



# PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 12.4

Winter 2005-06

## Dear members and friends,

It has been another busy fall and start of winter. At the end of October, Peter (Shinkon) Glynn and I attended Harvest Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zen (DBZ) monastery in New York with Eido Shimano Roshi. By the end of Harvest Sesshin it became clear that it is time for me to be more directly supportive of Eido Roshi efforts to propagate Rinzai Zen in the West. While at Harvest Sesshin, I quietly celebrated my 51st birthday; soon I'll be in my mid 50's! Eido Roshi and Genki Roshi (our founding abbot) are moving into their mid-seventies (Genki Roshi's 73rd birthday is Feb. 21st). Our corporeal bodies are not timeless; therefore, it is time for me to more earnestly consider ways that I can be supportive. I want to do my part to be sure that the legacy of Genki Roshi and Eido Roshi efforts are as fully realized as possible. They have given so much, and they have inspired so many.



*Afternoon Kinhin (walking meditation) -- Rohatsu Sesshin*

With this in mind, I've begun making a regular monthly monetary contribution to the Zen Studies Society to support Eido Roshi's efforts. I invite anyone reading this to consider doing the same. I know that for some your monthly contribution to Chobo-ji may already be a financial stretch, but consider how few genuine opportunities exist in the United States to train in a vital authentic Rinzai Zen monastery. This rare resource deserves our care; please consider this when you are making contributions to the causes you support.

Another way that I am planning to be supportive of the DBZ monastery is by attending next DBZ's 30th Anniversary Sesshin, which is scheduled for July 1-9. I would like for as many Chobo-ji students as possible to begin now considering attending this important event. Finally, I believe it is time for me to begin intensifying my own training with Eido Roshi. As I'm sure most readers know, ten years ago, with Genki Roshi's encouragement, I committed to attending two weeklong ses-

shins with Eido Roshi each year. Happily I've been able to keep that commitment, but because of other commitments and responsibilities I have not been able to go more often. I've thought long and hard how I might be able to do more with the time that I have. One way would be to begin switching my DBZ Harvest Sesshin commitment to DBZ's Rohatsu Sesshin the first eight days of December. Up to this point, I've been reluctant to bump Chobo-ji's Rohatsu sesshin in order to accommodate this. But after talking with Eido Roshi, and senior members of

Chobo-ji, I now have the support that I need to make this change. Accordingly, for the foreseeable future, Chobo-ji will hold its Rohatsu sesshin in early January instead of the more traditional early December dates.

Perhaps, in part, because word began to circulate about this change, Chobo-ji's Rohatsu Sesshin was very well attended this year. Forty-three people signed up, forty people arrived from around the world, and thirty-nine were able to complete the eight-day sesshin, with one person needing to leave early because of a serious illness (he has since fully recovered). Dee (Seishun) Endelman was our Dai-Tenzo (Chief Cook); she was backed up most frequently by Diane (JoAn) Ste Marie our Assistant Tenzo. Of course, to cook for so many required lots of support from many senior Chobo-ji members and the samu (work assignment) support of everyone. Seishun and JoAn's styles are very different, so a few

times there was heat generated about how to best serve the Sangha (community); nevertheless, we were all well nurtured with delicious offerings. Charlie (Taishin) Blackman was our Shika (manager), and not only made and rotated the samu assignments throughout each day, but was also behind the scenes from beginning to end to make sure that everything moved as smoothly as possible.

Bob (Daigan) Timmer was our Jikijitsu (Time Keeper) and kept us very punctual and led us briskly through the cold autumn

