



PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 12.1

Spring 2005

Dear members and friends,

We had a full house for Spring Sesshin (3/26 – 4/1). Fortunately we have not outgrown our space, and this is a relief to me. If the day comes that we must look for a bigger space, then we will deal with it; in the meantime, I am so grateful and pleased with the space we have now. We have cared for and improved the property each year since taking possession in 1998, and it is a joy to live here and serve this Sangha (community).

I want to let everyone know that I have completely revamped the Chobo-ji web pages (www.choboji.org); I think they are much easier to use with a lot more information. For example, you can download any issue of “Plum Mountain News” (PMN) from the Spring 2002 issue forward. You can also link to pictures from Spring Sesshin Jukai or January’s very successful three-day sesshin in France.

Early in February, I traveled to Canada to do a three-day retreat at the Calling Lakes Center in Saskatchewan and to visit Brenda (Zenmu) Nightingale. As you know from the last issue of PMN, she was expecting to hear results from her second cancer surgery during my visit. I am very happy to report that she learned the tumors removed during the most recent surgery were benign and biopsies showed that no cancer had spread to the lymph nodes. Zenmu told me that she felt her life has just begun anew. Recently, I received a letter from her seeking to be ordained a Zen unsui (monk). We discussed the requirements and concluded

that if all goes as planned she will be ready for ordination in the fall of 2006.

On March 13, after mini-sesshin (half-day zazen intensive), we held our Annual Meeting to elect the Board of Directors and conduct temple business. Rev. Genko Blackman has prepared a report of the meeting for this issue of PMN. Genko has also written a report detailing for us recent Zen activities in Wenatchee.

On Wednesday, March 23, we had a specially called evening zazen (meditation) and Dharma Talk given by my Dharma sister,

recently as part of his Chobo-ji Zen Intensive, to do a short book report for us.

At Spring Sesshin, Genko was our Dai-Tenzo (Chief Cook), and as most of us know, she is a very experienced Chobo-ji cook, producing delicious, creative, almost spontaneous temple meals. Delegating our samu (work meditation) assignments fell to our highly capable Shika (host/manager), Tom (Shodo) DeGroot. Diane (JoAn) Ste. Marie began sesshin as our Jikijitsu (time keeper); after her departure, the role was ably taken up by Michelle (Muji) LeSourd. Bob (Daigan) Timmer hit the Mukugyo (wooden fish drum) as our Densu (Chant Leader), and made notable progress in his skills. Linda (Muka) Wehnes was a great Jisha (Tea Server), and was assisted by Zenmu who provided many homemade treats. Peggy (Kochi) Smith-Venturi served me well as my Inji (Abbot Assistant), and also help finish the new covering for the altar cushions, begun by JoAn. As usual, by the conclusion of sesshin the Zen House property shined inside and out. Towards the end of the week many



Spring Sesshin 2005 Participants

Roko Sherry Chayat Ni-Osho, a Dharma Heir of Eido Shimano Roshi and abbot of the Zen Center of Syracuse. During Roko’s visit I told her how much I appreciated her editing of a book of Maurine Stuart’s Dharma Talks, Subtle Sound, (Shambhala Press, 1996), see (link: www.choboji.org/chobojibookstore.html). I read this book just last year, and in my opinion it gives the best inside look into Zen by any American author. I have asked Bob (Daigan) Timmer, who read the book

sesshin participants got the chance to once again assist in the care of the UW Arboretum Japanese Garden.

As you may recall, last October a dozen Chobo-ji members gathered to make personal contributions to the Jizo’s for Peace project. Our friends from Oregon’s Great Vow Monastery initiated this project to bring 270,000 images of Jizo Bodhisattva to Hiroshima this summer for the 60th an-

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niversary to the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Jizo Bodhisatva Quilt

During Spring Sesshin Kochi was assigned the task of stitching our “Jizo panels” into one large quilt. Chobo-ji’s Jizo quilt has now been mailed to Great Vow for transport to Japan.

At the Seattle Center, on the weekend of April 9-10, the American Friends Service Committee, with active support of the local chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, sponsored the nationally traveling exhibition on the human cost of the Iraq war titled, “Eyes Wide Open” (www.afsc.org/eyes/). A big part of the exhibit features a pair of boots honoring each of the more than 1,500 US military



Eyes Wide Open Exhibition

fatalities; another part of the exhibition was the “Wall of Remembrance” to memorialize the thousands of Iraqis killed in the conflict. On Saturday, several Chobo-ji members visited the exhibit together. We were all very moved. At one point, I was asked to lead a slow walking medita-

tion circumambulating the memorial. Afterwards, the Buddhist practitioners sat for a period of zazen on the grassy knoll just outside the exhibition hall.

