Dear members and friends,

Fall colors fill the trees, the mornings are drenched in cold fog; I will be leaving for Poland with Dee Seishun Endelman soon to do my second Bearing Witness Retreat at Auschwitz/Birkenau. August now seems remote, but it was not that long ago that I made my second visit to Upaya Zen Center to be with Joan Halifax and Roshi Bernie Glassman. Also late in August we concluded our three day Odayaka Sesshin. We tried a new sesshin format that was lighter and more spacious. It was our intention that the new schedule would be well suited for Chobo-Ji’s Dharma Dragons (parishioners over sixty) or for anyone else looking for a more relaxed sesshin experience. We got off to a bit of a rough start, as no posts had been assigned besides Tenzo (cook). But as posts were assigned everyone stepped right up and did a beautiful job. Emily HoU Ross gave so much of herself in her role as tenzo; the meals were delicious, timely and balanced. At the conclusion of sesshin Edwin Beatty and Coryl Crane did Jukai, Buddhist Precept Ceremony, and received Dharma names; more on this later in this issue.

Chobo-Ji sponsored a Spirituality-based Gestalt Workshop the weekend of Sept. 14 & 15, run by a good friend and colleague of mine Leonard Shaw, MSW. Several of our sangha members were in attendance, and I think it is fair to say we all learned some very useful skills. It is my hope that we can host this event again next year, and that more sangha members will be able to learn from this master of Eastern and Western psychology. Edwin Kyosei Beatty has written a review for this issue.

Autumn Sesshin was held here from Sept. 20-27. Eighteen people were in attendance and most were able to do it full-time. This meant that key posts did not need to be rotated during sesshin, which gave this sesshin a strong, grounded feeling. Our Tenzo this time was Scott Ishin Stolnack, who has been Tenzo before and brought a lot of experience to the post. I got to experience first hand his fine organizational and culinary skills when I had the opportunity to cook middle day lunch with him. John Daikan Green was our vastly experienced Shika (host(manager), and kept us all in line and busy with our samu (work meditation) chores. Rev. Daitetsu Hull was our steady Jikijitsu (time keeper) and also gave a powerful Dharma Talk on the fifth day. Mike DaiUn Urban served as Densu (chant leader) and totally threw himself into the post, learning quickly how to pick up the pace. Edwin Kyosei Beatty and Lynn Hernandez did a great job supporting everyone in the important post of Jisha (tea server), providing balanced snacks and keeping us all well-lubed with coffee and tea. Mark Rinzan Pechovnik made a fine Inji (abbot assistant), and has committed to come to all of Chobo-Ji’s sesshins even though he lives in Portland. Genko Blackman Ni-Osho gave a rich Dharma Talk investigating the third chapter of Shantideva’s Bodhicharyavatara on second day, and served matcha (whisked powdered green tea) in Genki Roshi’s unique tea bowls, which everyone received gratefully on middle day. We concluded Autumn Sesshin with two important ceremonies, one designating Daiki Edward Cadman, Sensei (teacher) with receipt of a brown Rakusu, and the other for Rev. Joriki Dat Baker who re-ordained in our Rinzai lineage. Both Daiki Sensei and Rev. Joriki gave short talks about the importance of these transitions. More on this later; in addition you will also find a transcription of my Teisho from middle day and the incense poem written to close this auspicious sesshin.

The day after the close of Autumn Sesshin was also very auspicious. Josen (Carolyn) and I traveled to Victoria, BC where I officiated a ceremony affirming Rev. Eshu Martin of Zenwest as an Osho (full temple priest) and Zenji (Dharma Teacher). Eshu has committed to doing at least two weeklong sesshins here in Seattle, and it is my plan to travel at least twice a year to do some teaching at his center. Eshu was ordained in the Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition in 1999, has attended or led in excess of forty weeklong sesshins, and is a master of Eastern and Western psychology. Edwin Kyosei Beatty has written a review for this issue.

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dedicated follower of the Way. Rev. Doshu Rogers writes more about the ceremony for this issue of PMN. I am delighted by our association with Eshu and Zenwest and look forward to a steadily growing relationship in the years to come. I feel this deepening connection represents a partial healing in the fabric of Japanese Rinzai Zen in the Americas.

We celebrated our second anniversary in our new space on October 6th with a mini-sesshin, Teisho on Socially Engaged Buddhism (see: http://genjo.libsyn.com), scrumptious potluck, silent auction to benefit Buddhist Global Relief and our founding abbot’s widow, and a two-hour Wisdom Council investigating six questions around expanding Chobo-Ji’s outreach and expression. Sally Zenka Metcalf reports on the festivities and refers to a survey with the six questions so those not in attendance can also offer their input.

Chobo-Ji was host this year to the annual gathering of the NWDA teachers meeting on October 5th, caringly supported by Genko Ni-Osho’s efforts. Oddly I was unable to attend, as I was previously committed to an annual professional conference. I have participated in several NWDA teachers meetings in the past and will again. Genko said the teachers felt warmly received and appreciative of our space at Chobo-Ji. Next I traveled to Doylestown, PA for my tenth annual three-day sesshin hosted by George Lyons Sensei and his wife Patti. There were thirty-two participants, including long term Chobo-Ji associates Frank DaiUi Apodaca Sensei and Rodger Tozan Park Sensei. Robert Ryugen Savoca Sensei from Brooklyn Aikikai was again the lead Tenzo. I cannot say how or why my journeys to Peace Valley have become consistently deeper, but it is with great gratitude that I return each year.