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

air for after-meal outdoor kinhin (walking meditation). Neither of our assigned Den-sus (Chant Leaders) were able to attend this Rohatsu, so our former Shika Tom (Shodo) DeGroot stepped in and did a great job keeping the beat. Ken (DaiEn) Iwata and Brenda (Zenmu) Nightingale were our Jishas (Tea Servers), they both learned on the job, as we all do, and by the end made a very efficient team. Zenmu, as usual, provided many homemade sweets herself. It was particularly gratifying to see Zenmu return to Rohatsu in person after missing last year due to illness. Sometimes life *is* Rohatsu. Denise (Shinkyō) Janetos further learned the ropes as my Inji (Abbot Assistant) and helped me move smoothly from one activity to another. Rev. Genko Blackman watched over the queue to the Dokuson room where Dharma Interview is held, making sure that everyone who wanted to be seen was accommodated in a timely fashion. Carolyn (Josen) Stevens, our perpetual Fusu (Treasurer), saw to it that we were all paid up, and handled our negotiations with Camp Indianola for next year. Josen also assisted as a sometimes Jokai, keisaku (waking stick) holder. Our lead Jokai this sesshin was Rodger (Tozan) Park, sensei at Huron Valley Aikikai in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Nearly half of those attending Rohatsu sesshin were from outside Washington State. Many were Aikido students with affiliations to either Chiba Sensei in San Diego or Shibata Sensei in Berkeley. It has been awhile since so many have joined us at one time, and they are always welcome for the sincerity and vitality they bring to their Zen training. There were only a few in attendance who had never done a weeklong sesshin before and they all did surprisingly well, considering that Rohatsu sesshin is the most demanding of the four sesshins that Chobo-ji offers each year. Particularly remarkable was the participation of Sergery from Kazakhstan. Not only had he not done much meditation before, but also he could not speak much English. So he had a more difficult time understanding what was going on and being asked of him. Neverthe-

less, with Taishin's help (who speaks Russian), he worked successfully to blend in and reported that he had a "good sesshin" by the end.

Without a doubt this was one of the strongest Rohatsu sesshins that Chobo-ji has ever done; everyone sat diligently with great determination. I feel so fortunate to be affiliated with such a strong and devoted Sangha. Rohatsu concluded with a Jukai (Buddhist Precept) ceremony for Ralph Leach, there will be more on this a little later. In addition to a transcribed Dharma Talk from the second day of sesshin and my closing incense poem, Steve Garber offers a Rohatsu haiku that you will find in this edition of Plum Mountain News.



### *Ringing in the New Year*

After our yearly holiday, break between Christmas and New Year's, the Sangha returned to the temple for what has become our annual New Year's Day chanting ceremony and potluck. Just before digging into the good eats we each took a turn ringing the temple bell to properly conclude 2005 and begin 2006 by ringing out our delusions with each "gong." We didn't reach the traditional 108 bells, but the nineteen in attendance gave it a good go. On January 10th, we celebrated Zen Master Rinzai's memorial day (d. 867), which also marks the seventh anniversary of my installation as Abbot of Chobo-ji. I know that each year seems to pass faster than the last, if I ever reach sixty or beyond, the

years, I fear, will just seem to zoom by; regardless, life is short, so we must do our best. On Saturday, January 14th, we had a Toya party, traditionally held on the shortest day of the year in a Zen monastery to celebrate the solstice. Toya is the one night in the year where the hierarchy is turned upside down and most of the monastic rules are deliberately broken to show non-attachment. We just use Toya as an excuse to have a good party, and this Toya was no exception. Good food, lots of wine, fun games, and good conversation; it was once again hosted at JoAn's lovely home.

Recently Genko and I met with Karen Pohio, the Program Coordinator for the King County Jail and soon Genko and I will begin a twice-monthly visit to offer "Buddhist Meditation" to those incarcerated in this rather draconian downtown institution. We have already had our "training" and hopefully our offering will be well received by both our target audience and correction officials. As you may know, Genko already volunteers at the Monroe State Correctional Complex, as I did in the past. We both feel that the King County Jail is a much harder place to do time than any other institution we have visited. We will let you know how it goes.

In addition to the other offerings already mentioned above, you will find in this issue of Plum Mountain News an updated schedule for this year, a financial report for last year, the new posts for the next training season beginning in March, an update on my monthly podcasts, and announcements for Spring Sesshin, Spring Intensive and for our upcoming Annual Meeting, where the Chobo-ji Board is elected. Josen and I are leaving on a ten-day trip to England January 18th, half of our time will be with Chris Mooney Sensei in Birmingham doing Zen and the other half will be a few days visiting London. The Zen House will be open as usual during our absence. Please stay warm and healthy the remainder of this winter season.