On Saturday, April 23rd, Justin (Myozan) Wadland married Emily Cook in a joint Zen Buddhist and Christian ceremony at Christ Episcopal Church in the University District. My good friend Rev. Dorian McGlannan was the Episcopal celebrant, and I was the Buddhist celebrant. There was a large crowd, and many family members and friends traveled from around the nation to attend. Also in attendance was a good contingent from Chobo-ji. Readings were included from the Prayer of Saint Francis and the Tao Te Ching, and the Heart Sutra was chanted most movingly by Edward (Daiki) Cadman. As I write, this Myozan and Emily have just returned from their honeymoon in Spain; I’m looking forward to Myozan’s return to the zendo so that we can congratulate him further over morning coffee. It was Myozan and Emily who gifted to the temple the new literature table in the entry foyer.

I just returned from doing a three-day sesshin at San Diego Aikikai, April 29th –

a full schedule again; however, he did not attend sesshin in order to see that his students are “capable of continuing in my absence.” Not unexpectedly, all of his students sat and performed all required tasks exceptionally. Special thanks go to Steve Garber (Inji) and Misa Suzuki (Tenzo).

Genki Roshi (our retired founding abbot) recently called to tell me that his May 2nd glaucoma surgery on his right eye took about twenty minutes and was very successful. He says his sight in that eye is much improved, with little or no after effects. Surgery for the left eye will be scheduled soon. Josie (Saeshin) Backhouse, who lives near by, wrote me in an email that both Roshi and Joshin are in good spirits. For more information about glaucoma see: www.glaucoma.org/learn.

In this issue of PMN, in addition to the content already listed, you will find the Spring Sesshin Closing Incense Poem, the Dharma Talk from fifth day, and a report of the Jukai ceremony held at the end of sesshin for Denise, Ken and Marilyn. Also included are the 2004 Annual Financial Report and the announcement of our upcoming Summer Sesshin (6/18 – 6/24), please try to make a reservation by Friday, June 10th. Between now and then, I will be traveling to New York to do Memorial Day Sesshin (5/28 – 6/5) at Dai Bosatsu monastery with Eido Shimano Roshi and the DBZ Sangha. As spring continues to unfold, please take care and be well.

With gassho,

Genjo

Annual Meeting Report by Genko

Chobo-ji members gathered at the zendo on March 13’s annual meeting to choose the board of directors for the coming year and participate in discussion of business.

Ongoing board members include Diane JoAn Ste. Marie, Carolyn Josen Stevens, Dee Seishun Endelman, Bob Daigan Timmer, Daiki Cadman, Tom Shodo DeGroot,

Scott Isshin Stolnack, and Genko Kathy Blackman. After a number of years of service on the board, Barbara Jodo Bullock stepped down; Linda Muka Wehnes replaces her for the coming year. Jodo will serve as Chobo-jii's representative to Northwest Dharma Association.

Board officers were also chosen for the coming year. Genko, Seishun, and Josen continue as president, secretary, and treasurer respectively, and Daigan replaces Shodo as vice president. In addition to overseeing the financial health of the organization, the board is responsible for the care and maintenance of our two major physical assets, the zendo property and the airplane.

Ken Daien Iwata proposed adding a water feature to the back garden at the zendo, and we all reviewed and discussed the detailed plans he brought for several variations on this theme. A committee was formed to



Possible Water Feature

further explore what makes the most sense, but there was general enthusiasm for the idea and gratitude to Daien for his work on this.

Another committee was formed to look over the zendo house to identify potential areas needing some work, and the chimney and pointing around the foundation rose to the top of the list. We are already proceeding with plans to rebuild the chimney [the chimney will be rebuilt on June 9th at a cost of \$1,300]; once that's done we'll investigate work on the foundation.

Over the years since we purchased the airplane it has done well for us through the leaseback program, and this year is up for a scheduled replacement of the engine along with some other equipment upgrades. We have been able to pay down both the plane and house loans ahead of schedule; please see Josen's report in this newsletter for more details on our financial health.

The board meets several times a year to conduct business (the next meeting will be after the mini-sesshin June 12). All Chobo-ji members are welcome to attend board meetings. We welcome your input and look forward to seeing you.

Financial Report

2004 was a steady financial year for Cho Bo Ji. Our income covered expenses, we continued to reduce the principal on our two loans, and we maintained our commitment to fund Genki Roshi's retirement. Income was \$54,471, composed of \$22,625 in dues, with the balance from sesshin fees, donations, and the rent that Genjo and I pay to live in the zen house. We received \$5,387 in special donations for the new zendo floor. Expenses were \$31,645. We paid

\$10,871 for Genki Roshi's pension and Medicare supplemental health insurance. \$10,011 went to house expenses – mortgage, insurance, repairs and maintenance. \$7,264 was spent on sesshin related expenses, primarily food and the cost of rent-



ing Camp Indianola for Rohatsu.