Thursday evening, October 24th, we got to hear Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard give this season’s Dharma Talk by a senior member. Her talk was a humorous, heartfelt account about her exploration of Buddhist practice and the insights she has gained over years of training. She especially related how her Zen practice has informed and enriched her experience as a parent of her twin girls. Included in this issue is a poem she wrote for this occasion. The following day I got to spend a short time with students of Bob Henry’s Religious Studies class in the chapel of Lakeside High School. Bob has a long association with our temple, and I have always deeply enjoyed spending time with his informed and inquisitive students.

Coming up of course is our Rohatsu Sesshin, Nov. 30th – Dec. 8th. Anyone planning to attend should register soon, before Nov. 23rd, by sending a $75 deposit with the application found at the bottom of our home page at: www.choboji.org. After Rohatsu, Rev. Anshin Claude Thomas who has visited Chobo-Ji several times will be our special guest Dec. 13-15. Anshin is Vietnam War veteran and international speaker, teacher and writer, and an advocate of non-violence. Anshin and I have a deep mutual respect for each other, and I am honored that he will again be with us. Among other offerings, he will give a public talk from 3-5PM on Saturday, Dec. 14th, and give the Dharma Talk during the mini-sesshin Dec. 15th, which will start and end later than our usual time and run from 9AM – 3PM. I hope that many of you can attend these events. More details will be released shortly in our weekly email bulletins.

For the holidays and Rohatsu Sesshin there will be no group zazen: November 28th – December 8th and December 25th – January 1st. We will have our annual ringing in the New Year chanting ceremony and potluck from 10AM to noon on New Year’s Day. We have scheduled our winter Toya Party and potluck this year on January 4th from 6-9PM. Toya traditionally is a time when the Zen hierarchy is turned on its head and temple rules are broken to demonstrate non-attachment to dictates and form. For us it is a time to celebrate and poke fun at our training with skits, songs and humor, a good time for one and all. Hope you can come. Please enjoy the offerings in this issue and have a joyous holiday season.

With gassho,

Genjo

2nd Anniversary Celebration
by Sally Zenka Metcalf

Can we believe it’s been two years since Chobo-Ji opened on Beacon Hill? Remarkable! The garden alone seems so mature; and there is an ancient feel in our brand new Zendo. Zen residents are filling our apartments, just as we dreamed, and Beacon Hill neighbors are discovering Introductory Zen on Tuesdays. There must be something to the adage, “if you build it, they will come.” Certainly, we have a lot to celebrate!

Our second anniversary celebration on Sunday, October 6th, inspired lively attendance by sangha folk, both new and long-standing. The wizened mixed cheerfully with a glowing group of practitioners’ offspring. (The little ones loved running in the Zendo.) The children were sweetly cared for by Genjo and Carolyn’s daughter, Adrienne, who herself grew up in our sangha. Scrumptious food was beautifully laid out, and promptly disappeared over catch-up conversations with Zen friends we rarely see; and with
Zen friends we often see in zazen but never get to engage in conversation.

After breaking bread together, we gathered for a discussion aimed at plumbing the thoughts and feelings of those present about the nature and potential activities of our transforming sangha. We put six questions before the group:

1. What do you dream/hope for how the Chobo-Ji community will support your practice or other members’ (new and standing) practice?

2. How does your practice support the Chobo-Ji community now; and how do you hope it will in future?

3. How can we be inclusive of children and families of Sangha members? For example, should we regularly provide child care/program at quarterly potlucks?

4. Do we have any responsibility to reach out to children in our neighborhood, and in what ways might we do that?

5. Individual members have been involved in prison work, peace activism, environmental work and, now, in meeting the needs of disenfranchised neighbors. When/how/should the sangha as a whole get behind or involved in such issues?

6. Are we interested or ready to form a Social Action Committee that would sort through issues and causes and make recommendations to the board?

The first two questions came out of our Sangha Relations Committee who long for sangha input about the nature of our Zen community. The timely questions about children at Chobo-Ji were contributed by Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard, herself the mother of shining twin daughters. The last two questions about socially-engaged Buddhism were offered by Genjo Osho, who is increasingly active in this wider arena. Osho’s teisho in the mini-sesshin preceding our anniversary celebration was a Zen take on taking Buddhist practice into the world for good. It will soon be a podcast, if you missed it.

After pondering the questions above, we initiated a council circle to allow individuals a chance to speak. Osho passed around his serpent-like Zen stick. The stick-holder addressed a question that moved them or passed, as they chose. We went round and round again at a peaceful pace and heard from nearly everyone by the time the council was complete. The thoughts and feelings expressed were rich with wise reflection, inspiration, guidance, open-hearted perspective, and a few action items that set heads nodding.

A summary is being compiled of our two council hours; but, although we were about twenty strong, it’s clear that the sangha has many more voices to be heard on these questions. We hope readers of this newsletter will fill out the Sangha Survey (found on our home page or in zendo entry hall) and either mail it in or drop it off next time you come to a sit. Even if you did attend the council, you might have more thoughts to share. Please put pen to paper and give us your survey by December 1.

When Choko and I were chatting in the kitchen after the council, we felt aglow with happiness! It’s so rare—given the characteristic silence of Zen—that we speak deeply and openly together. We hope to have such sharing quarterly in the future. It seems a healthy and vibrant counterpart to our precious stillness. Not since the impactful, sangha-wide meetings to envision and plan our new Zendo and residential center has the sangha spoken out so purposefully. The Anniversary Council followed this strong precedent for embracing the Voice of the Sangha as our guide. Can we make carving out time for this Voice an abiding tradition at Chobo-Ji?

In upcoming meetings, the Board will be having conversations about developing a social justice policy that can guide our future efforts to be of service.