With gassho,

*Genjo*

## Financial Report

Dear Sangha friends,

It's time for the annual Chobo-ji financial report. I continue to take great pleasure in serving as Fusu, or treasurer, primarily because our overall strength as a group of Zen practitioners is well reflected in our financial well-being. This past year, our group has grown. During 2004, a total of forty-five people paid dues for some or all of the year; in 2005 that number grew to sixty-one. In an average month, about forty folks pay dues, up from about thirty-five last year. It's exciting to have new members, with a stimulating mix of new and long-time practitioners sitting in the zendo together. And so far, we aren't having any problems with space. This morning, for the January mini-sesshin, we had nineteen people in attendance; nicely full. At the board's request, I've been tracking mini-sesshin attendance for two years, and we average ten to fifteen people each month. Weekday mornings average six to twelve people, and Sunday evenings draw eight to twelve.



In line with our growth, income was up this year to \$67,512 from \$54,471 last year. Our expenses also increased to \$37,251 from \$31,645. Net income was \$30,262, up from \$22,825 in 2004. Dues and sesshin payments are our main sources of income. Major expenses are retirement costs for Genki Roshi, \$12,115; sesshins, \$10,047; and house expenses, \$8,459.

Our balance sheet is healthy. At 12/31/04, we had \$22,238 in checking and savings accounts, and \$429,028 in other assets which consist of the Zen House, the Cessna airplane, and Genjo's and my retirement account. The really good news is

that the airplane loan will be paid off in full this year, and our house mortgage stands at \$69,000. It feels great to have so little debt. Speaking of the airplane, 2005 marked five years of ownership, and on schedule the engine was replaced to the tune of approximately \$26,000. The funds to pay for this had been nearly all saved from the plane's revenue as part of the Galvin Flying Service fleet. Once the airplane's mortgage is paid, we'll have a new source of revenue and the opportunity to more quickly pay down our house mortgage.

This quick summary leaves out most details. I make regular reports at our board meetings, and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

With gassho,

*Josen Carolyn Stevens*

## Annual Meeting Sunday, March 12th

Our Annual Meeting will be held at 11:30 am after the Sunday, March 12th mini-sesshin (5 - 11:30 am). At this meeting we elect our Board of Directors for the year. The Board is the legal and fiscal guardian of the temple. If you are interested in serving, please let Genko know beforehand. The Board meets about four times a year. A quorum of at least half of our active (i.e. dues paying) members is required, so please plan to attend this important meeting.

## Spring Sesshin March 25th - 31st

Please send a deposit by March 15th, 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, March 25th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.

## New Posts Beginning March 1st

Dee Seishun Endelman: **Shika**  
(Host - Manager)

Diane JoAn Ste Marie: **Dai-Tenzo**  
(Chief cook for Sesshins)

Charlie Taishin Blackman: **Tenzo**  
Assistant

Michelle Muji LeSourd: **Tenzo**  
2nd Assistant

Bob Daigan Timmer: **Jikijitsu**  
(Timekeeper)

Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard:  
**Densu** (Chant Leader)

Linda Muka Wehness: **Densu**  
Assistant

Ken DaiEn Iwata: **Jisha**  
(Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Brenda Zenmu Nightingale: **Jisha**  
Assistant

Peter Shinkon Glynn: **Inji**  
(Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn Josen Stevens: **Fusu**  
(Treasurer and financial manager)

Daiki Cadman & Genko Blackman:  
**Introduction to Zazen Leaders**



# Mumonkan

## Case 37: Oak Tree in the Front Garden

(2nd day, Rohatsu Sesshin, 2005)

Transcription help from Dee Seishun

**Koan:** A monk once asked Master Joshu, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?” Joshu answered, “The oak tree in the front garden.”

### Mumon’s Commentary:

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

### Mumon’s Poem:

*Words do not convey actualities;  
Letters do not embody the spirit  
of the mind.*

*He who attaches himself to words is lost;  
He who abides with letters  
will remain in ignorance.*

In the midst of the discomfort that arises from doing this marathon Rohatsu Sesshin, the most intensive retreat of the year, comes this beautiful image from Zen Master Joshu. He was a ninth century Chinese Zen man, one of the most insightful and brilliant Zen Masters of all time. He shares with us the stately oak tree in the front garden of his temple.