At year-end, Cho Bo Ji had \$8,500 in undesignated cash assets, and \$19,719 reserved for a new engine for the Cessna airplane. The reserved funds are earnings generated by the plane's lease-back to Galvin Flying Service. The new engine, which is a normal but expensive maintenance requirement, has been ordered and will be installed sometime this spring. At the annual meeting in March, the board authorized up to \$5,000 from general funds (if needed) to completely cover the engine cost. The Cessna loan principal, currently \$24,648, will be paid off in 2006, and thereafter the plane will provide an income stream to the Sangha. The current balance due on our house mortgage is \$69,000. Total assets are \$445,634, and equity \$344,664.

During the year, the number of dues-paying members rose from 30 to 40 people per month. This is probably the most exciting financial news of 2004, because it reflects the growth of our Sangha. When we first bought the zen house, membership shot up quickly, and then stayed steady for several years. It's great to have new members, and our space seems to be absorbing the influx easily. Sunday evening attendance, in particular, has grown.

During spring sesshin, a board subcommittee did an assessment of the long-term maintenance needs of our building. We realized that we're very fortunate to have a sound and sturdy structure. One weak spot is our chimney: currently held together with suet and prayers. Daigan Bob Timmer has found a mason who will restore it for about \$1,300, and the work is scheduled for June. Another subcommittee is looking into installing a fountain in the backyard behind the vegetable garden.

If you have any questions about this report or any aspect of Cho Bo Ji finances, please feel free to contact me. As always, it is a pleasure to serve as the Sangha treasurer.

With palms together,

Josen Carolyn Stevens

Mumonkan

Case 18: Tozan's Three Pounds of Flax

(5th day, Spring Sesshin, 2005)

Koan: A monk asked Master Tozan (b. 910, CE), "What is Buddha?" Tozan said, "Three pounds of flax."

Mumon's Commentary

Old Tozan studied a bit of clam Zen and, opening the shell a little, revealed his liver and intestines. Though it may be so, tell me, where do you see Tozan?

Mumon's Poem

*Thrust forth is
"Three pounds of flax!"*

*Words are intimate
Even more so is the mind.*

*He who talks about right and wrong
Is a person of right and wrong.*

We are nearing the close of Spring Sesshin 2005, less than 24 hours to go. For all our pain and struggle, we are all still here sitting together and no one has died. I am happy to report that two people so far have reported to me clarifying experiences into their True Nature. In the time remaining, perhaps more of us will awaken more fully to the depth of this reality just as it is.

The first koan in our long sequence of koan training begins with "What is the essence of the temple bell?" Everyone at sesshin is familiar with it; there is no one here who has not at least begun an inquiry into this one. Second comes, "susokan," or breath perception. It has to do with being present to the One who is breathing here on the cushion. Initially, in this koan, you are asked to manifest the whole universe breathing. After investigating susokan, it was Genki Roshi's habit to introduce everyone to Joshu's Mu. Many lines of Rinzai Zen begin with Mu [ineffable No-Thing].

Whether we're talking about the essence of the temple bell, the breath of the universe, Muuuu, or, as in this case, the three pounds of flax, we are always asking, "What is THIS?" When I first came upon this koan, I had to look up the word "flax." What is it, and why would Zen Master Tozan say that three pounds of this stuff IS Buddha? According to my dictionary, flax is "a plant with blue flowers that is widely cultivated for its seeds, which produce linseed oil, and its stems, from which the fiber to make linen is obtained." Three pounds of flax is probably the amount of linen necessary to make a Zen robe.

Zen Master Tozan is the same fellow who received sixty blows from Unmon (Mumonkan, Case 15) for responding in an exclusively ordinary way to Unmon's repeated inquiries. You may quarrel with Unmon's methods or think that they're harsh, but they must have had a good effect because in this case Tozan is the Zen Master. A lot of Zen training is about negation. No, no, no, no, no... IT is nothing you can read. IT cannot be adequately be written or said. There isn't anything that is IT and there isn't anything that isn't IT. For example, a wave is *not* the ocean *and* it's nothing *but* the ocean. Therefore, even what we dislike, including our pain, fatigue, confusion, yearning or self doubt, must too be IT. On the other hand, thank goodness these "difficult qualities" or waves are not the whole of the ocean of reality.