Sangha Relations
Neighborhood Outreach:
Safety & Emergency Preparedness
by Edwin Kyosei Beatty

Chobo-Ji – Sangha Relations hosted the first neighborhood gathering to create a local block watch and emergency preparedness group on September 29th. There was a good turnout for a first time meeting. Eleven people attended, including five Sangha house residents. Following the meeting, another ten neighbors signed up to be on the email contact list. It was an

Continued on next page…
enthusiastic group and the meeting lasted more than an hour.

There was homemade pumpkin soup (made with pumpkins from our own garden), bread, cookies, tea and coffee. The South Police Precinct and the Seattle Emergency Operations Center (EOC) provided lots of handouts. Copies are available in the lounge in folders next to the mail pick up box. The next meeting is Thursday, November 7th at 6:30 PM in the Lounge at Chobo-Ji. Mark Solomon, head of the Crime Prevention Unit for the South & Southeast Precinct will be on hand to answer questions on safety and the crime prevention program. Following the last meeting I sent out a contact spreadsheet, links to local resources like the Beacon Hill blog and information on upcoming events.

Since then I’ve attended two different meetings on neighborhood community emergency preparedness: The Peer to Peer Preparedness Summit at EOC and the Faith Based Communities Emergency Preparedness Event at the American Red Cross. Both were really valuable events – lots of information, resource contacts, and local networking connections.

The keynote speaker at the Peer to Peer Summit was Sandi Doughton, author of Full-Rip 9.0: The Next Big Earthquake in the Pacific Northwest. She summarized the current science on seismic activity in the region. Research has documented conclusively that this area has a history of major earthquakes on a 250-year cycle. We’re currently at 315 years since the last one, so the question is not whether we’ll have one, but when. Upgrading construction standards and seismic retrofitting are underway and useful, but the most significant way of mitigating the impact of a major disaster is neighborhood emergency preparedness. Being prepared can make a critical difference in surviving the days immediately following an event before any outside help arrives.

The city and county have a number of initiatives to develop and support volunteer neighborhood emergency preparedness:

- **Block Watch** - Getting to know your neighbors is the first step, and the neighborhood block watch is a great starting point.

- **SNAP (Seattle Neighbors Actively Prepare)** is a simple, flexible process designed to help neighborhoods create plans that are specific to neighborhood needs.

- **CERT (Community Emergency Response Team Program)** educates people in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations.

- **Emergency Communication Hubs** – By prior planning, preparation and practice, volunteer citizens will have the capacity to activate, as soon as possible after a disaster, a network of pre-located neighborhood communications sites to collect information on local situations, needs and resources, relay communications between Hub Sites be an information resource for residents, and assist in the allocation of available community resources to local needs.

**An example of a faith community commitment:** At the second workshop I attended on Faith-Based Communities and Emergency Preparedness, there was a member of a Ballard congregation, Philadelphia Church, which made a decision several years ago to commit to developing the capacity to shelter up to 300 neighbors in their facility and has built up supplies of water, food, medical supplies, communications resources, batteries, clothing and bedding over time. The scope and size of their commitment is larger than what Chobo-Ji could reasonably consider, but they’re willing to share their process and experience with us.

**CERT offers classes through the year.** I’ve signed up to attend a class on emergency medical care in early November. A schedule of classes is available online. Sangha members can decide individually about getting training and/or we can commit as a community to getting enough members trained in various disaster response skills to be able to better serve the neighborhood.

The closest Emergency Communication Hub is just two blocks away at the Jefferson Park Fire Station. At the Peer to Peer Meeting I attended, I was the only one from Beacon Hill. We broke out into groups by city sector, so I had the opportunity to meet others in the Southeast sector. There is a well-organized group from Rainier Beach where the only other Hub in this sector currently is located at Rainier Beach United Methodist Church, 5500 Roxbury Street. They are also willing to share their experience in organizing support for the local Hub, as is the lead volunteer organizer for West Seattle.

I’ve signed up to get in touch with others in Beacon Hill working on the Emergency Hub at the Jefferson Park Fire Station. There are plans to add more Hubs in the Southeast sector. Some will be located at community gardens, like the Beacon Hill Food Forest. There is a need for more volunteers to work on the Jefferson Hub – another potential opportunity for the Sangha and/or individual members to get involved.

The Seattle & King County Public Health Department is also putting together a network of communities involved in emergency preparedness. We could chose
to join that network by completing a Community Communication Network Enrollment form – another Board or Ad Hoc Committee decision to be researched and made.

Detailed information on steps to take and what to include to start assembling emergency preparedness resources are available online. The significant take away from the two meetings I attended was how important it is to develop a plan and make a start, with a goal and time frame in mind. Again, another matter for careful consideration of the Sangha with regard to scope, available resources and level of sustainable commitment.

All presentation material from the Peer to Peer Preparedness Summit is available online at [www.seattlehubs.org/Oct2013Summit](http://www.seattlehubs.org/Oct2013Summit). I also have more hard copy materials available in addition to those already in the Lounge.

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**Gestalt Workshop**

**with Leonard Shaw**

by Edwin Kyosei Beatty

The workshop blended Eastern and Western psychology to empower and educate participants using experiential exercises, art therapy and Gestalt Therapy practices. Drawing on more than forty years of experience as a psychotherapist and counselor, **Leonard Shaw** lead an intensive workshop, skillfully establishing and maintaining a safe and healing space for individual and group work. He also provided links and assignments to continuing homework support to the experience beyond the workshop.

For me one of the significant recurrent aspects of the work was paradox. The value of deeply and fully engaging in an issue with the intention of going beyond its appearance can serve as a powerful path to healing and letting go of it. I experienced a resonance between the Gestalt work and the way in which the discipline of zazen practice is grounded in non-attachment.