There are many ways to respond to the question, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?” Many responses from Zen Masters to these kinds of questions are not nearly as pleasant as “the oak tree in the front garden;” I’m thinking, for example, of Zen Master Unmon’s “Shit Stick!” As we deepen our practice and face the inconceivable, we often encounter many aches and pains, fatigue, doubt, and sometimes rage, shame, sadness or angst. It is by facing and moving through all this froth that we eventually realize “peace of mind.” Opening our hearts to the depths of the unconscious mind we sometimes feel as though we have opened up a can of worms or one of

those proverbial “Calvin and Hobbes” closets stuffed with many demons, monsters, fantasies and obsessions. You never know what’s going to bubble up in sesshin. I’ve done too many sesshins to count and they have never become predictable. I never know if there will be great realms of clarity, great realms of hell, or both. Most often, it’s a mixed bag. And that’s just as it is. This life is not going to be all to our liking; in fact, it’s a mixed bag, with only a fraction of one percent coming easily without any sort of impediment.

We all encounter many pains after long hours of sitting in the cold zendo with what may seem for some insufficient food, such small bowls after all, and we eat so quickly (we prefer to say deliberately).



Carolyn says I use that as an excuse to “chow down.” (laughter) Anyway, what happens when we are exposed to the elements in this way and to our fatigue, angst, doubt and many pains, etc. -- is that our normal ego defenses fall away. When our defenses are down, we may find that a reservoir of unprocessed or knotted up personal history bubbles up into our consciousness.

We are all really quite ingenious, without any awareness of being so. For the most part, we go through life bumping along and when this or that is a little more than we can handle we unconsciously store, either somatically or psychologically, that which we are unable to digest or process in real time. And that stored suffering often

comes up in sesshin. Isn’t that good? (laughter) Usually, when you’re experiencing it, you don’t think so! But it *is* good because in the course of sesshin, you will be able to combust or release at least some of the stored suffering so that some of your unfinished personal business becomes fully exhausted or integrated.

There’s no end to our karmic baggage because we’re all connected to one another and, collectively, we’ve got a lot of karmic baggage! Nevertheless, your own personal burdens collected in this lifetime, can be accessed and released through such a process as Rohatsu Sesshin. Since your personal reservoir of karmic baggage is connected seamlessly to the wider collective, as you do your work, you are doing the work of the collective. So this process of exposure, integration and release is a good thing. And it feels awful.

In my own case, I now know that a lot of very old material got buried in my unconscious — which means it was absorbed very early in my personal history, during the first three years of life. I have no concrete memory of it, but there was a great trauma and abuse that got stored behind many walls and defenses. It took more than ten years of zazen and many sesshins before it began to bubble to surface and, and when it did, it was more like a flood. If it weren’t for the help of my spouse, my closest friends and a good analyst, I would have run away from Zen training.

I sincerely hope that most people don’t have this kind of baggage lurking in their unconscious, but if you do, understand that you are not alone. Regardless if our suffering is associated with current or past circumstances it can be faced, and over time it will be composted or combusted. Whether the suffering we encounter on our zafu [meditation cushion] is the relatively superficial pain and fatigue of the present or the deeper doubt, angst and fear connected with older buried material, or both, it can be combusted. So be grateful!

Gratitude is the key to so-called “enlightenment,” and Mu is the raft that will get us to the other shore of this sesshin. And how does this work? Mu is the Zen syllable that is used as a mantra to re-

call the mysterious nothing or ineffable source that flowers as the universe. Through our Mu practice, we realize that even our suffering is nothing other than one of the myriad manifestations of Mu. Everything is Mu; therefore, even our suffering is nothing more than a concentrated knotted up slice of so called “Buddha Nature.” And should this concentrated historical material come up and aggravate your zazen and throw you into a hell realm, just sit! Just breathe! Do Mu! Breathe Mu! Be Mu! Then exhale and let it out, let it all out. Don’t push it back down. If tears come, let them come. If rage comes, let the rage come, and release it with each exhalation. Don’t swallow it, and please don’t project it! Lots of times, you want to throw it at the Jikijitsu [zendo time keeper] (laughter) or at me. You may think, “They are making me have this pain, this sorrow or suffering.” No, no. It’s all yours! (laughter) We’re not making you have it. Who chose to be here? (laughter) I didn’t make anybody come here. You just all showed up! (laughter) So don’t blame us.

**R**emember, don’t swallow, reject, deny or project your suffering. Instead, breathe it. Whether it’s the simple pain, which I agree can sometimes be horrific, or whether it’s something much older and entrenched, breathe it. Be with it and release it.

