



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

I feel much more hopeful these days, ever since President Biden dropped out of the race, and it seems possible that we will not suffer another Trump administration. In the first election that I could vote in, I voted for Nixon's second term, because he was opening doors to China. As we all know, Nixon resigned because of the Watergate scandal. Back then even Republicans understood that Nixon needed to be impeached and convicted if he didn't resign. In my view, current Trump Republicans have become like a cult around him, and when the Senate failed to convict Trump for the January 6th insurrection, Senate Republicans revealed their delusion or cowardice. If Trump had been convicted by the Senate, as I clearly think he should have, he would not have been able to run again for President. I strongly disagree with many Republican policies, but this is not what worries me. Trump as



Summer Sesshin 2024

steps forward. My 70th birthday is November 5th, election day. It is not hard to guess what I want for my birthday. Please be sure to vote with your full heart-mind, regardless if you agree with my position or not.

Summer Sesshin was strong! We had 28 people in attendance. On the last day, Rev. Seifu Singh-Molares was elevated to Osho (full priest), more on this later. Once again, our Tenzo (chief cook) was Elijah Seigan Zupancic, and as usual we

feasted on wonderful meals. Rev. Seifu has now completed four full sesshins as Shika (host/manager) and we all felt well cared for. Felix Wazan Pekar was once again our Jikijitsu (time keeper) and set the

pace of our sits and kinhin (walking meditation). Our slow kinhin is now at the perfect pace! Eddie Daichi Salazar, Sensei was Densu (chant leader) and kept the beat. Ansel Braidman and Ezra Kaigen Conklin served as our Jisha (tea servers) and made sure we were supplied with ample tea, coffee and snacks throughout the week. Finally, Sally Zenka Metcalf, Sensei, once again served as my Inji (abbot assistant) and managed the Dokusan room and line. From this sesshin in this issue you will find transcriptions of my last Teisho and closing incense poem, Sendo Osho's Dharma Talk, and Rev. Seifu's first Dharma Talk as a newly minted Osho.

Also, in this issue you will find updates about No Rank Zendo in Portland, the Board President's report, which will review our new price structure for sesshins, announcements for Summer Odayaka, Fall Intensive, new posts, Autumn Sesshin, and other upcoming events. I am thrilled with all our offerings besides zazen: book groups, sangha hikes, 100 sandwiches, guest speakers, and more. May the remainder of your summer be bright and cool.

With gassho,
Genjo



President worries me. However, if he is elected, I will continue to stand for democracy and justice for all. Sometimes things do have to get worse before they can get better. Often, we see the pattern for progress is three steps back, for four

No-Rank Zendo News

by Rev. Rinzan Pechovnik

As you know, No-Rank Zendo purchased a small church to serve as our temple back in October of last year. After a whirlwind of activity that included a major overhaul to virtually every room, all major renovation is now done (with medium and small projects continuing on forever ...).



We were able to put in carpeting in the fellowship hall just in time for our first in-house sesshin last month, which was our personal consecration of the space. We now want to invite the community at large to share in its dedication as a place of practice and spiritual refuge.

The opening ceremony will be held on **Saturday, October 5th at 10:00AM** followed by a potluck and open house. (October 5th is also Bodhidharma Day, the day Genjo Roshi ordained, and the day Rinzan Osho received Inka.)



We are very proud of our work on the temple, all that it has provided us as a community, and all that it will bring forth. We look forward to sharing it with everyone. Please RSVP info@norankzendo.org if you are planning to attend.

No-Rank Zen Temple is at 75 NE Wygant St. in Portland, Oregon.

Mumonkan ~ Case 37 The Oak (or Maple) Tree in the Front Garden Sendo Osho's Dharma Talk, 5th day of Summer Sesshin 2024

Koan: A monk once asked Joshu, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Joshu answered, "The oak tree in the front garden."

Mumon's Commentary: If you can firmly grasp the essence of Joshu's answer, for you there is no Sakyamuni in the past and no Maitreya in the future.

Mumon's Poem:

*Words do not convey actualities.
Letters do not embody the spirit of the mind.
She who attaches herself to words is lost;
They who abide with letters will remain in
ignorance.*

What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? is often asked in Zen dialog challenges – mondos. The Patriarch is Bodhidharma, whose name we hear chanted so often, near the top of our lineage. And the legend – with some truth – is that Bodhidharma was an Indian monk who brought a new form of Buddhist practice to China. In China the new form became known as Chan; later in Japan it became Zen.

Bodhidharma arrived in China around 520 of the Common Era. Buddhism had been established in China beginning in the first century of the Common Era. So Buddhism had been around for a while. When Bodhidharma showed up, what happened on his arrival became a famous story which is told in the first koan in the Blue Cliff Records. Bodhidharma has a meeting with the Emperor Wu, who has wanted to see him, has heard about him. And the Emperor Wu really wants the truth from India about Buddhism. But Bodhidharma has very few words for Emperor Wu. He says, "Emptiness, no holiness." And then when Emperor Wu asks him, "Who are you?" Bodhidharma says, "No knowing." And this is not what the Emperor wanted – he wanted something grand and complicated. Wow. And this was

just so meager, and mysterious. So Bodhidharma had to get out of there. He found a cave and sat looking at the wall of that cave for, reportedly, decades to come. His first Dharma heir became the second Chinese patriarch of Zen.