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**One example: Life as a Two Step Dance or a Three Step Dance?**

**The Two Step Dance:**

*Step #1:* Somebody does something or doesn’t do something, something happens or doesn’t happen and…

*Step #2:* I’m upset, or disappointed or hurt or whatever. That’s just how life is… something happens and I’m upset. We all make up our own movie. When we do the Two Step Dance we pretend that life happens to us and we become the victim of our own movie.

**The Three Step Dance:**

*Step #1:* Something happens…

*Step #2:* You instantly have an interpretation of the happening. You are not upset about the event of what did, or did not happen. You are actually upset about your instantaneous interpretation of what happened. So, if you are feeling bad, you choose an interpretation that had some kind of judgment, alienation or something that would allow you to feel bad.

*Step #3:* You are upset by your interpretation and pretending you are upset by what happened in Step #1. Now, if you want to feel better, STEP BACK from the whole dance. Notice that it is actually your interpretation that allows you to feel bad. Choose a new interpretation that gives you a heart connection with the people and/or events of Step #1. This does not condone their behavior; it simply assists you to regain your personal power and peace of mind. (from Life Is A Three Step Dance by Leonard Shaw.)

I found the whole workshop and experience valuable and have continued to benefit from the work. This particular exercise turned out to be incredibly useful in helping me through an experience that showed up just weeks after the workshop. I am still frequently challenged by the process of letting go and fully embracing non-attachment, but Leonard’s approach to spiritually-based Gestalt Therapy work has provided more resources and deepened my practice.

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**Case 16**

Having arrived at Zoden’s place, the Master asked, “Neither ordinary nor sacred. What can you say?” “Master, speak quickly,” Zoden said, “This old man is just as you see.” The Master shouted and said, “All you bald heads! What food are you seeking here?”

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**Case 17**

The Master arrived at Myoke’s place. Myoke said, “Coming and going, what are you doing?” The Master said, “Just wearing out straw sandals.” Myoke said, “After all, what’s the point?” The Master said, “This old fellow doesn’t even know how to carry on a dialogue!”

Sometimes we are clear and sometimes not; therefore, what’s the point? For this Sesshin, we’ve reached the peak. We may have more clarity, or it could be this is as much clarity as we’re going to have this sesshin. But I can promise you this, whether there’s more to come or this is it, this, too will pass. When the flower blooms, it always withers. Just as we come into life in aggregate form as a human being, we all will wither. What’s the point?

Sometimes we have clarity and sometimes we don’t. Sometimes we feel like a nut, sometimes we don’t. Sometimes we are possessed by our egoistic desires and attachments and delusions of all kinds. Sometimes we’re not. Sometimes we open to a broad perspective, seeing clearly and loving cleanly. It’s also true from time to time, we’ll be caught in our most primitive base desires and egoistic delusions and attachments. Even if we’re feeling relatively clear and clean right now, we’ll be caught again and again. There are times sitting on the cushion when I feel as clear as the Mind of the Tathagata embracing the universe. But literally, 10 minutes later, I can trip and fall or say something far less than kind, so what good is our practice? What’s the point?

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The Book of Rinzai

Anroku Chapter 16 & 17

Middle Day Autumn Sesshin, 2013

**Case 16**

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When we try to look too much for purpose and meaning, we are missing it once again. We try to climb the ladder of enlightenment, when even enlightenment is something that we need to let go of. Enlightenment does not equal maturity and yet I don’t think you can have deep maturity without experiencing “deep clarity” and clean loving. Deep maturity is integrating the fact that within us is what we call Buddha and what we call Mass Murderer. Learning to live with the fact of these multiple personalities is what we might call maturity.

We have an icon of the Buddha and some icons of Bodhisattvas, including Kannon in our Meditation Hall. Of course, they are golden, not as golden as you’d find in some temples but golden nonetheless. And I’m wearing a golden Kesa as is Genko ni-Osho. This goldenness reflects what Rinzai calls “That One shining alone” or that potential in all of us to be that clear and that cleanly loving. But you can’t find that kind of clarity in isolation. In a way, these icons and these robes are smoke and mirrors. They may attract you to the temple and this practice. You may be attracted to the bright light of these images or even these living images of Zen Masters and that’s not a terrible effect. It doesn’t have to be like a spider to a fly. It can be, “Come in. Investigate your true nature.” We acknowledge that the fullness of what we call the light or Buddha nature is within all of us. No one is separate or isolated from this light, though indeed sometimes we feel this way. It is important to remember that we cannot have that clarity or light in isolation from the more primitive, base nature of ours.

We cannot escape our instincts for survival as long as we’re corporeal beings. While we live we’re never escaping the fact that if we get hungry enough we might kill to feed our ourselves or our dependents, and we must realize that in a fit of anger or hate we might kill for revenge or even to simply get more than others. There is a primitive beast within us that is willing to commit any heinous crime to get what it wants. Maybe at one end of the temple we should have an icon to the Buddha and at another end, an icon to Hitler or Dr. Mengele, just to be real about our full potential.

When I don’t have so-called clarity, I’ve come to understand that my confusion, attachments and delusions, are pregnant clarity. Even this statement shows some attachment to clarity, but I hope you get the idea that I am trying not to favor one over the other. You can’t have a flower without a seed, and a seed is not the same thing as a flower. If I run around saying, “I just want flowers” and cut off all the buds on a rosebush because, “I don’t want buds, I just want flowers!” we’d never get any flowers. Likewise, my un-clarity is as important as my clarity in the same way as you can say “yin” is as important as “yang.” They have to work together and one can’t really find them in isolation. Clarity and non-clarity are in a dynamic dance with each other. My instincts for survival have to learn to work with my deeper Buddha Nature; my deeper nature must learn to work with my instincts for survival. It’s dynamic. They bounce off each other, they polish each other, and they inform each other.