Whenever we think we "have it" a Zen Master will say "Not Yet", "More! More! More!", "Continue!" or simply ring the small Dokusan bell that signals the conclusion of the Dharma interview. For the most part, Zen requires only a small vocabulary... More! Ring, ring, ring! Not Yet! No! Continue! Not such a hard job after all (laughter). All this negation drives us into what is called our Great Doubt, which fuels our Great Inquiry. Hard as this may be for us to accept, returning again and again to our Great Doubt is indispensable to any deep inquiry. From time to time, our deep inquiry will bring us to a breakthrough where we see through the veil of our own conceptualizations, ideas, hopes, desires, fantasies, dreams, and

fears. When we see through the veil of our own making, we more directly experience the "Great Void," manifested as thunder, the temple bell, one's own breath, Muuuuu, or, as in this case, three pounds of flax.

One time when Zen Master Joshu was asked what was the deep meaning of Zen, he responded, "the oak tree in the front garden" (Mumonkan, Case 37). But to really see the pine tree in our own front garden as simply pine tree **and** that which is so profound, minutely subtle, has no form, much less a name is not easy for us. Our pine tree stands tall and quiet, swaying gently in the breeze. It is so natural, so ordinary, **and** reveals the whole universe



and beyond the beyond! It is my hope that everyone in this room will "see the world" in this broad full way. If you haven't already seen this world in this way, look, look look. And, if you have seen the world in this way, then look again and then again. It's so easy to not see what is right in front of us. It is so easy to get lost in our own conceptualizations, feelings and sensations. As I have said, even our doubts, self-consciousness and yearn-

ing are also IT, but when we are limited to these qualities we are stuck on the surface and fail to see or appreciate the depth all around and within us.

There'll be no Dharma Talk tomorrow, as we'll be having a Jukai [Buddhist Precepts] ceremony for Denise, Ken and Marilyn. During the Jukai ceremony it is our custom to recite the Verses on the Faith Mind by our Third Zen Ancestor, Sosan Ganchi Zenji (d. 606 CE). These wonderful verses will be more than enough Dharma Talk; each time we read them I find something new. In his verses he speaks about penetrating the veil of our likes and dislikes and seeing "the true nature of things." He warns that "all dualities come from ignorant inference; they are like dreams of flowers in the air: foolish to try to grasp them." He tells us that if we come to see that which is in motion, as being at its root still, and that which is in still as really in motion, then "oneness itself cannot exist; to this ultimate finality no law or description applies." Form IS no form, no form IS form; the relative and the absolute are "Not Two."

When we transcend our overlay of dualistic thinking and see "the true nature of things," there are usually tears of appreciation, joy, awe and wonder. This way of seeing may last moments, hours, days or weeks. But, given our complexity, and some of the "necessities" that arise from our survival instincts, we quickly get caught up in the surface turbulence again. Unlike the tree, rock, grass, moon and star, we need to unceasingly train and practice in order to appreciate "the true nature of things." And even with unceasing training, we will feel at times confused, lost or hindered. However, without training, we will not often see through the veil of our own making; moreover, we may fail to recognize clarity when we have it, perhaps writing it off as a hallucination or a brief psychotic episode. We may wonder, "I'm not going crazy?" "Is this real or an illusion?" No, you're not going crazy. THIS is the real world right here **and** it is all an illusion!

After years of practice we learn to have more faith in our direct intuitive insight. In addition, when we are thrown by the

challenges of this life and death journey, we pick ourselves up more easily and get back on the horse with a little bit more grace. With maturity, we don't even worry about getting thrown, and we no longer have much trepidation about being confused or conflicted and once again entering the Great Doubt. Slowly the process becomes so familiar that nothing need be feared or rejected.

As we repeatedly see into our own true nature, we become less susceptible to feeling either inferior or superior, and we become a bit more balanced, even tempered and not so, as I think my wife would agree, bi-polar. Over time, we do become less self conscious and also more naturally confident. Confident in what, you ask? In reality being just as it is. That is to say, we become more and more comfortable accepting and appreciating things just as they are without needing to understand why things are the way they are. We don't have to know why a wave is coming or understand the fluid dynamics and physics of a wave in order to catch one.

On the other hand, we don't want to discount learning or understanding, there's nothing wrong with understanding the fluid dynamics of an ocean wave. Learning how to be articulate in Zen is also very much a part of our training. Someone said to me in the Dokusan room, "It's like learning a new language!" And I said, "That's exactly right!" And I've never come across a language for communicating reality that is more colorful, concise, candid and adaptable. It's a great language to learn because, in regards to our poisonous tendency to over conceptualize everything, the Zen way of relating to reality is like anti-venom. Our brilliant but hyperactive rational, discriminating consciousness adds so many layers of conceptualizations on top of reality that we usually miss it. The anti-venom that neutralizes multiple layers of conceptualizations is the language of Zen. We cannot learn the language of Zen at a blackboard, no one can teach it to us. It can only be acquired through the trial and error of our own experience and experimentation, in much the same way as we must have learned our native tongue.