**B**reathing through whatever arises creates a kind of fire in our Hara (abdomen). By the way, this is how I stay warm! By constantly combusting thoughts, feelings, sensations or historical baggage, I am able to keep myself warm even when it is cold. Breathing and doing Mu creates a kind of furnace right here [Genjo slaps his Hara] in your center, and you can go on and on whether it’s cold or hot, whether in the midst of clarity or confusion. In this way we can just chug along. Breathe in, breathe out and let the fire of your Hara churn through even so-called clarity. Clarity is just fine, but don’t attach to it. Breathe in and breathe out.

**S**o, in the midst of our churning, we are given the gift of Joshu’s Oak Tree in the Front Garden. Master Joshu, the same fellow who is so famous for responding

“Mu” to the question “Does a dog have Buddha Nature?”, says, in response to “What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?”, “The oak tree in the front garden.”

**T**he Patriarch being referred to is Bodhidharma, the first Buddhist ancestor to bring what would one day be called Zen from India to China. In the fifth century, China was already well versed in Buddhism; however, the Buddhism flourishing at that time was a bit lopsided, focusing more on the philosophical or scholastic approach rather than emphasizing direct insight. Bodhidharma brought a very experientially based practice, one that not only asked for but



demand, direct personal insight, which will always prove to be deeper than any intellectual understanding, theory or formula.

**S**ometimes, our understanding will be upside down or the opposite of reality. You may think this can’t be, but it happens all the time. For example, for a long while, people understood the world to be flat. Today, many believe that each one of us is a separate discrete being, this too could not be further from the truth. On the other hand, sometimes our understanding will be right on, but understanding alone can only go so far. This doesn’t mean that under-

standing is to be discarded, for insight without understanding is also incomplete. But understanding without insight is woefully lacking.

**T**he records say Bodhidharma spent nine years sitting in a cave, facing a wall near the Shaolin Temple Shorin-ji. He didn’t say much and attracted little attention. Eventually a fellow by the name of Shinko was drawn to him. Suspecting that Bodhidharma had great insight into the Tao, Shinko implored him to become his disciple. Repeatedly Bodhidharma denied him. Becoming desperate Shinko is said to have “cut off his arm” to demonstrate his sincerity, passion and willingness to

sacrifice. In Zen practice we say that in order to access genuine insight the practitioner must be ready to surrender his or her life repeatedly. In other words, it’s not difficult to talk about “genuine insight” but to experience it, to transcend, to get beyond our rational discriminating consciousness is *not* an easy task.

**W**e must let go completely. We must *let go* and *let be* completely. This is to say, we must work individually and collectively to come to the place we we’re able to fully accept things just as they are, without try-

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

ing to impose our preferences, ideas and desires. More than learning how to accept, we must come to *appreciate* things just as they are. And more than this, we must learn to have *gratitude* for things just as they are, whether they are to our liking or not. This ability to accept, appreciate and have gratitude does not come easily in the midst of things we dislike! But true insight will rarely make an appearance until we have matured sufficiently to repeatedly enter the perspective of deep gratitude for things just as they are.

One of the reasons our sesshins are so arduous is to give us the opportunity to stretch our capacity, in the midst of our sufferings, to be more mature in our abil-



ity to have gratitude for circumstances just as they are. We often don't find things to our liking; even so, can we not right now deeply appreciate the oak tree in the front garden? Can we not deeply appreciate the bite of the cold moist morning air during kinhin (walking meditation)? Are we able to deeply appreciate the sound of the seagulls squawking, skimming over Puget Sound, or the residue of first snow on the fallen log? Can we "hear" the stillness of the mist hanging in the trees? Does the taste of the warm broth or tea reach our very marrow? This kind of appreciation

and gratitude for these subtle but profound realities all around us *is* the opportunity of Rohatsu Sesshin.

To really let go and let be, releasing our need to make things different and transcending our efforts to control circumstances is not easy! It seems we are nearly always trying to succeed, improve or better our circumstances. To simply and deeply come into this reality, deeply appreciating and having gratitude for things just as they are, requires that our heart expand to include the whole universe and beyond. We must grow past the artificial ego boundaries defining self and other, and separating ourselves from the natural world. As our kokoro (heart/mind) transcends our self-imposed boundaries and defenses we begin to realize that *we* are right now, for better

or worse, the voice of the Dharma. Whether singing or dancing, sitting or walking, eating or sleeping, this is Dharma or Buddha Nature or Muuu... expressing itself. Every corner of reality, every blade of grass, every breath, every heartbeat is manifesting Bodhidharma's insight! It is from this realization that Joshu in response to, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" said, "The oak tree in the front garden." In the midst of the silence among the trees, in the stillness of the snow on the log, in the breath visible in

the cold air Bodhidharma is imploring us to see, to let go and be.