I remember when I first realized that it wasn’t that important to remain living and I thought to myself, quite literally, “I could just walk in front of a moving train and be okay.” That scared my girlfriend at the time because she could see that I was quite serious. There was no need to stay alive in order to protect myself or save others. There was also, thankfully, no need to kill myself. This is not to say that with the time remaining in this life that I should not dedicate myself to the awakening of all, so here I am talking to you today.

Having arrived at Zoden’s place, the Master asked, “Neither ordinary nor sacred. What can you say? Master, speak quickly!” Here Rinzai is the guest and he’s asking a guest question but it’s a pretty powerful question. If one gets stuck in saying this or that, you’ve missed it. So these kinds of Zen-n-y questions are eliciting some kind of transcendent, spontaneous, creative response. Just to review, the absolute version of an apple is just folded up nothing, looking like an apple. The relative version of an apple if it’s in my hands is, “It’s an apple!” A more specific relative response would name the kind of apple. The transcendent response is (crunches down) found in taking a bite!

The transcendent response has to be something that’s ordinary but intimates that the person giving the response is in on the fact that there is this dynamic balance between what we call the relative and the absolute, between what we call yin and yang, between what we call life and death, between what we call good and bad, between what we call Buddha nature and self-nature.

Zoden responds to Rinzai’s question, “This old man is just as you see.” Frankly, I don’t think it’s a bad response. It’s quick, it’s immediate, it’s simple, and it’s not stuck in the relative or absolute. But Rinzai’s response was a shout —KATSU— and then he follows up with, “All you bald-heads sitting in this room. What food are you seeking here?” Really diss-ing Zoden. Rinzai in his pilgrimages sets a really high bar and standard. The response has got to be really sharp with no holes in it, otherwise Rinzai is just going to toss it aside. If prompted by Rinzai’s question, what response would you have given that would have satisfied him?

In reality, we are both Buddha and Hitler. Or another way to say it is that you are neither Buddha nor Hitler. Huh? In fact, I’m neither Buddha nor Hitler. Nor are you. Even to talk about these qualities in isolation we are lost. Reality is a big soup where the ingredients can’t isolated from each other. Even to speak of Buddha or Hitler as polar opposites, is demonstrating our lack of understanding and revealing how we are already stuck in concepts. It’s said that, before enlightenment, we talk about Buddha and Hitler and the contrast between them and after “enlightenment,” we see clearly there’s no Buddha and no Hitler, there’s just THIS. And once in a while, in the course of things, it gets a little lopsided. A little bit more yang than yin or yin than yang. But overall, it’s all in the mix, it all balances out and it’s quite dynamic. This is how it is!

Right now, we call ourselves “alive,” and we may understand that death always follows life, life always follows death, it can also be said, life always follows life and death always follows death. However we mix it up, one thing we can say with complete confidence is that this temporary aggregate existence is just that, temporary! Brief!

One really excellent transcendent response that almost universally works in response to a Zen question is just to shout -- KATSU! It has no meaning (slaps hands together), yet
it’s immediate and it cuts through our attachment to “It’s gotta be this or that” or “It’s not this or that.” Okay, but putting a shout aside, what could you say? The luxury of coming to dokusan is that you’ve got all of this time on the cushion to come up with the pithiest phrase while Rinzai is expecting an immediate response, right now! This expectation is one of the gifts of Rinzai Zen. Over literally years and decades, this training conditions us to be sharper and more dynamic in this moment of reality, (snap, snap, snap, snap). Slowly we learn how to jump without all of the normal hesitation and worry we are so often encumbered with.

The Master arrived at Myoke’s place and Myoke now asks the question: “Coming and going. What are you doing?” This is a great question, nice host question to the guest. Myoke knows Rinzai was traveling about from master to master, allowing him to be tested and testing others. By going around from here to there, Rinzai invites polishing and helps to polish others. And yet there’s also a principle in Zen, that there’s really nowhere to go. Where can we really go? We are always “here,” there is no escaping the universe. Even if we’re dead, where do we go? First of all, all the atoms we are composed of are still here, and haven’t gone anywhere. Moreover, all the other aggregate parts of our so-called “self” haven’t gone anywhere either. Everything changes form. It is after all a multi-dimensional dynamic Universe; everything is in flux and changing form but, as a rule of thumb, nothing’s created or destroyed. On the other hand, at the subatomic level, it is also true that “things” are coming into and out of existence all the time. By this point in our investigation we should understand that every time we get stuck on one idea, we had better find its opposite because it’s also true. It’s true that nothing is created or destroyed. It’s also true that right here in this room, things are coming into existence and going out of existence all the time.

Anyway, Myoke’s in the role of Master and host; he’s challenging Rinzai who’s in the role of guest. Myoke asks, “What are you doing, coming and going? Don’t you know that you can’t find the truth out there? That everything you need is right where you are?” Rinzai responds, and I think this reveals Rinzai’s quality and depth, “Just wearing out straw sandals.” When I was in Japan, I helped make some straw sandals for myself to go on long outdoor kinhin (walking meditation) where we would pick the daikon radish for pickling or we would go on various other begging (takuhatsu) trips to the local community. We would do this ritualized begging for the support of the temple while wearing straw sandals. The straw sandals wore out pretty quickly. On special occasions, we would sometimes wear these really weird platform wooden stilts (Geta). I will never understand how they thought this was a good idea; anymore than a woman wearing high heels! The straw sandals were so much more comfortable!