Bodhidharma became the first Chinese patriarch of Zen, and our lineage goes on from there. It became a challenge for any Zen master to be asked the question, "Why did the Patriarch come from the West?" And Joshu comes up here with what seems like a total non sequitur. What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? Joshu answers, "The oak tree in the front garden."

Well, we can think of our maple tree in our back garden, but it's still a non sequitur. So, let's just think about that maple tree a bit. One good piece of advice for someone beginning to work with a koan is that if there are images in it, just sit with the images and let them work on you. Don't be analytical. Just be with the image.

And – there's our maple tree. It's massive. It's very tall. Genjo has sent his drone up above it, and with that we could realize that from the top of the maple tree you can see Puget Sound. You can see all over this neighborhood and out to the Sound.

The maple tree is old. You know that just from looking at its trunk. It's old in a very beautiful way. It seems to lean in. It's also flourishing. It has a huge number of leaves on it, at the beginning of summer, and they're still quite bright green. It's very much alive.

However, we know that it's old and its lifespan is limited. We take good care of it – we try to take good care of it – but it will go, like all of us. Meanwhile, though, it provides shade, shelter for a number of creatures – birds, squirrels. Plus fungi down there underground, with its roots. It shares with us in so many ways.



What does this have to do with the question, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?” What this question means traditionally is, “What is the essence of Zen?” Bodhidharma brought Chan to the West, Zen to the West. What is the essence of Zen? Well, this maple tree in our back garden.

Here we are in the zendo, practicing zazen, practicing Zen, paying attention as best we can. And out there is the maple tree.

This koan, as Mumon presents it, is a core slice of a longer story about Joshu which appears as Case 12 in *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu* (translated and edited by James Green).

This longer story begins with the master, Joshu, addressing his assembly of monks. He opens by saying, “This fact is clear and obvious. Even a person of limitless power cannot go beyond it.” Joshu continues, “When I went to Isan’s place a monk asked him, ‘What is the mind that the Patriarch brought from the West?’ Isan said, ‘Bring me my chair.’” Joshu concludes, “If he would be a master of our sect, he must begin to teach men by means of the fact of his own nature.”

Joshu’s visit to Isan had been part of a 20-year pilgrimage Joshu made following the death of his primary teacher, Nansen. The *Mumonkan* gives us two glimpses of Joshu’s relationship with Nansen. In “Ordinary Mind is Tao” we see the young Joshu, and in “Nansen Kills a Cat” we see an older Joshu who had become Nansen’s chief assistant. So Joshu (who famously lived for 120 years) was already quite mature by the time he visited Isan.

Now, coming back to Joshu addressing his own monks, let’s think about Isan’s response to the question about the Patriarch coming from the West. Isan said, “Bring me my chair.” That sounds as though Isan was about to give a Teisho, and he’s asking the monk, hey, bring me my chair so I can get started with your question. However, that’s all Isan says. Just, “Bring me my chair.” We don’t get the rest of the Teisho – in fact it’s pretty clear there wasn’t a rest of the Teisho. And Joshu concludes his account of the event by saying, “If he would be a master of our sect, he must begin to teach people by means of the fact of his own nature.” That statement points right back to Joshu’s opening, “This fact is clear and obvious. Even a person of limitless power cannot go

beyond it.”

So, we have to conclude that Isan’s “Bring me my chair” wasn’t the preparation for a Teisho. This was it, “Bring me my chair.” What, then, is “Bring me”? Is it a command? I don’t think so. It’s an invitation, arising from Isan’s nature. It’s an invitation to bring your caring heart.

When Genjo and I talked about this in the dokusan room, Genjo suggested, helping me see what was going on, “Imagine you’re in the hospital visiting someone and they say, ‘Bring me a cup of water.’ And what’s your response?” Well, you open your arms, you open your heart. You bring them the cup of water. “Bring me” is bring me your caring heart-mind. What is the mind that the Patriarch brought from the West? It’s the caring heart-mind. This is Isan’s mind. It’s Joshu’s mind as well, as we’ll see. And of course it’s our mind.



After that dokusan, I went back to the cushion and I started feeling a bit skeptical. Isn’t this caring heart-mind interpretation rather touchy-feeling for Bodhidharma and Zen rigor? I mean, Bodhidharma was really fierce, and scary. Look what he did to the Emperor Wu, and he stared at that wall for all those years. What would he have to do with caring heart-mind?

Just think. It’s quite clear. Why would Bodhidharma go to the trouble of an arduous journey from India to China, when he’s well on in his life, to bring Chan

Buddhism, Chan practice, zazen, sitting in the cave? That matters. It has to matter. What is the purpose of the Patriarch’s coming from the West? It has to be something that matters just enormously. And what can matter more enormously in our world than the caring heart-mind?