**“W**ords do not convey actualities. Letters do not embody the spirit of the mind. If you attach yourself to words, you are lost.” If you get stuck on the words “the oak tree in the front garden” or think that these words impart some special secret meaning, you're lost. “Who abides with letters will remain in ignorance.” This is not to say that words and letters, scriptures and philosophy don't have value, but intellectual understanding without insight will always remain ignorance. We say in Zen, words can only at best be a finger pointing at the moon, hardly the moon itself.

A picture of an apple will never taste as good as the real thing! And to taste an apple you must bite into it yourself, no one can do it for you! In this way, I have no Dharma to give you; my Dharma talk is just that, talk. You sitting on the cushion, doing kinhin, sweeping the floor, preparing a meal or eating a meal, must directly and intimately bite into each experience. I cannot do it for you, and I too must learn to rely on the vital, direct intuitive experience of reality. There is no substitute for true insight. No one can take a breath for us. No one can die for us. No one can live for us.

Zen Master Joshu shared his insight and heart so intimately with us. Are we able to appreciate and have gratitude for his efforts? Can we even see the oak tree in the front garden that he shared so open heartedly. Where is it now? If we can firmly comprehend the essence of Joshu's response, then, for us, there's no Shakya-muni, Historical Buddha of the Shakya Clan, and no Maitreya, future incarnation of Buddha. With true insight there is no need for Buddha in the past, no need for a future Buddha; in fact, there simply is no Buddha at all. No talk of Buddha. No talk of Buddha Nature. No talk of Tao. No talk of Dharma. Just this mist in the forest, just this seagull calling, skimming Puget Sound.

With gassho,

*Genjo*

## Rohatsu Sesshin 2005 Closing Incense Poem

*Millennium ago Shakyamuni awoke  
to the morning star Venus,  
today's Rohatsu participants  
are greeted by  
Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars.*

*Sitting again and again with snow,  
seagull and surf as our allies.  
Who sees the Empty Mountain?*



*Blue Heron skims the muddy  
marsh, Bald Eagle soars over  
Puget Sound.*

*At any time, at any place the planets  
are in alignment.*

---

## Rohatsu Haiku by Steve Garber

*Falling on the ground  
A waterfall of snowflakes  
The ground still... empty*



## Jukai Ceremony

On the morning of December 8th, at the close of Rohatsu Sesshin, which celebrates the historical Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, Ralph Leach formally accepted the Buddhist precepts. He has been an active participant in our Sangha since the spring of 2002, but has



selected by the abbot to be an inspiration for realizing one's full potential. Ralph's new Dharma Name is Mu-Zan which means Empty or No Mountain.

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

just completed the requisite two week-long sesshins. Ralph's first sesshin was Summer Sesshin 2003. Shortly thereafter he was in a mountain climbing accident that broke both his legs and could have easily taken his life. Ralph says that his concentrated practice of zazen in that first sesshin "anchored me as I lay alone on that rocky ledge with my injuries not knowing whether I would leave there alive, or what sort of life I might face if I did make it out."

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.

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

After that Ralph received a Rakusu (symbolic piece of the historical Buddha's robe worn around the neck) and a Dharma Name. A Dharma Name is





## Spring Intensive

Last fall three people were able to participate in our three month intensive which concluded with Rohatsu. Perhaps this many or more will be able to sign on for this Spring's Intensive, which will start March 12th, with mini-sesshin on that day, and conclude on June 23rd at the close of Summer Sesshin. To join you must be a member in good standing. Good standing means you have:

A) made three consecutive monthly dues contributions and

B) attended at least one half-day mini-sesshin or week-long sesshin in the last quarter.

Then to participate in the intensive you must agree to the following:

- 1) Attend group zazen at least five out of seven days a week.
- 2) Commit to attending all mini-sesshins and week-long sesshins during the training intensive.
- 3) Join the Dharma dialogs held at 7:30 pm most 1st and 3rd Sundays.
- 4) Make an attempt to go every Dharma Interview offered during the intensive. (Dharma Interview will be offered each

Sunday night that Genjo is in town.)

