filling in gaps in my own exploration and understanding. Therefore, I’m delighted by and grateful for his efforts.

After reading the chapter “Things Fall Apart,” one may feel tempted to close the book, abandoning any hope that organizational Zen can move forward in a positive way. Every form of human development individually or collectively will have bumps and falls. The last two chapters, “Revisioning” and “Contemporary Voices,” will, I hope, restore confidence that this tradition may yet healthfully root here in the West. I don’t think this will be possible if we don’t move further away from what I call “Guru Zen.” There is nothing intrinsically wrong with authority or hierarchy. I think any sort of rigorous skilled discipline or practice requires reliance on people in authority that have done advanced training. Moreover, Zen *sesshins* (weeklong meditation marathons) require a hierarchical form to contain the potential breakdowns and breakthroughs that often accompany intense retreats. However, the idealization that is often projected on the person leading a sesshin or Zen center is a poison. If swallowed by the “Zen Master,” it becomes Guru Zen. Certainly this happened in a major way with some of my teachers, including Genki Takabayashi, though much less so with others. I haven’t met anyone entirely immune to the poison of idealization, including myself. In my view, deflecting student idealization and vilification is one of a Zen teacher’s major responsibilities.

Buddhist doctrine tells us our apparent self (*atman*) is not real (*anatman*); yet, anyone without a strong sense of self is liable to be unstable. Anyone who takes himself or herself too seriously or his or her role as a Zen teacher too seriously will end up being arrogant or much worse. Without confidence based on long experience, leadership is impossible. Without a great deal of self-awareness and deep open

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heartedness, healthy leadership is unachievable. However, to have confidence, self-awareness, open heartedness and some measure of humility does not make one immune to our most basic instincts for survival, which include primitive physical and psychological needs for nurture and love. If a Zen teacher's needs are not being adequately met outside the sangha, leaders blasted with idealization and not sufficiently mature may end up feeding on their own sangha. It would be helpful if everyone doing Zen training were aware of these primitive tendencies so that we are less likely to be possessed by our own hungry ghosts. This is much more easily said than done. Anyone who thinks that multiple breakthroughs into one's deep infinite nature constitute psychological maturity is setting themselves up for a big fall. We never arrive at maturity or mastery; wherever we are we are just beginning.

The chapter "Revisioning" starts off with a quote from Zen Master Dogen, who when asked to tell something of his life replied, "Just one mistake after another." Maturity and mastery are possible only if we are deeply mindful and willing to learn from our endless mistakes. Any teacher who thinks they are enlightened, knows the truth, and has attained something to teach others is already sunk. In my view, koans should be used only to help knock at the door of our own deep nature and not as a means of propping up the teacher's mastery. When the gateless gate swings open, the artificial barriers between host (questioner) and guest (responder) fall away, and there will usually be a good laugh. I think that most teachers in "Contemporary Voices," the last chapter of *The Story of Zen*, would agree that at best senior followers of the way can be companions and guides to practices that have worked for them. Then all that remains is to point at the moon saying, "look, look!"



Chen's Mountain Flowers

The Hidden Lamp

Genjo's Teisho
Middle day of Autumn Sesshin, 2019

CASE: Chen was a laywoman who traveled far and wide visiting famous masters. After she realized enlightenment, she composed the following verse:

*Up on the high slopes,
I see only old woodcutters.*

*Everyone has the spirit of
the knife and the axe.*

*How can they see the mountain flowers
reflected in the water — glorious, red?*

STUDY QUESTIONS: Is it possible to enter and witness the wilderness without taking something away from it? Why is it so easy to forget to pay attention to the beauty all around us?"

Yesterday I spoke about how some sits are nearly consumed by our fatigue, monkey-mind, pain, or some other trial or tribulation that emerges while on the cushion. (See Chobo-Ji's podcast: [Shuzan's New Bride](#)) During such sits, even in midst of an awful storm of monkey-mind, we can learn to settle down into our own center of gravity or balance point, just behind or within our lower *tanden* or *hara*. Sitting down there is like sitting in our own inner secret garden where we cannot be moved or disturbed. Here the breath becomes very slow, gentle, with substantially less air volume, and we discover that even in a storm we can find this inner place of sanctuary. In the midst of such a storm we really can't see much of anything. It's as though my hands are interlaced and covering my eyes. The best we can do is to learn how to sit patiently in our center of gravity and ride out the storm.

