



# PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 13.1

Spring 2006

## Dear members and friends,

As I write this, it is a rather cold drippy Memorial Day weekend in the Pacific Northwest. However, because of the rain and cooler weather, the Zen House garden is abundantly green and lush. Normally this time of year, I am at Dai Bosatsu Zendo (Eido Roshi's Zen monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York), but this year I needed to be at my daughter's graduation from college, which took place just a few days ago (Adrienne will be moving back into her room on the third floor of the Zen House for at least the summer).

This July 4th will mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) Kongo-ji. I am so grateful for the existence of DBZ, and for Genki Roshi's (Chobo-ji founding abbot) more than 50-year friendship with Eido Roshi. Genki Roshi and Eido Roshi first met when sitting next to each other at the 600-year memorial sesshin for Kanzan Egen Zenji in Japan. Through this Dharma connection, I have been nurtured and encouraged on the path of Zen these many years. I feel very fortunate that Rev. Genko Blackman and I will be able to attend DBZ's 30th Anniversary Sesshin and Celebration (July 7 – 15). As you might imagine, it is customary to offer a generous contribution on the occasion of a temple's major anniversary. Accordingly, I have instructed the Fusu (treasurer) to send a gift on behalf of Chobo-ji. In my mind, it is essential that we ensure that DBZ will continue to offer

this and future generations of spiritual seekers a place to practice authentic Rinzai Zen training. So I would like to encourage you to individually consider making a contribution to DBZ for the continuation of this treasure at this milestone in American Zen. Please note that long-time Chobo-ji student Peter (Shinkon) Glynn is at DBZ now for Spring Kessei (resident training period).

A lot has gone on since the last issue of Plum Mountain News. In late January, Carolyn (Josen) and I returned from our trip to England, where we did a three-day sesshin with Chris Mooney Sensei and nearly thirty participants. This is the third consecutive year that I have traveled to

began to lead a twice-monthly Buddhist meditation group on the eighth floor of the King County Jail. This is a very transient population so there is a lot of turnover, but our presence and practice I think are having an impact. There are two individuals in particular who appear to have really benefited, and both have attended all of our offerings. Later in this issue, Seishun will talk about additional opportunities for our Sangha to be involved in prison work.

After our half-day sesshin on March 12th, we held our Annual Meeting, and elected the Board of Directors for this year. The meeting was very well attended, which was a good thing, as we needed a quorum to hold elections. Genko was again elected to

be president of the Board and her report of the meeting can be found in this issue. Our next Board meeting is June 11th.

In late March, Genki Roshi held a second pottery show for the Urasenke Tea School in San Francisco in as many years. His tea bowls and calligraphy were, of course, very well received. Genki Roshi will be having a

pottery show here in Seattle just after Summer Sesshin on Saturday, June 24th. You will find a report and further announcement in the pages to follow.

On March 31st, we completed Spring Sesshin 2006. There were 25 people in attendance, only a few of whom attended part-time, and only one who had not attended a weeklong sesshin previously.

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## *UK Sesshin with Aikido Friends*

Europe to do sesshin with Aikido practitioners associated with Birankai International and Chiba Sensei. As usual, our hosts were very gracious and supportive.

On February 4th we did a half-day sesshin with the Ellensburg Zen Group (Raiuzan-ji) and on March 4th we did a half-day sesshin with the Wenatchee Zen Group held at the Cascade Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Also in February, Genko and I

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This level of participation was unusually high for us. For nearly every meal we had to set up an additional table downstairs to accommodate the overflow, as our traditional seiza dining tables can seat a maximum of 21 in the zendo. The hour and a half of samu each day produced striking results on the Zen House property, and we were able to share our labor with the wider community by helping to beautify our corner-park and assist with gardening at the Seattle Arboretum Japanese Garden.

Diane (JoAn) Ste. Marie was the Tenzo (Chief cook) and she did a superlative job cooking for so many in our small kitchen. Dee (Seishun) Endelman was the Shika (manager) for this sesshin, and she kept us organized. Bob (Daigan) Timmer was our Jikijitsu (time keeper) who kept us punctual. Ken (DaiEn) Iwata and Brenda (Zenu) Nightingale were the Jisha (tea servers) who nurtured us each day. Peter (Shinkon) Glynn was my able Inji (attendant). Mary (Choko) Cabaniss-Ballard was the Densu (chant leader) who, though she struggled with some of the Eko (dedications), kept the beat superbly. Tom (Shodo) DeGroot swung the keisaku (teaching stick) as our Jokai. And of course, Josen made sure we were all paid up as our Fusu. Sesshin requires teamwork and as usual we had a great team.