As we learn the language of Zen through

direct experimentation and investigation in the Dokusan room [Dharma Interview], we realize that the Zen way of relating to reality helps us see past our discriminating mind or obsession with naming and describing things. How extraordinary! The language of Zen helps us transcend language! The Zen way of seeing has been a big help to me. It has allowed me to more fully appreciate this world, this reality, this life-and-death journey, by helping me to recognize and remember what is really important. Life is short, so I am glad that this training helps simplify, clarify and recall what is essential. Zen training always points us at the raw inconceivable depth of reality, and for this I am so very grateful. The language of Zen beautifully plays with both sides of reality, the relative and the absolute. There are philosophies and religions that talk about the True Nature of the Universe or Godhead which have little or nothing to do with ordinary life. And then there are languages that have everything to do with ordinary life but say little or nothing about the Depth. I've never encountered an approach that so consistently and aptly blends the two.

So, it is my wish that we all awaken more fully as we practice together and investigate and challenge each other in the Dokusan room. I warn you, learning the language of Zen which so easily mixes the ordinary with the absolute is very difficult for anyone, but perhaps especially for Westerners. As soon as you think you can say IT, you've lost IT, but you *must* say it! This conundrum is something that Rinzai Zen training constantly returns to. How do you say or impart what which cannot be adequately said? The language of Zen is not simply a verbal language; "that which can not be adequately said" can be intimated in many ways. Instead of speaking about God, Buddha, Spirit, Dharma or Tao, the Zen way of expressing one's insights often blends what's right in front of us —like three pounds of flax, the pine tree in the front garden, the temple bell or whatever, with some nod or hint at the inconceivable manifest in this moment.

If you try to say IT too directly, or start to talk about Dharma, Tao, Spirit, Godhead

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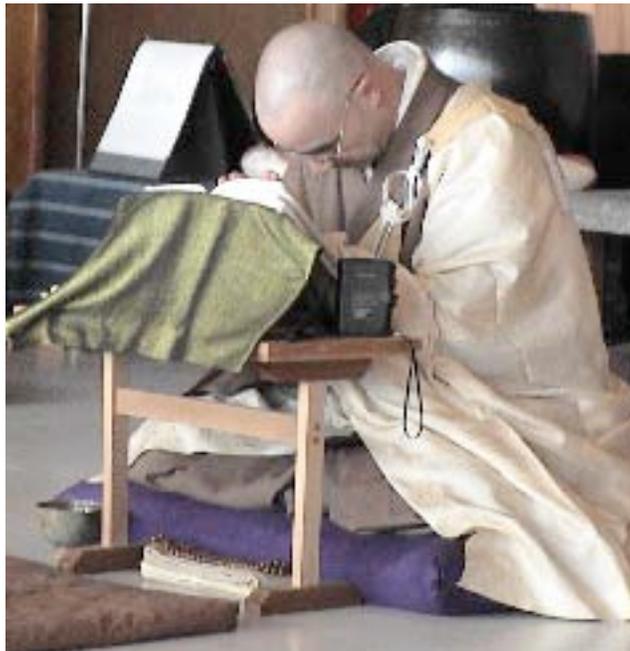
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or Buddha Nature, you've already missed it. If you don't talk about IT, you remain merely at the surface of reality. In the course of Zen training we experiment and learn how to use the ordinary to intimate the most profound depths. The depths are shouting at us, from every surface and corner, but we so often fail to recognize THIS! IT shouts at us in the distant thunder, and in the gentle rain falling; from our own pain, IT is shouting at us! IT is very demonstrative; yet, we have trouble being demonstrative. We have trouble accepting that there is any depth at all, and though we may accept this truth from time to time, we have even more trouble accepting that we are seamlessly inseparable from IT. Oh, not me! Perhaps a Zen Master, a Sage, a Saint, or a Bodhisattva could feel this way, but not me! I don't know how to do it. The odd thing is "I don't know how to do it" is already doing it. It can be said that Zen has no secrets and nothing to teach; yet, one of the many things we learn during the course of our training and practice is that our doubt, yearning and "not knowing" are IT. In time we come to appreciate with gratitude that these aspects are necessary, nay, indispensable.