Undoubtedly, if we sit here long enough, sit after sit, there will be times of clearing, where the storm dissipates. Other times it may feel like the stormy waves and cloudy silt settles. Sometimes, we may have the feeling that stormy elements are combusted,

digested, or composted by our relentless practice of zazen. In such cases, when a measure of our doubt, delusions, attachments and repulsions are combusted, we feel and are a bit lighter. Composting happens naturally, you only have to give it time. Given enough time all impediments heat up and decompose. Then our own shit becomes manure, which can then assist with our natural growth and maturation. All we need do is sit in our center of gravity and wait for it to happen. There isn't a lot of processing that we have to do. Nevertheless, sometimes we can't help but turn our impediments over in our mind. As long as we don't turn things over excessively, this action can actually help with the composting process. Inevitably, sitting long enough in our center of gravity, some material will naturally release, some will settle to be taken up another day, and some of it will be composted or combusted. To the extent that some of the distracting material is released, settles or is combusted, we immediately begin to see past all of the karma baggage that hangs on our sense of a separate self.

Sometimes our internal storm of thoughts, feelings and sensations is so loud that all we can do is just sit patiently waiting for the storm to dissipate. However, if we are not too exhausted, and we have previously made some progress communing with our own depth, we may be able to drop down from our center of gravity, and sink towards the center of the Earth and the infinite depths beyond that. Once we have encountered what we vocalize as Mu, through glimpse after glimpse or a full-blown breakthrough, over time we develop confidence and faith in our own experience. Remembering this experience, we can use it as a seedling to root again in the depth we have previously encountered. Eventually we become more and more practiced at being able to dive into, or let go into our own depth. In other words, with lots of practice, it becomes easier to drop into Mu even in the midst of a serious storm.

Actually, it is not that hard to sit far beneath the surface waves of a severe storm of mental formations. But when I'm exhausted this becomes much harder, and like everyone else, I'm often exhausted in sesshin. Yet, without exhaustion our natural defenses remain strong and there is no place or opportunity to stretch our capacity to move more consistently towards the depths

of the intimate infinite. When we use our vulnerability, experience and determination to stretch, we slowly become more skillful at stepping back from our own narrow sense of personal identity and all the karmic baggage that hangs on our identity. As we learn to more confidently and consistently drop down past our attachments to our outward identity it becomes easier to commune with Mu. Whenever we can do this, even though sometimes nothing is combusted or changed, we start to see the wider world and our inner landscape clearly. When we learn how in the midst of exhaustion and other encumbrances to slip through a crack into our depths for even a moment, then we will see past all of our complications, doubts, fears, attachments, compulsions, worries, regrets, and even grudges. Once we sink beneath our sense of personal identity, all our baggage becomes temporarily distant. As we get up from a sit at this depth then when we see a flower, hear the wind, smell the incense, taste the tea or feel the rain on our face during outside *kinhin*, we can be quietly moved to tears.

This kind of experience is of course wonderful. But I warn you it is also a kind of spiritual bypassing. In such moments, often nothing has been composted or combusted. In other words, one's complications haven't gone anywhere. Indeed, we feel very distant from them, and for a while we see clearly. Eido Shimano often spoke at length about combusting our delusions and karmic baggage; however, there is plenty of evidence that shows that he and other teachers I've trained with did not do this sufficiently. With lots of training and experience doing zazen it becomes relatively easy to drop beneath our complications rather than combust, compost or otherwise untangle them. That's why being a beginner is in some ways more advantageous than someone who has sat for decades. (laughter) If we haven't yet learned how to easily drop into the intimate infinity of Mu, then we're more stuck composting, combusting or digesting all our fears, doubts, attachments, repulsions, regrets and grudges. Only by confronting and composting our karmic baggage can we hope to transform it into lasting maturity.