Joshu, having told his story, having opened things up, is there in front of his monks. And a monk then asks, “What is the mind that the Patriarch brought from the West?” Well, gee, I guess he didn’t get it. Or, he’s challenging Joshu. We know what Isan said, what can you come up with?

Joshu said, of course, “Oak tree in the front garden.” The monk said, “Don’t instruct by means of objectivity.” Joshu said, “I don’t instruct by means of objectivity.” The monk again asked, “What is the mind that the Patriarch brought from the West?” And Joshu said, “Oak tree in the front garden.”

What would it be to instruct by means of objectivity? With objectivity, you have subjectivity. You have dualism. You have separation. There’s subject and object, there’s you here and the oak tree there. There’s Joshu here, pointing, saying you look at the oak tree over there. The oak tree becomes an it, an object.

In the koan as presented in the *Mumonkan*, with Joshu’s immediate response to the question – “The oak tree in the front garden” – suddenly there can be no subjectivity and no objectivity. It’s just this, no separation, what’s sometimes called “suchness.” The listener, the questioner, is invited to merge with this suchness. Joshu, with his caring heart and mind, invites merging with this suchness of the oak tree, or the maple tree.

Going on with our particular maple tree, and I’m going to talk about it in the relative for a while, it’s the things I’ve already said about it. It’s old and massive, very moving. When you see it, you kind of feel it, and want to put your arms around it. It breathes in and breathes out. We’re in here, in the zendo, practicing zazen, breathing in, breathing out. We breathe in oxygen, we breathe out carbon dioxide. The leaves of the maple tree absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. This is what enables the sun’s energy to circulate, to be converted to our energy.

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Thinking not only about our maple tree now, but about plants on earth, the coming of plants to this planet made expansive life on earth possible. We and other animals couldn't do without plants giving us oxygen and, of course, absorbing carbon dioxide, and now we're in trouble because they can't do enough of it.

Here in the zendo, doing zazen, maybe we hear the wind chimes, we hear the birds. Hearing the wind chimes tells us there's wind, and we might even hear the wind in the maple tree. Sitting zazen, because this sound catches our attention, it might feel like a distraction. I'm supposed to be focusing on something else – nothing? I'm supposed to be thinking about my koan, I'm supposed to be untangling my knots, composting my accumulated bad karma, but now I get to escape, briefly, into what's out there. Nature. And of course, this is not a distraction at all. This is an invitation to let go – of the distracting ego that's driving our thoughts. That's the "distraction," and the joy – with what's out there, which is no longer out there, which is in here and we're out there. There's no in here, out there. Briefly.

Recently, as I've told a number of you, in the place where I'm now living downtown, I have an apartment high on the ninth floor, overlooking Freeway Park, and really more than nine floors above it because the park is downhill from the building I'm in. And so I'm quite far up and there's a lot of space out there, often with one or more seagulls soaring through it, and I can see the trees in the park especially if I go right up to the windows and look down. And I can look out and see tall downtown buildings on the other side of the park.

But my favorite way to look out is to lie on my bed, looking out the bedroom window, especially when there's a little white cloud floating by. Sometimes there's a bunch of clouds, merged, but sometimes it's just one little fluffy white cloud at a time. The cloud moves slowly or fast, depending on the wind. And I just – oh, there's nothing to judge about a cloud. You don't have to make any distinctions. There's nothing to analyze about a cloud. It really just is. And it's so evanescent and semi-transparent, and joyous-feeling as it floats by.

In poems from ancient China, some of them by poets connected to Chan, and then in Japanese Zen poems, clouds come up a lot. That's no accident. It's so easy to let go of

self when you're just looking at a cloud. The maple tree can seem more complicated, a living being like us, mortal. The cloud is totally transient, but there's nothing tragic about that. It just forms out of the water in the air and then it evaporates back into the water in the air or it joins other clouds and rain comes from it. It just comes and goes. It's perfect form and no form, no form and form.

The maple tree, with its longer but limited lifespan, might feel more sad. Those of us who've lived with that tree for quite a while know it's going to go, and its going will be death. That mortality is part of our consciousness of it, as it's part of our consciousness of ourselves. As a plant, though, the maple tree doesn't have a consciousness in the way that animals do. Even pretty rudimentary animals have something of a centralized nervous system. A tree doesn't have a centralized nervous system. It has lots of connections going on, and little parts that are connected to other little parts. The parts are sentient, the tree is sentient, but it doesn't have a consciousness in the way that I am talking about right now.

The maple tree is certainly not conscious of its own mortality, and as Genjo has said, most animals are not either. That's us, mostly. And there's another very interesting thing that seems to be peculiar to us, which I've been reading about in a wonderful book by Peter Godfrey-Smith, an Australian marine biologist who has written about the philosophy of science and the philosophy of biology. The book, *Metazoa: The Evolution of Mind*, is mostly about animals, as its title implies. It gets up through octopi (which he has also written a whole book about). There's also a particular shrimp that he kind of makes friends with, that's quite an individual, and various other relatively "advanced" marine creatures.