Old Tozan was asked, "What is Buddha Nature? What is Tao? What is the essence of the Universe?" Tozan says and thrusts forth, "Three Pounds of Flax!" I read somewhere that Tozan's family was in the business of making cloth, so, we can presume that he was quite intimate with this product, and probably, although the text does not say, making a robe for himself. Even today some Zen groups require that you make your own robe and Rakusu [symbolic piece of the Buddha's robe worn around the neck]. In fact Denise did just that for tomorrow's Jukai. Therefore, she will likely be very intimate with her Rakusu, as I hope we all become over time, but she has a head start from having stitched it herself.

This gold kesa [Genjo points to his own outer robe, representing the Historical Buddha's one robe] is not very traditional.

I have a very traditional purple kesa, made in Japan, which I'll wear at the Jukai ceremony, and was a gift from Edo Shimano Roshi at the time of my abbot installation. Before giving me the kesa, Eido Roshi wore it himself many years; therefore, it is full of his "Zen sweat" and "strong Nen" [original thought or intention], which is very intimate for me. But, for me, this gold kesa is even more intimate. First of all, our founding Abbot and my ordination teacher, Genki Takabayashi Roshi, picked out the cloth. After this, Genki Roshi dyed the cloth personally. It was white originally and he managed to



Genjo Osho wearing gold Kesa

get this uniform gold color from natural dyes. The dyed silk was then cut and stitched by Josen. It proved to be very difficult for her; so every time I wear this kesa I deeply feel both their effort and care. When I first wore this gold kesa at the Dai Bosatsu Monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York some nine years ago, I think it may have caught Eido Roshi's disapproving eye. I sensed that he thought it was a bit presumptuous of me to wear a gold silk kesa; nevertheless, risking his displeasure, I was reluctant to give it up because it contained so much love and support. Sometime later Eido Roshi gave me the tie-ring [enso] that now goes with this kesa, and I knew it was all right, and that he understood by adding his own contribution to this garment.

So, there is nothing magical about this garment, but it has a deep intimacy for me, just as the three pounds of flax did for Tozan. And, as I said yesterday, the stick I carry into the Zendo for Dharma Talk, is just a stick, another gift from Genki Roshi. But when is a stick not just a stick? When is three pounds of flax, just three pounds of flax **and** so much more? The previous owners of this property planted the pine tree in our front garden and it is not very remarkable. But, when you have your eyes open, the pine tree in the front garden is just a pine tree **and** so much more! When you have your eyes open, the temple bell is so intimate. When your eyes are open, your Muuuuu is so intimate! Muuuuu is just the vocalization of the syllable Mu, right? My vocalization of this syllable is rather gravelly. But in the vocalization of this simple syllable, sometimes the inconceivable is clearly intimated. Learning how to be intimate with the world in this way is what we call Zen training and practice.

Mumon's Poem for this case begins, "Thrust forth this three pounds of flax!" "Old Tozan studied a bit of Clam Zen" starts Mumon's Commentary. Clam Zen means there's a pearl in it. "Opening the shell a little reveals his liver and intestines." He gives it all: "Here it is! I'll share my most deep intimacy with you. I won't be self-conscious, or doubtful or hesitant. Here's my deepest intimacy and I freely share it with you." He gives it all and, even so, "Tell me, where do you see the real Tozan?" It's a challenge for us to accept this level of intimacy, to let it in! It is a challenge to see "the Tao that cannot be named" in three pounds of flax. Similarly, it is a challenge to intimate the Tao in the vocalization of a syllable, or to reveal the essence of the temple bell without words or explanation, or to experience and express the whole universe breathing. Quite a challenge! Words can be intimate but even more so the mind, our kokoro, Heart/Mind. Words can be intimate but even more is sharing your own true heart without dependence on ideas, beliefs or concepts.

When we fall back into talking about right and wrong, or this is it, this isn't it, we know we're locked into our superficial discriminations again. This is it! This isn't it! This is right, this is wrong! Have I got it? Did I get it? Is this It? No, this isn't It! We've boxed ourselves in. We have a saying, "Those who live by the sword, die by the sword." Likewise, those who live in right and wrong are stuck in right and wrong. In what remains of this sesshin let's all get free, free to experience and share the Depth of what is.

With gassho,

Genjo

(Transcription help from Dee Seishun)

Spring Sesshin 2005 Closing Incense Poem

*Followers of the Way,
Who sees the Dharma clouds?*

*Quickly they pass over Dai Bai Zan
leaving no trace.*

*Each of us shares one Mind,
one Heart.*

*This Mind reflects on itself,
only to realize there is No Mind.*

*With no instruction or formula the
temple garden blooms.*



Summer Sesshin June 18 - 24

Please send a deposit by June 10th, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check to Chobo-ji. The cost of sesshin is \$210 (less dues). Sesshin begins promptly at 5 am the morning of Saturday, June 18th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.