With enough glimpses into deep reality, we begin to have faith of something beyond ourselves, and that's what this koan concerning laywoman Chen is about. She

actively explored the practices and offerings available and after moving through many teachers, she had a breakthrough and composed the following verse:

*Up on the high slopes,
I see only old woodcutters.
Everyone has the spirit of
the knife and the axe.*

*How can they see the mountain flowers
reflected in the water — glorious, red?*

Her verse was significant in her day and it is just as significant now because it reveals something timeless about the human condition. Of course in Chen's day there weren't so many pollutants or people. I wonder how her verse might have come out in this day and age. When she says, "Up on the high slopes, I see old woodcutters," she is clearly seeing people just going about their labor, collecting what they need to live, building their homes, worried about security, everyone working to have enough and maybe a little bit more. "Woodcutters" is a metaphor for every vocation. The line, "Everyone has the spirit of the knife and the axe" reveals how when we as humans need something, we just go and get it. We either cut it down, get it from our stores, or trade for it. Once we have what we want, we consume it, store it, or sell it. As human animals we are a lot like chipmunks searching for what we need to consume or store. When the world population was a whole lot smaller, and the resources of the planet seemingly inexhaustible, there was no perceived harm in perpetually using the knife and axe. It was natural to cut, cut, cut, consume, consume, consume.

Now add billions of people and a kind of voodoo global economics to the mix. In my view, economics is a pseudo-science. Most of what I observe in economics is a pyramid scheme, which uses formulas that generally assume infinite resources, infinite consumption, allowing for infinite profit. When resources become less available, no problem, they just become more precious and therefore more profitable. (Of course there are many economists such as Yanis Varoufakis who see through these delusions, but unfortunately their view have not yet awakened or redirected the world economy.)

If we're just taking care of ourselves, our family and our village, there are not many complications, but as Chen's next line

points out, if people always go about their labors with knife and axe, "how can they see the mountain flowers?" If we're so caught up in our labors working to have enough resources for food, shelter and security, we're going to miss the mountain flowers, the turning leaves, the drop of dew, the sound of the ocean waves, or the canopy of stars seen on a clear high desert night. We're going to miss the moon reflected on the waters, or the glorious red of a rose.

If Chen were alive today I think she would be a lot like Greta Thunberg. She sees what we're not seeing. She sees the flowers, the forest, the rising temperature, the dying species, the climate displaced, the world as it is. Greta is worried, and rightly so, about her future, our future. More than likely, she'll be around longer than anyone in this room. She talks about the upcoming environmental tipping point. If we continue



to exhaust enough fossil fuels, increasing the atmospheric CO₂ quotient enough to raise the average planet temperature by 1.5 °C, science tells us there will be a cascading calamity that will not be easily reversible. Of course earth will work it out, our planet has faced and recovered from much worse calamities. However, a mass extinction has already started, and there is the possibility that our species may prematurely find this planet inhospitable. Our future and certainly our children's future is in peril. We can't just go on with endless cutting and consuming. We must stop to really see the flowers, leaves, stars, trees, rivers and oceans as they are.

This truth puts a heavy burden and responsibility on those who are engaged in the practice of looking and seeing the world as it really is. What are we going to do about it? I'm not here to say. Here we are at the peak of sesshin – and hopefully at this point we must know that we can't go back to our homes, only to resume our old

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vocation with our knife and axe. Metaphorically speaking, we can't continue to chop and cut all that we need and then more. What will we do? It's a great koan. At sesshin we investigate, "what is this, and who's asking?" Leaving this sesshin we must ask, "what can be done and how will we do it?" How will we proceed? I don't know, and I'm not saying we have to know. But we had better address this koan. This is not like Chen's time. We can no longer just accept most people going about their business, missing the flowers. We're beyond that now! Zen training has long been about seeing what is real. It is imperative to ask, what do we do when we see? Really seeing the flowers reflected in the water, what actions are we going to take?

It's impossible to enter and witness the wilderness without receiving something from it. Hiking in the woods, walking along our coast, or trekking up to the mountains is sure to be eye opening in one way or another. Perhaps one simple thing we can do when we return home from sesshin is to invite our families and friends to get out in the wilderness! Right? If we are in the wilderness long enough it becomes nearly impossible not to see things as they are. And seeing things as they are it becomes nearly impossible not to care.



This is our Great Vow that we chant multiple times each day, to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate. We vow to care for the seamless, multidimensional fabric of reality from which we can't be separated. It is our responsibility to care for the fabric of the planet. In a few days we will conclude this sesshin. How then will we do what needs doing?

Closing Incense Poem

Autumn Sesshin 2019

Who hears the wind chimes?

Who hears the silence?