Godfrey-Smith shows how a sense of self has emerged in a long, slow evolutionary process of beings interacting with others as perceivers, receivers, and agents, both experiencers and active creators of effects. In this process, "selves" have been both separate and connected all along. We humans have developed through this process with brains that are more complicated, allow for more goings-on than are probably possible for even the most "advanced" other animals. And something that seems to be peculiar to us is that we can make up things. With our free-wheeling heart-minds we can construct worlds. We

can imagine the world as different from the way it is. We can imagine ourselves as different from the way we are. We can imagine human life as different from the way it currently is. And we can come to the zendo and practice zazen and experience suchness, and issue the invitation.

May we extend this mind over the whole universe, that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom. Well, let's go for it.

Hekiganroku – Case 63

Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two

Genjo's 6th Day Summer Teisho

Engo's Introduction: What is beyond thinking must be the topic for serious discourse. What transcends words should be the subject of earnest investigation. When lightning flashes and shooting stars fall, you should display the power to drain the deepest lakes and overturn mountains. Has any of you acquired such ability? See the following.

Main Subject: Nansen one day saw the monks of the Eastern and Western halls quarreling over a cat. He held up the cat and said, "If you can give an answer, I will not kill it." No one could answer. Nansen cut the cat in two.

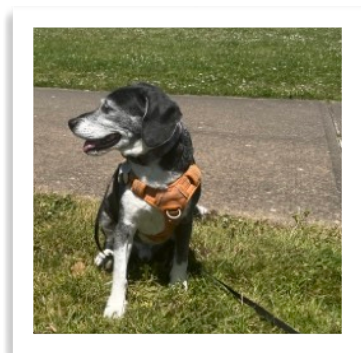
Setcho's Verse:

*Thoughtless the monks of the both halls;
Raising dust and smoke,
Out of control.
Fortunately, Nansen was there;
His deeds squared with his words.
He cut the cat in two
Regardless of who was right, who wrong.*

.....
What a bummer that this is the last Teisho of Summer Sesshin, and, how fortuitous that this is the last Teisho.

Last night, in the very early morning hours, Carolyn was coming to bed. Charlie, our rescue dog, was curled up on Carolyn's side of the bed. Charlie still has some resource guarding issues and gave her a mean growl, telling her to stay away. Because of sesshin, I had not been able to give him as much

attention as he wants and needs from me. So, he got protective of his space on the bed and his desire to have me all to himself. This exchange, of course, woke me up. I have learned that if I call him close to me, he reluctantly complies, and presses his body next to mine. Then I rub his belly and he begins to calm down. His growl then becomes a kind of whimper, and Carolyn is allowed on the bed.



In my life, I've had many dogs and cats, and of course, I was with most of them when they passed. In earlier talks I've told you about my dog Timber, a Husky that got run over on Highway 50, in the Sierra Nevada mountains, when I was in the fourth grade. And in previous talks I've also spoken about my dog, Spud, and how he would pull me around the neighborhood in the sixth grade on my skateboard. I was never a very good skateboarder, but Spud was a great "sled dog," until he saw a cat to chase while I was holding on for dear life. I so fondly remember all these important and intimate relationships with my family's dogs and cats. I remember my dog Skamp who could climb any fence, my black cat Cheeta who adopted Spud as a puppy after she lost her own litter. My beautiful cat, Butterball, who was a Calico Manx, and got run over on a city street in the San Fernando Valley. More recently there was Bruno my short-haired Dachshund who would always jump in my open suitcase hoping not to be left behind. And then there was my long-haired Dachshund, Anna, who went blind, but allowed me to be her seeing eye person when going on neighborhood walks. I fiercely loved all these companions.

This morning, knowing I would be giving Teisho on Nansen killing the temple cat, I had some of the most grounded, deep samadhi sits of this sesshin. People have left Zen practice because they were so upset about Nansen's actions in this koan.

Therefore, I hope to convey my own understanding as clearly as possible.

Nansen had 200 or so monks training with him. One hundred in each of two training halls. One day Nansen came upon the monks of the two halls arguing about the cat, probably about which hall had priority about the cat's abode and affections. I think everyone, including Nansen, loved this cat, as much as I have loved my own animals. The monks were not committing any great crime arguing over the cat, but Nansen certainly considered this argument a distraction from the core of Zen training, which is to

constantly investigate this matter of life and death. In our brief time on this planet in human form, how are we to apply ourselves for the benefit of all beings great and small, animate and inanimate? Nansen could not let this rather frivolous argument continue; therefore, he held up the cat by the scruff of the neck and said, "Give me a turning word of Zen, or I will kill this cat!" Nansen certainly expected that one of the many monks could spontaneously respond appropriately to this challenge. However, all the monks froze; not even one of them simply shouted, STOP, which would have surely saved the cat. Nansen had painted himself into a corner. Perhaps we would wish that in his disgust at his monks' inability to respond, Nansen would just throw the cat down and stomp off, but instead Nansen went through with his threat and killed the cat. Part of the koan is why did Nansen follow through with his threat?