Subtle Sound The Zen Teachings of Maurine Stuart

(Book Report by Bob Daigan Timmer)

This book is a collection of several (29) teishos given by Maurine Stuart, who was one of the teachers of Roko Sherry Chayat Ni-Osho, Genjo Osho's dharma sister. (The title of the book -- Subtle Sound -- derives from Maurine's dharma name, MyoOn, which she received from Soen Nakagawa Roshi.) The book begins with a lengthy Introduction by Roko Ni-Osho which tells about Maurine's introduction to Zen and her life of zen. In addition to writing the Introduction, Roko Ni-Osho edited the teishos in the book. Eido Shimano Roshi and his teacher, Soen Nakagawa Roshi, as well as Hakuun Yasutani Roshi were all players in Maurine's life.

The teishos in the book sparkle with clarity. From the aptly titled chapters (*The Illusion of "I", There Are No Repetitions, Depending on Nothing*) to the "bite-sized" lengths of the teishos (most are less than 6 pages), to the substantial (but elusive) content -- each chapter shines with her teaching. (This is probably a tribute to the editing as much as the teacher!) A common theme which runs through all the

teishos is the joy to be gotten from zazen. She writes: "By committing ourselves completely to our zazen, by accepting everything just as it comes, we become freer, more open, more alert, move vividly alive." (from *Ordinary Mind*) and again (in a conversation with a friend) she says, "How did you come to your wonderful condition of enlightenment?" And she said, "I concentrate on one thing at a time and I count my breaths. That's it." (from *Taking It Home*).

I have a personal interest in this book as well. In a recent sesshin, I was "in the pits" and happened to pick up this book from the coffee table in the living room. I read the following sentence (from *The Illusion of "I"*) "The idea is that an ordinary human being came to an awakened state of mind by realigning himself to the situations around him."

That was a very helpful sentence for me. It foretells the end of the book (*The Last Word*) which concludes "Nobody finishes this training. There is no last work. *This* is a present-tensed word, going on forever. What is your own experience of This?"

Wenatchee Zen

For some time now Genjo has been working with a small group of people from Wenatchee who are exploring Zen meditation. On April 17 and 18 Genko went to Wenatchee for the first of a regular series of visitations with the Zen group forming there through the efforts of Todd and Sharon Petit. The plan is to meet Saturday afternoons at the Unitarian Church, beginning with introductory instruction and zazen, followed by a brief Dharma talk, tea, and more zazen. Between 11 and 15 folks were able to stay for all or part of the afternoon.

This particular weekend Genko also was invited to speak at the Unitarian services the following day; the topic for the early morning discussion forum and the service itself was Zen and social activism, and we examined what it means to each of us to

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act compassionately from our place of practice, which is only this present moment and the particular circumstances we find ourselves in.

The Wenatchee connection will continue to grow through mutual visitations, and Genko is looking forward to remaining involved in this.

Jukai Ceremony

On the last day of Spring Sesshin 2004, Denise Janetos, Ken Iwata and Marilyn Cornwell formally accepted the Buddhist precepts. All three have been active participants in our Sangha for some time, and by the conclusion of Spring Sesshin all of them had completed at least two week-long sesshins.

During the Jukai Ceremony they acknowledged their respect for Zen practice and Buddhist principles by giving themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), chanting the Bodhisattva vows and leading the Sangha in reciting the Ten Precepts.

After that they each received a Rakusu (symbolic piece of the historical Buddha's robe worn around the neck) and a Dharma Name. A Dharma Name is selected by the abbot to be an inspiration for realizing one's full potential.

Denise's new Dharma Name is Shin-Kyo which means Mind Mirror. Shin-Kyo reflects the truth and loves to reflect on the truth. After submitting her Jukai petition she wrote me an e-mail telling me of a friend who asked her "Will you be a Bud-

dhist nun after Jukai?" Denise appropriately responded, "No, Jukai basically means to me that I have formally accepted the Buddhist path, that I am serious about it, but of course still questioning everything as well."

Ken's new Dharma Name is Dai-En which means Vast Garden. Ken wrote in his Jukai petition:

In zazen, I find a deep resonance that is harmonious with some universal bell that sounds from some unknown origin. This sound combined with my breath creates a cord that allows me to probe and stimulate the depth of my being, opening, revealing, gently guiding me to the truth. ... What I find amazing and exciting about this practice is its simplicity and directness. It is available to all those who seek it. This I believe is the magic of Zen.