*Mind awakens to itself,
but is nowhere to be found.*

*Aligning with loving presence,
self is forgotten.*

The cool breeze leaves no trace.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Nov. 30 - Dec. 8

Please help us get an accurate count by sending a [deposit and application](#) by Nov. 24, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check, \$90 or more, to Chobo-Ji and leave it in the bowl by the zendo entrance, mail (Chobo-Ji, 1733 S. Horton St. #7, Seattle, WA 98144) or use [PayPal](#). The online [application](#) is a fillable pdf, which you can drop off at the zendo, send by post or email it.

The cost of sesshin is \$440 (less one month's dues for members). We will leave from Chobo-Ji, on 11/30, by 3PM with informal supper, introductions and orientation to follow upon arrival at the [Gwinwood Conference Center](#) in Lacey, WA, near Olympia (6013 30th Ave SE Lacey, WA 98503). Sesshin concludes the morning of Sunday, Dec. 8 around 10 AM. Departure flights should be made for no earlier than 3PM, 12/8. Please bring a sleeping bag, toiletries, sitting clothes with layers, work clothes and a towel.

From the North:

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

From the South:

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

From either direction:

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

Shiho-Shiki

Dharma Heir Transmission Ceremony
by Cort Smith

Through the process of Dharma Transmission, a Zen teacher acknowledges a wondrous heart-mind-to-heart-mind recognition with his student, acknowledging that student's readiness to carry and transmit the Rinzai Zen tradition to future generations thus linking that student with the unbroken stream of Zen's lineage, tracing itself back to the historical Buddha.

On October 5th, 2019, at the Portland Dharma Center, Genjo Marinello Roshi passed the staff acknowledging this heart-mind-to-heart-mind recognition, known in Japanese as inka, to Rinzan Pechovnik Osho. Genjo Marinello is the abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji in Seattle, Washington. Rinzan Pechovnik Osho is the founding teacher of No-Rank Zen Temple in Portland, Oregon.



Among the dignitaries present to witness the Dharma Transmission Ceremony were Kakumyo Lowe-Charde, Abbot of Dharma-Rain Zen Center in Portland Oregon; David Shunkou Komeiji, priest in the Shingon Buddhist tradition; Sakula Reinard, teacher at Friends of the Dharma in Portland Oregon; Domyo Burke, founder of Bright Way Zen in Portland Oregon; Genko Rainwater, a transmitted teacher at Dharma Rain Zen Center; and Ryushin Creedon a Zen teacher in Corvallis Oregon. Also present as honored guests were Rinzan's wife, Anne Pechovnik, his two children, Joseph and Seshia Pechovnik, and his mother, Micki King.

Sixty guests were in attendance. Shakuhachi music performed by Onsetsu Evan Cordes set the tone while the honored guests processed in, followed by the sounding of the wooden *han*, bringing the audience to attention before Genjo Roshi entered the room. After Roshi made prostrations, four peers serving as Dharma Gates took their places to act as barriers through which Rinzan, dressed in simple pilgrims robes, had to pass before presenting himself to Genjo Roshi.



Each Dharma Gate posed a question, or koan, to Rinzan. When satisfied with his answer, they shouted "Hai!" – the Japanese word for "Yes!" – affirming their approval and letting Rinzan pass on. When Rinzan

finally presented himself to Genjo Roshi, Roshi asked a series of final challenging questions, each pointing to Rinzan's motivation for taking on the teachings as a student and sharing them as a teacher. When satisfied with Rinzan's answers, he firmly stamped a ceremonial staff on the floor before handing it to Rinzan. This symbolized the transmission, or recognition, of Rinzan as his Dharma Heir.



Rinzan departed briefly to change out of the pilgrim's robes into his more formal attire. Upon returning, Rinzan participated in ceremonial chanting and, with the four Dharma Gates as witnesses, prostrated himself during the chanting of the names of both female and male dharma ancestors stretching back through the millennia, formally joining them in the lineage.

At the conclusion of the chanting, Genjo Roshi made a short speech, emphasizing the heart-mind-to-heart-mind recognition. Genjo spoke of his trust in Rinzan's ability to carry the Rinzaï Zen lineage forward to the next generation, and the need to bring ever-increasing inclusivity into the practice.

He also emphasized the need for continued harmony with the maha-sangha and the never-ending process of maturation that requires investigation into one's own psychology and character.