I think we all know what it is like to freeze in a difficult or confrontational situation. Fight, flight, freeze, and fawn are very basic, albeit primitive, defense mechanisms, but it is hard to imagine that all 200 monks froze and did not speak. It came to me this morning that if I were in that situation, I might have said, "If you kill the cat, Zen practitioners will be talking about this cat for centuries!" If you imagine yourself in this situation, the core of the koan is what would you have said to save the cat? And all of us have the luxury of considering this question without the immediate threat of the cat being killed. How fortunate for us!



I have no doubt that Nansen felt miserable about killing the cat, and must have been full of regret that he had painted himself into this corner where he felt that he must follow through with his threat. It was appropriate to challenge his monks; however, was it appropriate to risk the cat's life?

One of the skillful means I use to investigate this matter of life or death on the cushion is as follows: I count off ten slow exhalations while telling myself that these will be the last ten breaths of this lifetime. I learned this technique while taking a hospice support course during the AIDS pandemic. As I release each exhalation, I internally say my goodbyes to all those I love, review my life with all its joys and sorrows, regrets and achievements.

I try to come to a place where I am ready to take my last breath and leave this life. I have found that if I am not ready to die then I am not ready to fully live. If we are ready to die, we realize how every day of this life is so miraculous, and how everything we love is so temporary.

When we sit in the zendo, it is impossible not to feel the gravity of the planet pulling us to its center, helping us, in fact, to plant our tailbone like a tap root into the center of mother earth and beyond. The earth of course orbits our star because it is in the gravity well of the sun. The solar system orbits the center of our galaxy every 250 million years because it is in the gravity well of the Milky Way. The Milky Way galaxy would fly apart if we weren't in the gravity well of a pocket of dark matter (whatever that is). Perhaps whatever dark matter turns out to be is related to the feeling I always have, when I am sitting, of being held by a subtle, mysterious, invisible embrace that silently nurtures and restores me. This is my experience of Mu. On the rare occasions when I'm able to release my life into Mu, there is a loss of individual identity and gain of an all-embracing love for the planet and the universe. Where did the essence of the cat go when it died? Where do any of us go when we die?

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Later today, this being the last full day of Summer Sesshin, we will hear the quintessential four lines of the Diamond Sutra that we chant each summer, where the Tathágata says,

*So I tell you:
All composite things
Are like a dream, a fantasy, a bubble and
a shadow,
Are like a dewdrop and a flash of
lightning.
They are thus to be regarded.*

Then the Tathágata restates these four lines by saying,

*— And so you should
Think in this way of all this fleeting
world:
As a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream,
A dewdrop, a flash of lightning in a
summer cloud,
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a
dream.*

This life is but a dream; it is our calling to live it lucidly with a mindful and caring heart-mind.

Osho Ceremony

Osho candidates are *unsui* (priests in training) who have served in every temple post, made substantial progress in the Rinzaï koan curriculum, and have done many sesshins in the course of about ten years of dedicated training. Oshos have the authority to run temples of their own, give Dharma talks, offer Dharma interviews, do Jukai and even ordain new unsui. However, an Osho is not necessarily a Dharma Heir. Only Dharma heirs can give teishos or offer official dokusan. As of this writing, Rinzan, Osho is my only Dharma Heir. During the Osho ceremony candidates renew their commitment to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha), and their Great Vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate. At the ceremony, candidates re-affirm the [Precepts and Four Bodhisattva Vows](#), and receive the title Zenji (Dharma Teacher).

On the final day of Summer Sesshin, June 28, 2024, Rev. Seifu Singh-Molares became a full Chobo-Ji priest (Osho). At the conclusion of the ceremony I asked him to give a brief Dharma talk. Here is a transcript of Seifu, Osho's Dharma talk:

Mumonkan ~ Case 16

Bell- Sound and Priest's Robe
Seifu Osho's Dharma Talk,
Final day of Summer Sesshin 2024

Koan: Ummon said, "Look! This world is vast and wide. Why do you put on your priest's robe at the sounds of the bell?"

Mumon's Commentary: Now, in studying Zen and disciplining oneself in Zen, one must strictly avoid following sounds and clinging to forms. Even though one may be enlightened by hearing a sound, or have one's mind clarified by seeing a form, this is just a matter of course. It is nothing to talk about, either, if a Zen person is able to master sounds and control forms, and thus can clearly see the reality of everything and is wonderfully free in everything they do. Though it may be so, you tell me does the sound come to your ear, or does the ear go to your sound? Even if you are able to transcend both sound and silence, how do you speak of that fact? If you listen with your ear, you cannot truly get it. When you hear with your eye, then you can really get it.

Mumon's Poem:

*If you understand, "it," all things are one;
If you do not, they are different and separate.
If you do not understand "it," all things are one;
if you do, they are different and separate.*

.....
You might think that after reading this case, I am going to discuss this wonderful koan, but I actually am not. My focus instead is on the last line of Mumon's comment: "When hearing with your eye, you are truly intimate."

What is this type of eye, and this type of intimacy that he speaks of?

Let's begin with by considering a couple of Indian terms. The first is the familiar greeting "Namaste," which literally means "I bow to you." But not just any old "you," which is why it is usually rendered as "the Divine in me recognizes the Divine in you," which I prefer to translate as the "the Beyond in me recognizes (or sees) the Beyond in you." No ordinary "seeing" here.