Rinzai gives a totally relative response to Myoke’s question; yet, it’s so relative, it embodies the transcendent! He doesn’t try and answer by saying, “In reality, there’s no coming and going.” It’s clear he’s been coming and going. He’s got to somehow demonstrate that, “Yeah, I’ve been coming and going on the relative level and, on the absolute level, I haven’t gone anywhere.” He says, “I’ve been wearing out my straw sandals” as if to say, he’s been walking in place wearing out his sandals. That’s the implication I see in his response. In other words, he has got the relative and the absolute contained in the transcendent truth that his sandals keep wearing away even though he’s gone nowhere. Now that’s pithy, top notch Zen!

Rinzai continues the dialogue by asking, “After all, what’s the point?” Lovely question, really! What’s the point??! After such a beautiful response from Rinzai, in my view, really nothing more was needed. Perhaps Myoke was checking to see if Rinzai really was coming from a transcendent stance. It is true, what’s the point of coming and going when he can’t really go anywhere? And Myoke may be saying, “Well, if you’re just walking in place wearing out your sandals, what’s the point?” What’s the point of all this searching? You already have what you are searching for. And you’ll never find it Out There! You might encounter it here on the cushion, settling deeply into your own True Nature. Everything we may be looking for is already within us. There really is nowhere to go which is why we do a lot of sitting! Normally, we are stuck with the tip of the iceberg view of ourselves. However, if we sit long enough, we start to feel what’s beneath the initial layer of consciousness and it’s huge. The iceberg is much bigger than we imagined; moreover, it is seamless with the whole ocean and this ocean is fathomless, it has no bottom. If we sit here long enough, we are bound to realize this truth.

Myoke says, “After all, what’s the point?” and Rinzai says, “This old fellow doesn’t even know how to carry on a dialogue!” So he diss-es Myoke, too. I would say not quite as bad as he diss-ed Zoden.

What is it about Myoke’s response that’s a bit inappropriate to Rinzai’s zinger, “Just wearing out straw sandals”? If I’d posed such a question to a traveling monk, “Coming and going, what are you doing?” And the monk had answered, “Just wearing out straw sandals,” and I was confident that the monk was aware of the absurdity of coming and going, yet was using it to investigate and examine himself more carefully, I’d say, “Let’s have some tea.” Dialogue concluded. Myoke continued the dialogue with “What’s the point?” but I think this was unnecessary and kind of muddies the water.

If clarity comes and goes then what we call “enlightenment” has to be let go of. In fact there is no way to hold on to it. Maturity then is realizing the truth that we are these different polarities all wrapped up in one package. Given this truth, where does that leave us? What is the point? After all, “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West in the first place?” This can be explored a bit in the zendo but deep testing must happen outside the zendo. The zendo is a great laboratory to investigate this matter of polarities, and to explore our deep nature beyond these polarities. We are attracted to this deep exploration because we realize this life is but a brief blip. The realization

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of our own impermanence brings us into the zendo where we can explore and experiment with the deep nature that transcends life and death. Here it is, the whole spectrum of reality, come and explore it. But if our exploration is limited to the zendo or temple, all our practice and training will fail at being truly useful. Unless we’re able to get up off the cushion and bring our integration out into the wider world, our practice will fall far short. This zendo is a wonderful laboratory, but we must learn to test what we learn here in our daily lives outside of the temple. I can tell you that the best testing is done while engaged in acts of service. When we are being of service to mother earth, caring for creatures great and small, animate and inanimate, that’s where the rubber meets the road.

Always remember that the golden icons and the golden robes are only an advertisement for one side of the equation. I think for Westerners, it’s an important invitation because we often go around feeling so unworthy. And the gold says, “No, come to the Light, you are the Light!” We can learn that we are the Light and we can rely on the Light and we need to rely on nothing else. Often we have such poor confidence and trust in our own Nature. Somehow, we’ve been taught that we’re “less than.” Even narcissism, which seems like it comes from the position, “I’m more than” is really based on a sense of inadequacy. Therefore, the golden icons and robes are an interesting attraction that may bring us in and get us to investigate. That’s fine. Yet, our deep nature cannot be deeply integrated until we test it outside of the laboratory. When training as an unsui (cloud and water person – training monk) apprenticing under Genki Takabayashi Roshi, it was always expected that I have a job, whether it was delivering papers to the paper boys, managing a kite store, programming computers, or being a psychotherapist. These are all ways I’ve earned my living while I was training and this training forced me to be out in the world, not just in the laboratory with a white coat, only in this case, a black robe. I think there’s something fundamentally healthy about testing my practice and training working outside the temple and raising a daughter. If all our training is restricted to the temple, we don’t get the chance to test our training in the wider world and are left with a narrow Clubhouse View of reality.

Of course, we know what can happen when restricted to a narrow view, untested by living in the wider world. Without the testing and expansion of our practice in the wider world, our temple training can implode and we become very much like “the spider is to the fly.” Unfortunately, anything can be corrupted and the highest teaching brought low. So watch out! Always doubt! We say that our practice requires Great Doubt, Great Faith and Great Determination. Different people will say which one is the most important. Some people will say “Great Faith”, some “Great Determination”, it is my opinion that “Great Doubt” is most important. Great Doubt leads to deep exploration and investigation on and off the cushion, in and out of the temple. Vigilance too is a part of Great Doubt, which helps not to be fooled by smoke and mirrors. Although the gold, ritual and form may draw you in and help introduce you to great clarity, peacefulness and a loving heart, these experiences will be of limited value if we are not able to bring it out to our families and vocations. We indeed may have great gratitude towards Buddhism and Zen. That’s how I feel! But don’t get fooled! Practice in the temple is only the beginning of training.