Rinzan then gave his [first Teisho](#), a lecture distinguished from a regular Dharma Talk as coming from one who has received transmission. He presented a koan from the Rinzaï Roku (the recorded teachings of Master Rinzaï) on the "True Person of No-Rank." This honored both the naming of the No-Rank temple Rinzaï founded as well as his full entry into the Rinzaï lineage:

"From your lump of red flesh there is a True Person without Rank who is always going out and coming in through the face. If you have not yet testified to this, look! Look!"

In his Teisho, Rinzaï spoke of the fundamental ordinariness of practice and the realization of our deep nature that already flows through all of us, saying that the true person of no-rank that Rinzaï speaks about shines through all things. This is already true. We simply don't yet realize it. With his practice and the guidance of his teachers, beginning with

Hogen and Chozen Bays Roshis, from Great Vow Monastery, on through Genjo Roshi, Rinzaï came to see this for himself. But true realization, he cautioned, comes not from merely experiencing the brightness that shines forth. One must act from it. True realization is not simply knowing this truth but functioning from this truth. Zen practice teaches us to live in the world in such a way that the light shines through us in how we care for the world. In such a way, our practice is never ending, and maturation in



Continued on next page...

the way is manifested in a very ordinary and obvious manner. The true person shines through us in a mere hand-shake, or raking leaves, or picking up someone's spilled bag of groceries, or handing a couple dollars to a person in need.



The Dharma Transmission ceremony ended with the chanting of the Four Great Bodhisattva Vows, the first of which echoed Rinzan's Teisho and, in Genjo Roshi's translation, states, "However innumerable beings are, we vow to care for them all."

Rinzan Osho began his Zen training in 2004 at Zen Community of Oregon. He began training and eventually ordained under Genjo Roshi in 2013. As prerequisite to Dharma Transition, Rinzan completed the Rinzai-Hakuin koan curriculum a year ago, passing koans in the Mumonkan (Gateless Gate), Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record), Rinzai Roku, Tozan's Five Ranks, and finally the Ten Precepts presented as koans. Rinzan founded No-Rank Zendo in 2013 and began leading sesshin at No-Rank when he was made an Osho, full priest, in 2016. Rinzan lives in Portland Oregon with his wife, Anne, where he also works as a practicing psychotherapist.



Moving the Heart

By: Ryuun Joriki Baker, Osho

Last spring, after carefully considering the best interests of the sangha and my family, Blue Mountain Zendo decided to move. Many of you know that Blue Mountain Zendo found itself the focal point of a group of neighbors who did not want Buddhists as neighbors, even though the property was located in the mountains and on two acres of land. After six years of trying to remedy the situation, there was no sign that it was ever going to improve. Contrary to improving, the violence began spilling out to other neighbors who were being singled out for supporting us – it was time to go. In the spring of 2019 Blue Mountain Zendo began its search for two new spaces, a city zendo and a country temple.

It was decided that our initial move in 2013 to Andreas, PA, made weekly practice impossible for many students still living in the city of the old location. Moving back to that area would allow us to reconnect with many of the previous members who were unable to make the hour+ drive to attend the temple. So, we set out to look for a space that we could use for zazen one or two nights every week. I had remembered a brief conversation that I had with Genjo, Osho about his Quaker practice. He said that the Quakers sit in a similar way to Zen students and that he considered himself a "Zen – Quaker." Additionally, it sounded like it would be a good fit but, was there a Quaker group in the Lehigh Valley? I knew nothing of the Quaker faith and had no idea how to approach them. "Hello, we sit in robes in the dark, walk in circles, hit each other with sticks and chant in three foreign languages. Can we rent your space?" I sat for a few hours reading about Quaker practice before I was convinced that it just may work. I reached out to the "Lehigh Valley Quakers" and after a few emails, a meeting was arranged at the "Meeting House."

Our meeting was interesting, a bit awkward at first, I think I may have said "My teacher is a Quaker" and then thought to myself "Why would you say that?". Maybe some part of me was hoping it would cut the ice and they would say, "Would that happen to be Genjo from

Seattle?" but, it came out of my mouth and onto the floor. Recovering from my name drop, the meeting went very well. We both discussed our practices and also the simplicity of the sanctuary space, which made it a wonderfully open and organic choice. Other than church pews, the sanctuary space was completely open and it has the feel of a place for deep spiritual work. The next day I was offered the use of the space and I signed the lease that night. Six months later and our weekly zazen attendance averages 13-15 people per night and continues to grow. The valley sangha is a balance of new students and seasoned students but, all beginners! Blue Mountain Zendo had found a location for their city zendo; however, what about the country temple for overnight sesshin and events?