Consider another term as well, the Sanskrit "Darshana" which literally means a "glimpse of the Holy," and which I would render as "I invite you to see the Beyond in me, so that you might recognize (or even better, "remember") it in yourself."

In the West, we use expressions such as "the eyes are the windows to the soul," or refer to our "third eye," or "inner eye," as deeper seeing. These types of seeing sound lofty and unattainable for most of us. But are they really?



Let me use an encounter I had, which is likely similar to some that each of you have also experienced. Some time ago, I used to run a team in Tokyo for a large software company. One night, my team went across town to have dinner. I stayed behind at the office as I had to take a call from HQ, and then set out to join them. The office was close to Shinjuku station.

Have you all been to grand central station in NYC? Shinjuku is like that. Only worse. This is where there are crowds like you can't begin to imagine. And where they have personnel (literally called "pushers") to shove people into the train cars. As I am standing at the station, having decided to wait for the next train, I catch an older gentleman's eyes. We are transfixed by each other. And that look between us is not just any "look." It becomes a portal. Deep, penetrating, transcendent. The kind of look that contains an entire lifetime, which was transmitted to me, with all of its joys, sorrows, hardships, achievements, heartbreak and wisdom. But as I looked deeper, it wasn't just this man's life and mine I was seeing. But rather the lives of everyone. All of those who have been, are, and will be. All births, deaths, tragedies, happiness, music, dance, youth, and old age. All contained in one 45 second gaze. One beyond the reach of the ego driven "I," but clearly discernible by the Cosmic "Eye."

A portal to eternity. A gate to forever. The lives and experiences of everyone flashing before me. That kind of look!



Why did it happen there and then? I don't know. Why did we pick each other? I don't know. But I can confirm this was no mere gaze or accident. There was intention and recognition, even though we were technically strangers. We remembered ourselves in each other, and into each other. We couldn't take our eyes off one another. And as he pulled away there was a melancholic joy in both of us. I felt his, and he apparently felt mine, confirmed by a forlorn smile. And while on multiple levels he is long gone by now, yet he will never leave me.

Which brings up Mumon's conjoined concept, intimacy. We saw each other with an intimacy that transcended the kind we might have with our partners, children, or beloved friends. Something that runs much deeper even than that. Forever in a long, penetrating look. And isn't that the point of our practice after all?

Consider the look the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa exchanged in the well known Buddhist Flower Sermon, which details the origin story of Ch'an (or Zen) Buddhism, also the subject of Case 6 of the *Mumonkan*. The Buddha holds up a flower, everyone in the assembly falls silent, and only Mahākāśyapa smiles in recognition. But note that this is not really a sermon about a flower! Instead, it's a story about the look that the Buddha and Kāśyapa exchanged. It's that look that seals the transmission of forever, not the flower!

With all of this said, why then do we go

about our daily lives not staring at each other through our Cosmic Eyes?

One answer is that we are so intensely preoccupied with the hubbub of our daily lives that we literally lose sight of one another. As well as ourselves! Our egos can easily run rampant, narrowing our field. And yet some part of us recognizes the incongruity and disharmony of doing this, so we scurry about yelling "I am blind! I am blind! I can't see!"

Why not open our eyes then? Perhaps because we fear what we might see. We don't want to witness the death of our egos, and don't want to embrace our own mortality. We dread losing ourselves into the endless expanse of an abyss, and recoil at the prospect of finding our being untethered and unmoored, sliding into oblivion.

Well, I have news for you. We are each but one speck out of eight billion human specks. On a planet that contains millions of species, in a tiny solar system, part of a small galaxy. And the latest computer estimates put the number of galaxies in the trillions!

(Don't ask me how they came up with that number, but rest assured that it is almost certainly wrong, and that sentient beings in the future will look back on us with a measure of disdain for our positively primitive beliefs.)

But the point is that we are already hurtling through space, one seemingly without any boundaries that we can truly grasp or define. Oh why are we so worried? We already are what we fear! The tiniest of specks in a wide expanse beyond our comprehension.

Of course in Zen, "not knowing" is at the heart of our practice. But our awareness that we cannot ultimately know anything is something we can experience, deeply and truly. Groundlessness and impermanence are the only solid things in the Universe. So it is that we need not fear the intimacy of eternity, as it is always with us.

We have but to look in each other's eyes to see it.

Closing Incense Poem

Summer Sesshin 2024

Oh, this matter!

Like a dream, a fantasy,

A flash of lightning in a summer cloud.

*Who feels the gravity of the deeply
transmitted tranquil wind?*

*Followers of the way, with open hearts,
Depart as peacemakers.*

President's Corner

by Dr. Eddie Daichi Salazar

Summer greetings! I wish all of the sangha time to step back and rejuvenate as able. I am happy to report, on behalf of the Board, that the sangha remains vibrant and strong. The recent Board meeting reviewed various aspects of sangha life, and after many years felt it was time to revisit the suggested membership dues and sesshin cost structure. As all of us know, costs have increased in all aspects of life, including at Chobo-Ji. Our foundational value, however, is to make practice accessible to all. All of our fees are always a suggestion. Fees are never to be a barrier to practice. That said, the suggested membership dues and sesshin rate will have very modest increases as follows:

Suggested monthly membership increase from \$75 to \$100.