- 5) Do at least one hour of samu (working meditation – gardening or cleaning) for the temple per week.
- 6) Read at least one assigned (mutually agreed upon) book on Zen history or practice.
- 7) Make plans to attend an additional sesshin (3 days minimum), preferably at a more formal training center, such as Great Vow Monastery or Dai-Bosatsu Monastery. (This requirement does not have to be met during the intensive but must be planned and completed within a year of the intensive).

For those ChoBo-Ji members who live outside of Seattle, creative adjustments are possible, please speak Genjo Osho-san.

As you may be aware, Brenda Zenmu Nightingale has petitioned to become an *unsui* (cloud and water person or Zen monk). She will likely complete all the requirements set forth by the end of this coming July; and, if all goes as planned, she will be ordained at either next Autumn Sesshin or Rohatsu Sesshin one year from now. Currently, there are also one or two more who are considering this path. So that it is clear to anyone considering this path, here are the requirements that must be met to be ordained.

- I) Complete at least two Chobo-ji intensives over the course of two years, or alternatively, complete six week-long Chobo-ji sesshins.
- II) Do Jukai (see above).
- III) Write a formal letter stating your reasons and desire (don't write before completing the first two steps).
- IV) Solicit the advice of any living nuclear family relatives about your intention to "leave home."
- V) Move to Seattle if you don't already live here, or minimally make plans to reside in Seattle during both the Fall and Spring Intensives. (At this time, I don't believe it is possible actively to oversee training from a distance.)
- VI) Complete an additional year of attending all four Chobo-ji quarterly week-long sesshins full time, attend nearly all group zazen offerings during the year, and travel with me at least once to Dai-Bosatsu Monastery for sesshin.
- VII) Make or purchase (with assistance offered by the Sangha) all the robes and work clothes needed for ordination.
- VIII) Cut one's hair short in preparation for head shaving (ordained women must first have their head shaved, but subsequently are allowed to keep their hair short, except when doing kessei.)
- IX) Commit to doing at least one kessei



(monastic training intensive --minimum of three months), preferably at Dai-Bosatsu monastery, within the first two years of ordination.

- X) Commit to attending all ChoBo-Ji training intensives, or equivalent, for ten years.

## Podcasting Dharma Talks

In order to reach out and share our practice with others, Genjo has been experimenting with publishing a RSS (Really Simple Syndication) audio feed of the monthly mini-sesshin Dharma Talks on the World Wide Web. The format is in Apple's new clear ACC audio files which require either a current version of Quicktime or iTunes (Mac or Windows) to listen to them. The audio files can be downloaded from [www.ourmedia.org/user/32687](http://www.ourmedia.org/user/32687) or from iTunes (Podcasts / Religion & Spirituality / Buddhism / Cho Bo Ji's Media).

There are now eight "episodes" available, with more than seventy people subscribed to listen to them. One Dharma Talk from Rohatsu 2005 has been included and has gotten very positive reviews from internet listeners. One reviewer writes:

*Now Hear This! Some time ago I discussed at length Podcasting Zen talks, using Apple iTunes. Since that time the field of offerings has gotten broader and even better in quality. All that being said, I want to draw attention to a particular podcast from Cho Bo Ji. Over the weekend, I listened to a Teisho by Genjo Marinello Osho, called "Kicking Over the Pitcher". It was recorded during Rohatsu. I found this teisho to be quite moving. It was amazingly clear and highly understandable. I might even say elegant. ... I highly recommend Cho Bo Ji's podcast. Please remember that Podcasting is free as is the software from Apple. Very nice*

Happiness  
Jaye Morris, Curator  
[digitalZENDO.com](http://digitalZENDO.com)

## 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 Ryutakuji 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 certified 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 early January.

**Mini-Sesshins:** Half day retreats with breakfast, Dharma Talk and Dharma Interview. 5 - 11:30 am, Sundays: 2/12, 3/12, 4/9, 5/7, 6/11, 7/16, 8/13

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

*Summer Sesshin: 6/17/06 - 6/23/06*

*Autumn Sesshin: 9/23/06 - 9/29/06*

*Rohatsu Sesshin: 1/6/07 - 1/14/07*

**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](http://www.choboji.org)