The "Meeting House" is not designed for overnight stays and is booked solid throughout the year. The temple space would need to fill that role and offer a safe place for students to come and practice. We looked in many areas within Pennsylvania for the right property; we were very concerned about finding ourselves in a similar situation to that of the Andreas Zendo. The property would need to be far enough away from the city that it would be still and quiet, yet not so far that the drive would be over an hour away for our Lehigh Valley students. We began to look at the North-East Corner of Pennsylvania. in an area called the Poconos. The Poconos are a very rural yet diverse part of Pennsylvania. There are many residents of the Poconos who commute from New Jersey and New York City for work; therefore, there is a great amount of diversity. The area of the Poconos we perceived would be a good fit was located in the middle of the Delaware Gap National Park. The park winds along the Delaware River through New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Upstate New York, a truly beautiful and pristine place.

We soon understood why so many people wanted to visit or live within the Delaware National Forest. In return, we soon found a property that would work for my family and

the zendo and we signed the mortgage on April of 2019. We are slowly establishing a full-time schedule once again that is now split between the two sites. Attendance has been positive for the day-long events that we have had, while we continue to build and strengthen the sangha once again. At one of these events last week, two people stated they "...felt like they had come home". I know that feeling is not dependent on any space. It is an internal paradigm shift and realization of our interconnectedness with the universe – coming home. Nevertheless, these statements still made my heart well up. Anytime we can be even the smallest support for another's spiritual journey, is truly a privilege and blessing. We made a good choice.

I must smile writing this closing paragraph. For the past twenty years the zendo has prospered, struggled, and everything in between. Yet, it remains. Seemingly maturing after every step and misstep – we just march on. For me, no matter where I am, I know I am at Blue Mountain Zendo. I carry it with me, just as all of you carry your own temples within you. It has no true walls, roof or rooms but it nourishes and protects - outstretched feather and wing. During this move, I realized that the heart is the greatest carpenter. It builds for the benefit of others without the need for fence and gate. It would rather build than destroy and demands nothing in return. The heart's door is always open and its space never full. With an awakened heart and mind, we are always at home, always in a sacred place and always connected to the world around us. An "Impossible dream" Eido Roshi would say on this matter, nonetheless, (OUR) impossible dream.

Holiday Notes...

**No zazen during the holidays
Evening of Dec. 24 – Jan. 1st**

**Toya (Winter Solstice party to
"break all rules") Sunday,
Dec. 15th, 10AM, Potluck**

**New Year's Day Celebration
and Potluck, 10am – noon**

NVC Corner

Sally Zenka Metcalf Sensei

"...Even if someone names us as a sworn enemy and persecutes us, we should be warm and compassionate towards them. Their very abuse conveys the Buddha's boundless loving-kindness for us. It must be seen as a compassionate device to liberate us entirely from our own egoistic delusions and attachments we have built up from the beginning-less past."

– excerpt from the Preface to Torei Zenji's Bodhisattva's Vow

Have you wondered what the evocative excerpt above means? Is it a Buddhist version of turning the other cheek? How can abuse possibly convey Buddha's loving kindness, or be a compassionate device to free us from delusion? For me, Nonviolent Communication sheds light on this ancient Zen passage.

One of the happiest applications of my Buddhist practice is cultivating loving relationships with sangha members, coworkers, and the people and creatures I move among daily. This is my joy and my challenge.

However, I run aground on conflict—especially when I'm accused or blamed. I'm suddenly triggered, big time, and enveloped in a storm of fear, defensiveness and knee-jerk judgmentalism. I ardently want to forgive and to reconcile conflict lovingly, but my frightened negativity is like an insistent pointing finger aimed at an offending person. YOU are the problem. YOU are to blame. YOU are wrong. YOU need correction. I call this determined pointing "youing."

What I began to notice about youing is the more I point at you as the problem in our conflict, the more alienated from you I become; and the farther from forgiveness and loving connection I'm driven. It's a bit like trying to force the two wrong ends of a magnet together, only to feel them spring apart. This is separation—the greatest delusion of all, says the Buddha.