Suggested Zazenkai rate increase from \$25 to \$30.

Suggested sesshin rate increase from \$300 to \$360.

Suggested Rohatsu rate increase from \$350 to \$400. No change in Odayaka rate of \$130.

These rates help us moderate additional costs and yet still remain much cheaper than other Dharma institutions. Please know that any of these should not discourage anyone from practicing at Chobo-Ji. These rates take effect immediately and will be reflected gradually in all of our materials. Do let us know if any of these will constitute an obstacle, and we can offer a full or partial scholarship. Again, I feel privileged to practice with such an amazing sangha. I hope that you share that with me.

Summer Odayaka

August 16 - 18

We welcome both in-person and Zoom participation in our two and a half day Odayaka Sesshin. You may attend one or more days. If attending by Zoom you will need to register for each day you plan to attend ([Friday](#), [Saturday](#), [Sunday](#)). Please help us get an accurate count by sending an [application](#) by August 10th if you want to guarantee a reserved spot.

The cost of sesshin is \$130; If attending by Zoom please make a donation that fits your budget and level of participation (suggested donation \$50 each day for Friday and Saturday, \$30 for Sunday). 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.

Sesshin starts Friday and Saturday mornings at 7:00 a.m. (optional additional zazen from 5:30 to 6:30 a.m.) and concludes around 8:30 p.m. Sunday morning sesshin goes from 5 a.m. to noon.

Fall Temple Posts

beginning Sept. 8, 2024

Elijah Seigan Zupancic
Sendo Anne Howells, Osho
Shika (Host - Manager)

Felix Wazan Pekar
Tenzo (Cook)

Michelle Muji LeSourd
Charles Porter
Jikijitsu (Timekeepers)

Eddie Daichi Salazar, Sensei
Michelle Kim
Densu (Chant Leaders)

Will Rak
Brooks Donohue
Jisha (Tea Servers and zendo care)

Seifu Singh-Molares, Osho
Inji (Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn Josen Stevens Sensei
Michelle Atkinson
Fusu (Accountant)

Eddie Daichi Salazar
Intro Instruction

Fall Intensive

An intensive covers roughly the same time frame as the traditional temple *kessei* period, beginning with the first zazenkai for that season (Sept. 10) and ending with Rohatsu Sesshin. It's a time for concentrated study and practice. *Please let Genjo know if you plan to participate ASAP.* Chobo-Ji participants receive dokusan once weekly on Wednesday evenings. *All ordained are strongly encouraged to participate fully.*

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, zazenkai, and full-time attendance at 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. These hours can be in your own home, garden or community.
- 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) Attend dokusan Wednesdays in person or via Zoom at 8:30PM, or if this is impossible arrange a Zoom call with Genjo Osho. Zoom calls can be short, 5 minutes maximum per week, or up to 15 minutes every two weeks, or 30 minutes once a month.

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

Autumn Sesshin

Sept. 20 - 27

We welcome both in-person and Zoom participation in our week-long Autumn Sesshin. For in-person participation, full attendance is expected; please speak to [Genjo](#) if this is not possible. For on-line participation, you may attend by Zoom ([Zoom registration required](#)) for any portion that fits your schedule, but some attendance each day is expected. Please help us get an accurate count by sending an application by Sept. 15, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot.

The cost of sesshin is \$360 (minus dues for this month for dues-paying members); if attending by Zoom please make a donation that fits your budget and level of participation. You can use [PayPal](#) or leave a check in the bowl at the entrance to the zendo. (Using PayPal please note that your payment is for Autumn Sesshin.) We provide sleeping accommodations to 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.

Sesshin starts Friday evening, Sept. 20 at 5:30 p.m. with introductions, orientation and informal supper. From Saturday to the following Thursday, Sesshin runs from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. The final Friday begins at 5 a.m. and concludes around 11 a.m.

We offer limited partial scholarships for sesshin. For more information please email: registration@choboji.org.



Fall Book Group

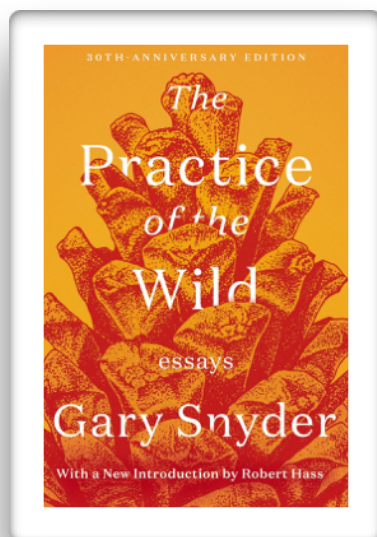
Thursdays, Oct. 3 - Nov. 14

7:30- 8:45 PM

Chobo-Ji Lounge & via [Zoom](#)

We're looking forward to discussing our next book: Gary Snyder's *The Practice of the Wild*, a collection of meditative essays Snyder wrote between 1970 and 1990 which has become a classic of North American environmental writing. Snyder has been a loved poet since his earliest publications in the 1960's; he is also a long-time Zen practitioner and a deeply thoughtful environmental activist.