In her Jukai petition letter, she writes:

While in therapy, zazen and prayer were the skillful means through which I began to learn to embrace my own embodied existence, and to become aware to the tyranny of, and right relationship to, the mind/ego. I emerged from therapy with some insights and skills for continuing my practice and then began sitting with the Chobo-ji sangha. The sangha has been a source of refuge for me. As a candidate for ordination in my church I have many pastoral and liturgical leadership responsibilities, but with the Sangha I just sit, and do whatever task is asked of me. Sitting with more experienced practitioners straightens my practice and keeps pointing me back to my cushion. Within the sangha there is a welcome, accountability, creativity, and humor that refreshes.



Jukai candidates need to petition in writing at least one month prior to the ceremony, saying why they feel the time is ripe to take this step. Jukai candidates usually have attended regular zazen at Chobo-Ji for a minimum of six months (including at least two week-long sesshins), have become regular financial supporters of the Temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha). In other words, they find themselves inspired by practice, feel that the training opens their

Heart-Mind, and want to serve the Temple community.

Marilyn's new Dharma Name is Ho-Un which means Dharma Cloud. The "Un" part of her name is also found in the Japanese word unsui which means "cloud and water person" and refers to a Zen monk. As you may know, in addition to following the Buddhist path she is soon to enter seminary to complete her studies to be an Episcopal priest.





Denise Shin-Kyo Janetos



Ken Dai-En Iwata



Marilyn Ho-Un Cornwell

NorthWest Dharma News

NWDN is a comprehensive magazine containing a calendar of Buddhist events, articles, and news about the greater Northwest Buddhist community. Subscribe today and keep current with upcoming teachings, retreat opportunities, and news.

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Plum Mountain News

About Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji

In 1978, Zen Master Genki Takabayashi was invited by the Seattle Zen Center, founded by Dr. Glenn Webb (at the time a UW Art History professor), to become the resident teacher. He accepted, and by 1983 he formalized his teaching style around a small group of students, and founded Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji, translated as *Great Plum Mountain Listening to the Dharma Zen Temple*.

Before Genki Roshi came to Seattle, he trained for nearly twenty years at Daitoku-Ji, the head Rinzai temple in Japan. In addition, Genki Roshi directed a Rinzai temple in Kamakura, Japan. He entered the monastery when he was 11 years old.



After twenty years of tirelessly giving himself to the transmission of Buddha Dharma to the United States, in 1997 he retired as our teacher, got married and moved to Montana. There he is planting the seeds for yet another American Zen group, and doing the activities he loves best: gardening, pottery, and cooking.

Genjo Osho began his Zen training in 1975, was ordained in 1980, became an Osho (full priest) in 1990, and our Abbot in 1999. In 1981-82 he trained at Ryutaku-ji in Japan. Genjo Osho is assisted by Rev. Genko Kathy Blackman. In addition to his Zen duties, Genjo Osho is a psychotherapist in private practice, a certificated spiritual director, married to wife, Carolyn, and father to daughter, Adrienne. Our temple is in the Rinzai Zen School. Since Genki Roshi retired, Genjo Osho has continued his training with Eido T. Shimano Roshi, abbot of Dai Bosatsu Monastery in New York.

Schedule

Introduction to Zen

Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 pm

Zazen

Monday - Friday, 5:30 am, 1 hr.

Saturdays, 6:30 - 8:00 am

Sundays, 6:30 pm, 1 hr.

Dharma Talks

1st and 3rd Sundays, 7:30 pm, 1 hr.

Sesshins: Quarterly week-long retreats last week in March, June, September and the first week of December.

Mini-Sesshins: Half day retreats with breakfast, Dharma Talk and Dharma Interview. 5 - 11:20 am, Sundays: 6/12, 7/10, 8/14, 9/11, 10/16, 11/13

Summer Sesshin: 6/18/05 - 6/24/05

Autumn Sesshin: 9/24/05 - 9/30/05

Rohatsu Sesshin: 11/30/05 - 12/8/05

Spring Sesshin: 3/25/06 - 3/31/06

We Are Located: at 1811 20th Ave., (one half-block north of Madison and south of Denny). Street parking is available in front or between 19th and 20th on Denny, or off-street parking is available behind the house. After entering the front door, remove your shoes and socks in the entry way and proceed to the Zendo (meditation hall) upstairs. [206-328-3944](tel:206-328-3944)

Dues and Fees: go to support the life of this temple. We have no outside support from any organization.

Dues are \$60 a month or whatever one can afford. Any amount received monthly means that you will receive this quarterly newsletter, receive discounts on retreats, and be considered an active member.

The suggested fee for any morning or evening practice period, including Tuesday night introduction and Sunday night Dharma Talk is five dollars. The \$5 fee is waived for all members.

The suggested fee for mini-sesshins is \$20. Fees for the March, July, and September sesshins are \$210, and Rohatsu Sesshin is \$320. Members may subtract their monthly dues from the week-long sesshin cost. For more information see:

www.choboji.org