Nonviolent Communication has turned out to be a compassionate device to free me

from youing. First, NVC requires me to deeply listen to my assumed antagonist with openhearted curiosity and the desire for connection. Immediately I discover it's impossible to be genuinely curious and simultaneously point the finger of blame—youing diffused!

Next, I'm urged to guess what my adversary may feel. Suddenly I'm flung inside my foe in search of very human emotions. I have those and can relate. I meet their fear, frustration, grief, disappointment, longing; and, in meeting these genuine feelings, am touched. The distance between me and the other dissolves. Now we stand together in the landscape of intimacy.

Finally, I'm called to look deeper—into the realm of the other person's universal human needs. Universal needs are those shared across the planet by all people. These are needs such as to be heard, to be acknowledged and appreciated, to create, to heal, to be safe, to serve, and the needs for communion, inspiration, rest, peace, love, and many more. Beneath every alienation are deep human needs calling to be met.

When conflict first begins with another, I may see them as unforgivably selfish, controlling, and narrow-minded. They may see me in an equally judgmental light. By looking for deep human needs in each other, we may discover that what we interpreted as controlling might be the pressing need for safety. What seemed selfish might be fiercely defended independence. What seemed narrow-minded might be the need to be respected for one's own viewpoint, even if it differs from another's.

The miraculous happens when we see the human needs compelling another. Our experience of the other transforms! No longer are they the antagonist in our story, but rather they become our friend and ally in a kinder world. The accusatory pointing finger becomes an open hand. In a recent NVC workshop, Kathleen Macferran said, "This is forgiveness."

*Forgiveness is healing
of the perception of
separation.*

Paraphrased from A
Course in Miracles



Continued on next page...

NVC at Chobo-Ji

Because we've found Nonviolent Communication helpful for our community, Chobo-Ji highly recommends and annually sponsors these trainings at our temple. NVC is an extension of our spiritual practice. Returning this fall, we have Marcia Christen facilitating two *Introduction to NVC* workshops on October 26 and **November 2 from 10:00am to 4:30pm**. All are welcome to either or both days. The cost is whatever donation attendees would like to make.

In January, Kathleen Macferran returns to facilitate the workshop *NVC and Repairing Relationships* on January 4 & 5, 10:00am to 4:30pm, also for donation. Again, all are welcome. Whenever we offer NVC workshops the general public is invited, so feel free to bring friends, partners, family. For more details and preregistration see our Temple Happenings newsletter.

After the January workshops, we reopen our Ongoing NVC Practice Group, to meet twice monthly for six months. It is open to everyone who's had some NVC training. For more information, talk with Sally ZenKa, Metcalf.Sally@gmail.com



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 our 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 seventh day of Autumn Sesshin, Friday, Sept. 27, 2019, Calvin Gimpelevich did Jukai (Precept and Dharma Name Ceremony).

Calvin did his first Chobo-Ji sesshin in in the fall of 2018. Here are some of Calvin's own words on why he wanted to do this ceremony:

I feel as if I've been circling a formal commitment to Buddhism for many years, partially because I did not want to make a commitment that I lacked the maturity or consistency to meet. This summer, as I turned thirty and got married, the resistance shifted into a desire to root into my communities and beliefs. I used to have an abstracted interest in moving beyond my ego--with vehement attachment to the same. The ego remains, but my wants changed. Stepping outside of myself, committing to the Three Treasures, and working on the Great Vow now feel like intimate worthwhile tasks.

I've felt very supported by the community at Chobo-ji, which takes care of another part of my earlier hesitations. Having seen many spiritual communities rent by abuses of power, I avoided becoming too involved with any of the Buddhist groups I passed through. My experience with Chobo-ji has been overwhelmingly positive and I would like to do Jukai, making that commitment to Buddhism, with you.

Looking forward, to me Jukai means being serious about my practice, and facing reality regardless of what it brings.



I struggle a little with the precepts, coming from a Judeo-Christian tradition in which commandments are laws shot from God (/the patriarch/ overlord/law) that can be observed or broken, and the breaking leads to punishment (shame, guilt, hell, etc.). The most helpful discussion I've had, in taking a different mindset to the Buddhist approach, was one at the Dharma Punx peer sessions I used to attend, where the precepts were framed as a tool to help avoid falling into pits in the ground (a metaphor; in this case, for increased personal suffering). The idea of precepts as helping one avoid discomfort, as opposed to something rigid, which can only be broken or kept, made me friendlier to them.