In this book's "Preface," Snyder writes, "A key term is practice: meaning a deliberate sustained and conscious effort to be more finely tuned to ourselves and to the way the actual existing world is. 'The world,' with the exception of a tiny bit of human intervention, is ultimately a wild place. It is that side of our being which guides our breath and our digestion, and when



observed and appreciated is a source of deep intelligence. The teachings of Buddhism are really mostly about practice and very little theory – though the theory is so engaging that through all of history it has led many people slightly and charmingly astray. *The Practice of the Wild* suggests that we engage in more than environmentalist virtue, political keenness, or useful and necessary activism. We must ground ourselves in the dark of our deepest selves" (xxix)

We're announcing this book choice early to give those who wish an opportunity for leisurely browsing. We recommend the 20th Anniversary Edition of the book, published in 2020. At a later time we'll announce specific reading choices for each of our seven meetings. All are welcome to any of the meetings, as long as you've read the selection for the given evening's discussion. We'll set up a Zoom link for those who can't make it to the lounge.

Zen Intro Series

Tuesdays, beginning Oct. 1 - Nov. 12

7:30- 8:45 PM

Chobo-Ji Zendo

Bring your curiosity and your questions to our introduction to Zen class. This six-week, in-person course, will cover everything you need to develop a meditation practice and teaches the fundamentals of Zen Buddhism. Each class is taught by a different, experienced, Zen practitioner. Classes start with introductions, a 15 minute sit, followed by a presentation, and ample time to ask questions. Recommendation is five dollars per class. Please register at intro@choboji.org.

Oct. 1: Orientation to Zen Practice

Oct. 8: Forms of Rinzai Zen Practice

Oct. 15: The Four Noble Truths

Oct. 22: The Eight Fold Path

Oct. 29: Koan Study

Nov. 5: NO CLASS

Nov. 12: The Four Great Vows

Are you Interested in a Late-Morning Weekday Sit?

Chobo-Ji is starting a late-morning, in-person zazen period twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., starting August 5th. As always please arrive a little early to get settled. Contact Lynn Sogetsu Hernandez at lhernz@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

100 Sandwiches Program

Come and join us on the Saturdays, (once a month, starting at 9:30 AM), that we make 100 Sandwiches for people who are hungry in our neighborhood. Please see below for our monthly dates. Our turkey & cheese, and our classic PB&J are delivered in person to those in need by Marko, one of Chobo-Ji's Zen residents, with a warm smile, and good wishes.

Sandwiches are delivered to encampments in the 12th and Jackson area on Tuesdays, and Marko also shares them in the CID on Sunday mornings.

Would you like to help fund 100 Sandwiches' transformation? For one-time donations see below. Or adopt a baker's dozen PB&Js with a monthly gift of \$20. You can write a check to Chobo-Ji and leave the check in the bowl at the Zendo entrance, or mail it (to Chobo-Ji, 1733 S. Horton St., Apt. 7, Seattle WA 98144), or use [PayPal](#). If you choose PayPal, please make your donation to zen@choboji.org. Whichever payment method you use, please note that your donation is for 100 Sandwiches. And accept our heartfelt thanks! Questions? Ask Sally at Saturday morning coffee, or email her at Metcalf.sally@gmail.com.

9:30 -11:00 on the following dates...

August 24,

September 14

October 19

November 16

December 14



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

Intro to zazen most Tuesdays 7:30-8:45PM,

Dharma Council, most Saturdays at 8:30 AM – Dharma Dialogue, some Sundays at 7:30 PM

(See Google Calendar at <https://choboji.org/schedule/> for more detail and Zoom links.)

Zen Sangha Hike (location to be announced in Temple Happenings) ...	Aug. 10, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...	Aug. 11, 5 - 11:15 a.m.
Summer Odayaka (three-day Zen intensive) ...	Aug. 16 - 18
100 Sandwiches prep ...	Aug. 24, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Zen Post Workshop (come and learn what each post does)	Sept. 7, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Zen Sangha Hike (location to be announced in Temple Happenings) ...	Sept. 7, noon - 6:00 p.m.
Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...	Sept. 8, 5 - 11:15 a.m.
Board Meeting ...	Sept. 8, noon - 1:30 p.m.
100 Sandwiches prep ...	Sept. 14, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Autumn Sesshin (seven-day Zen intensive) ...	Sept. 20 - 27
100 Sandwiches prep ...	Oct. 19, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...	Oct. 20, 5 - 11:15 a.m.
Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...	Nov. 10, 5 - 11:15 a.m.
Board Meeting ...	Nov. 10, noon - 1:30 p.m.
100 Sandwiches prep ...	Nov. 16, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Rohatsu Sesshin (eight-day Zen intensive) ...	Nov. 30 - Dec. 8



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

Plum Mountain News
1733 S. Horton St., unit 7
Seattle, WA 98144