So-called Buddha and so-called Hitler can’t be found in isolation. I have no doubt that on occasion Hitler was a nice guy. And no doubt the real, historical Buddha was sometimes a shit. We must learn to accept, balance and integrate our various polarities, in a way that benefits each other and mother earth. Our practice in the zendo is just the beginning of this work. Take care to train deeply and test extensively. It is so easy to fool ourselves.

With gassho,

Genjo

Closing Incense Poem

Autumn Sesshin, 2013

Boundless Mind Energy illuminates reality.

Autumn colors brighten.
A cool breeze stirs.

Who sees the waning moon?
No one hears the sound of one hand.

Residential Practice

Beginning Nov. 1st

The last two tenants, who have lived in apartments 6 & 8 from long before we bought the building three years ago, are moving out. This means that soon everyone living here will be active members of our sangha. For me this is a dream come true that we are close to realizing our aim to fully convert the property into an urban Residential Zen Practice Center.

In fact the larger of the two one-bedroom apartments is already committed to a couple Zen practitioners that we are familiar with. Daitetsu and Kojun Hull. They write:

Dear Chobo-Ji Sangha,

We have recently relocated to Seattle, and will be moving into an apartment at Chobo-Ji in mid-November. Our current circumstances are such that we don’t have everything we need to live on our own. Our finances are such that we could use some help. Below is a list of what we need. If you have any of these items and were considering taking them to Goodwill, or otherwise moving them on to us, please consider moving them on to us.

Thanks so much!

Daitetsu and Kojun Hull

- Queen sized bed with firm mattress
- Dining room table and chairs

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There will be further announcements released in our weekly email bulletins about when and where to bring donated items.

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**Osho Ceremony**
for Rev. Eshu Martin

On September 28th, 2013 Genjo Osho affirmed Eshu Martin, Abbot of Zenwest Buddhist Society (formerly known as Victoria Zen Centre) as Osho. As described by Genjo Osho, “Osho is the Japanese Zen word for temple priest, so this is a ceremony acknowledging and affirming Eshu Martin as a temple priest and Dharma Teacher. This is not the same as Dharma Transmission which may come after years of additional training. As an acknowledged temple priest, Eshu will have the authority to give Dharma talks, do one-on-one Dharma interviews and ordain priests in training (unsui in Japanese). Eshu has been acting in this capacity already, so this ceremony is more of a celebration and acknowledgment of this fact.”

The ceremony took place at the Interfaith Chapel of the University of Victoria, in Victoria, Canada. It was attended by about 80 people, including visiting priests Rev. Kojun Hull and Rev. Daitetsu Hull, Zenwest ordained members Ven. Doshu Rogers and Ven. Soshin McMurchy (who is also a UVic Chaplain), local UVic Chaplains Rev. Henri Lock and Rev. Lyle McKenzie, Chobo-ji member Carolyn Josen Stevens, as well as Eshu’s family and friends, and many from the Zenwest Sangha.

Genjo started by cutting away any pretensions we might harbour related to fancy robes and pomp, directing us instead toward what is essential, as he led Eshu and the assembly to embrace repentance, the three treasures, the ten precepts, the Rinzai/Hakuin lineage, and the four bodhisattva vows. When it came time to give Eshu an extension to his dharma name, Genjo first clarified the interpretation of the existing name of Eshū (恵秀) as being ‘abundant gifts of the heart, for real’, and then gave him the new name of Kösen (紅仙), ‘red mountain hermit.’ Eshu then gave a short dharma talk.

Following the ceremony, the community gathered for a reception and celebratory potluck dinner at the Uplands Community Centre. Following dinner, the out-of-town guests were invited to share a little of ‘what had brought them here tonight.’ After this, the floor was opened for general comments and acknowledgements of Eshu, which included a particularly moving offering from Niki Martin, Eshu’s wife. Kigen Martin wrapped up the evening with a magic show, using a very willing and co-conspiratorial Genjo as his first audience accomplice. A good time was had by all!

Special thanks go to all who played a part in making this special event such a success. A full video of the ceremony is being edited, and will be available soon (see [www.zenwest.ca](http://www.zenwest.ca) for link).

Gassho,

Doshu Rogers

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**Jukai Ceremony**

On the morning of August 25th, 2013, the final day of our first three-day Odayaka Sesshin, Coryl Crane and Edwin Beatty formally accepted the Buddhist precepts. Both have been followers of the Way for some time and each has attended a minimum of two weeklong sesshins. Coryl has been practicing zazen for decades and was the person who introduced Chiba Sensei, Chief Aikido Instructor of Birankai International to Chobo-Ji’s founding abbot, Genki Takabayashi Roshi. Edwin is one of our earliest Zen Residential Practice residents.

Coryl wrote in her Jukai application letter that, “You ask what feels right to take Jukai at this time. Without too much conscious thought there are principles that I hold dear that guide my life, my relationships to those...”

Continued on next page…
around me, to all living creatures and to the earth. I think somehow that they came with me into this life... At this point in my life I am experiencing a deep happiness that I have never felt before. Life is a treasure.

Coryl told me that Chiba Sensei named her Aikido dojo “Kaku Sho Kan”, Dojo of the Happy Crane; accordingly I gave Coryl the Dharma name of Kei Cho or Benevolent (abundant gifts of the heart) Bird/Crane.

Edwin wrote: “I would like to deepen my commitment and relationship to Chobo-Ji. Living at the Temple at S. Horton Street since January 2011, attending zazen and sesshin, Chobo-Ji is home for me, the Sangha is family. I feel incredibly fortunate to live here and be part of this community, and it feels like this is the right time for me to formally recognize the significance of that relationship... I experience being part of the Buddhist community and the Quaker community as being totally compatible and complementary. Chobo-Ji, with its commitment to practice in the city, engaging in the larger community, is consistent with my own beliefs in developing a spiritual practice grounded in the everyday world. I recently came across an excerpt from the Bhagavad Gita that expresses that well:

The true saint goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market, and marries and takes part in the social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment.