The precept that is the most problematic for me is, "I will remember that silence is precious; I will not gossip or engage in frivolous conversation." I honestly think the difficulty I find with this is cultural; being Jewish — or at least Jewish in Ashkenazi diasporic way that I am — speech, even excessive seemingly frivolous or aggressive speech, are the primary mode (beside food) of community and interpersonal bonding. My overall struggles with the precepts are the fearful dichotomies of authenticity/expression vs. disassociation/repression. I worry about artificially suppressing my self in an attempt to do what I "should."

The Precept that easiest for me to connect with is, "I will esteem the Three Treasures; the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha." Because this last is not framed as negatively directive, and because I do already esteem the triple jewel in my heart, the aforementioned struggle does not appear.

I spoke to Zenka about the precepts, addressing my understanding and caveats, while hearing about her perspective/journey with them. She specifically talked about "No Killing" and her realization that it was not possible, being a living being, to exist without killing anything, and using the precepts as a serious personal guide, as opposed to as literal behavioral guidelines. Relatedly, we talked about the Buddhist approach to morality and ethics as opposed to the Judeo-Christian we both were raised with—as something outside the punitive and reward-based motivators to obey God's will.

A part of me wishes, to escape the Judaic baggage, for the absolute perspective on precepts to move wholly away from literal strictures, meaning everything is okay and can go—but another part of me relates this to shallower ideas oriented away from depth and towards feeling good. Talking to Zenka, I was struck by her understanding of the precepts, and the way following them deeply led her to think of her self and physical body as a process with cycles, mirroring the idea of life as a cycle and process that I've glimpsed during openings in my own practice. In that description, the absolute

perspective had a logic I do not normally feel. At this point, I do not have a depth of understanding or practice to match her understanding of the precepts, but the conversation made them seem less static, like something that could deepen my understanding of life, instead of being the static prohibitions I've tended to view them as.

When I think about a dharma name, what my mind veers to most is the negative absolute. I think that may be because of the conversations we've had about that void in dharma names. I'm a little ambivalent about putting forth what seems like a complicated marker for growth, but, as I think on it, this is the region of practice that jumps out.

Genjo Roshi gave Calvin the Dharma name: MuShin - "Mu" = No/Nothing (無) - "Shin" = Mind (心). Together these kanji are translated in English as "No Mind," and match characters in the calligraphy by Sochu Roshi that hangs behind Genjo in the Dokusan Room.



Important Dates to Remember

Daily zazen: M-F, 5:30-6:30 AM; Sat. 7-8:30 AM; M & W, 7:30-8:30 PM; Sun. 6:30-7:30 PM

Dharma Talks, Sundays, 7:30pm: 11/3, 11/17, 11/24, 12/22, 1/5, 1/19, 2/2, 2/16, 3/1, 3/15

Zen Intro: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45pm (except 12/3/19 & 12/24/19 & 12/31/19)

NVC as a Spiritual Practice Workshop ...

100 Veg Meals for homeless (zendo kitchen) ...

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

Board Meeting ...

100 Veg Meals for homeless (zendo kitchen) ...

Zendo CLOSED for zazen during Holidays ...

Rohatsu Sesshin (weeklong Zen intensive - zendo CLOSED) ...

100 Veg Meals for homeless (zendo kitchen) ...

Toya Brunch Potluck ...

100 Veg Meals for homeless (zendo kitchen) ...

Zendo CLOSED for zazen during Holidays ...

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

NVC Repairing Relationships Workshop ...

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

Board Meeting ...

Winter Odayaka Sesshin with Rinzan Osho ...

Nov. 2, 10am - 4:30pm

Nov. 9, 9:30am - noon

Nov. 10, 5am - 11:15am

Nov. 10, 11:30am - 1:30pm

Nov. 16, 9:30am - noon

Nov. 28 & 29

Nov. 30 (3:00pm) - Dec. 8 (11am)

Dec. 14, 9:30am - noon

Dec. 15, 10am - noon

Dec. 21, 9:30am - noon

Dec. 24 evening - evening Jan. 1st

Jan. 1, 10am - noon

Jan. 4 & 5, 10am - 4:30pm

Jan. 12, 5am - 11:15am

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

Jan. 24 - Jan. 26



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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