Why Rinzai Zen? I’m still working on understanding that. Much as the structure of daily practice seemed a bit awkward and strange at first, it quickly became familiar and comfortable. I was a little worried the first time I signed up to attend sesshin. I didn’t know how the experience of the intensity and structure would be. I was prepared that it might be difficult, even something that I would not be able to tolerate. There was a lot to learn, but the biggest surprise was how comfortable it felt where my ‘growing edge’ is... so I am more grateful that ever to have a home in a spiritual community, and I’m ready to pay attention to what unfolds next in being here.”

Reading this and seeing how he has given himself to this sangha, I gave Edwin the Dharma Name Kyo Sei (Communal Life).

Jukai candidates need to petition in writing at least one month prior to the ceremony. Jukai candidates usually have attended regular zazen at Chobo-Ji for a minimum of six months (including at least two week-long sesshins), must be regular financial supporters of the temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha).

Affirmation Ceremony

On the morning of September 27th, 2013, the final day of Autumn Sesshin, Rev. Joriki Dat Baker and Daiki Edward Cadman renewed their Buddhist precepts. Both have been followers of the Way for decades, both have done more than 40 weeklong sesshins. Joriki was originally ordained in a sister Vietnamese Zen lineage in January of 2011, and has practiced with me at DBZ in New...
York. He has founded an active Zen group in Pennsylvania called the Blue Mountain Zendo, and I plan to do a weeklong retreat with the Blue Mountain Sangha this January. Anyone who has trained with Joriki knows just how dedicated to his practice and the Dharma he is. At Spring Sesshin he ended up in hospital because he pushed himself so hard. At this sesshin he was able to maintain better self care. Joriki is also a trained social worker and advocate for those with chronic pain disabilities, having been diagnosed in 1996 with MS and Poly-Neuropathy. Because of these conditions and other injuries Joriki must sit in a chair with full back support for long periods of zazen. This looks very odd at first for a Zen priest, but when one understands what he is dealing with physically, it is amazing that he continues to do sesshins at all. He has committed to doing at least two weeklong sesshins with me a year, and I feel blessed by our deepening association. At the ceremony I shaved a small spot on Joriki’s head symbolizing his re-ordination in the Japanese Rinzai – Hakuin lineage.

Daiki Cadman originally did Jukai with Genki Takabayashi Roshi, our recently deceased founding abbot, and he dedicated his talk to him. When I became the second abbot of Chobo-Ji in January of 1999, Daiki told how Genki instructed him to fully support me as abbot so that this temple would flourish long after Genki’s departure. Daiki has been deeply true to this instruction, volunteering to be the first Zen Resident in our new Residential Practice Center. Moreover, Daiki served for many years on our Board of Directors, and I can always count on Daiki being frank with me when he thinks something is out of whack. Recently, he invited me to tea in his room, to tell me kindly about various concerns. I don’t always agree with his perception or suggested course, but I deeply value that he shares his perspective so cleanly and frankly with me. Of course I always know he has the temple’s best interest at heart. Daiki and I have been through so much together over the years, each of us growing and learning more from this path of ours. I am honored by his support and friendship and happy to give him the first brown rakusu to a lay student and name him Sensei (teacher).

Choko’s Incense Poem

Chobo-Ji is the place to be Where we get to experience reality. Sitting, chanting, bowing, and walking And sometimes even talking. With nods and sticks, we stay awake Nothing to do, say or take. With chores galore, there’s plenty to do And how can we forget, the never-ending Mu. Our names may sound strange, there’s meaning in each Our abbot, Genjo, says he does not teach. The food is so fine, it’s hard to beat When we sit down, there’s nothing to do but eat. The bowls, chopsticks, it may take a while And at the end of the meal, we put them in a pile. There are many before us whose gratitude is deep What they’ve started, is not to keep. And kinhin is not a dance. Sometimes outside, sometimes, in, it depends on circumstance. We face our demons, limits and more And what about that crumb on the floor? To those who’re here and those who are not All our hearts is what we’ve got.
## Important Dates to Remember

**Daily Zazen**: M-F, 5:30 AM; Sat. 6:30 AM; M & W, 7:30 PM, Sun. 6:30 PM  
**Dharma Talks**: Sundays: 11/3, 11/17, 12/15, 12/22 - 7:30 PM  
**Zen Intro**: Tuesdays, 7:30-8:45 PM, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 11/26, 12/10, 12/17, 1/7, 1/14

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and teisho ...</td>
<td>Nov. 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 5am - 11:15am</td>
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<td>Board Meeting ...</td>
<td>Nov. 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 11:30 am - 1:30pm</td>
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<td>Book Study Group ...</td>
<td>Nov. 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 9am - 11am</td>
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<td><strong>No Public Zazen ...</strong></td>
<td>Nov. 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - Dec. 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Rohatsu Sesshin ...</td>
<td>Nov. 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - Dec. 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Public Talk with Rev. Claude Anshin Thomas ...</td>
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<td>Mini-Sesshin with meal, Dokusan and Anshin Dharma Talk ...</td>
<td>Dec. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 9am - 3pm</td>
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<td><strong>No Public Zazen ...</strong></td>
<td>Dec. 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - Jan. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>New Year's Day Celebration and Potluck ...</td>
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<td>Toya Party and Potluck ...</td>
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*Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji*

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