Our sesshin started Saturday, March 25th, the same day that seven people were killed only a few blocks away from the zendo. Some reported that they heard the shots; all of us heard many sirens that morning. Hundreds gathered for an interfaith memorial on March 29th. That day we walked in kinhin to the site, each of us bearing incense and our strong Nen (primal thoughts) for those killed, their families and friends. We chanted the Four Great Vows, and I offered a dedication. It was a very moving day (see story: [http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/264745\\_service29.html](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/264745_service29.html))

On April 8th, we celebrated the Buddha's Birthday by pouring "ambrosial nectar" (sweet warm tea, symbolizing the warm rain that is said to have fallen at his birth)

over an icon of a young standing Buddha. For next year's celebration we will have a bronze "standing infant Buddha" that was recently ordered from China. There was a three-day sesshin held at San Diego Aikikai April 21 – 23. Chiba Sensei was in good form, helping to prepare the meals and sitting zazen with us. There were more than twenty participants, but Leslie Cohen was not in attendance as her second child was born recently, and her husband, Paul, is still recovering from a freak highway accident that nearly killed him. During our mini-sesshin on May 7th, we celebrated the memorial of Choro An Nyogen Senzaki Zenji (1876 – 1958) who was the first resident Zen priest in the Americas and therefore is thought of as the first patriarch of American Zen. My Dharma Talk that day was dedicated to him and it can be heard as a podcast on iTunes.



### *Service for Seven Killed*

On the morning of May 4th, I had the privilege to attend a prayer service organized by the Religious Coalition for Equality. We prayed and meditated for justice for all people, including gays and lesbians. We celebrated the new state law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing and lending, and expressed dismay at those who would support a referendum aimed at overturning the legislation. "All human beings are of equal value in the sight of their creator," said the Rev. Stephen Jones of Seattle First Baptist Church, which hosted the interfaith service. There were about 30 clergy of Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist faiths among others. To demonstrate the interfaith nature of this service, an editor of the PI saw fit to print

a picture of me meditating on the front page of the May 5th edition (see story: [http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/269169\\_prayer05.html](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/269169_prayer05.html)).

I am sorry to announce that former Chobo-ji member Ellen (HoU) Earth (1952 – 2006) died on May 15th. Ellen was a sincere and active student of the Way. Her Dharma Name is "Dharma Rain," and her nurturing countenance can be felt even now. HoU was a mother, partner, beloved eldest sister, chef and activist who sustained a caring heart towards everyone, especially the less fortunate. She died quickly from complications associated with a brain tumor. She only recently got the diagnosis that the tumor was inoperable, but despite this she was still planning to attend the Mindfulness Retreat for Women offered at Chobo-ji the weekend of May 20th. Several Chobo-ji members attended a wake held in her honor May 17th. I was invited to lead those gathered in a brief period of zazen. The most moving moment was when we all sang "Two Good Arms" by Charlie King in her honor. At Chobo-ji's Friday morning zazen, May 19th, we chanted the Dai Segaki for HoU, and her picture has resided next to our statue of Kannon ever since.

I am told that the Women's Mindfulness Retreat was a grand success. Genko writes about this and also reviews the book Eloquent Zen: Daito and Early Japanese Zen for this issue of Plum Mountain News. Also in this edition of PMN you will find a transcription of the Dharma Talk given on the third day of Spring Sesshin, "Tosotsu's Three Barriers," the Closing Incense Poem, announcement for Summer Sesshin (June 17 – 23), and an announcement for a proposed women's summer camping trip. Please note that there will be no mini-sesshin in July as I will be away at DBZ. May your spring continue to be lush and colorful and I hope to see many of you at Summer Sesshin. Because we will be trying to hold the maximum to 21, please remember to reserve your place at sesshin by sending a deposit in early.

With gassho,

*Genjo*

## Annual Meeting Report

Thank you to all of you who were able to attend the Chobo-ji annual members meeting on March 12 - we had just enough attendees for a quorum, and the group re-elected the following board members to another one-year term:

**Daiki Cadman**, Tom Shodo DeGroot, Dee Seishun Endelman, Diane JoAn Ste. Marie, Scott Ishin Stolnack, Carolyn Josen Stevens, Bob Daigan Timmer, Linda Muka Wehnes, and Genko Blackman. Genjo continues to serve ex officio as our abbot. Officers are: Genko President, Daigan Vice President, Muka Secretary, and Josen Treasurer. Many thanks to all for agreeing to serve in these capacities.

The group heard reports from John Daikan Green and Barbara Jodo Bullock on the Northwest Dharma Association annual meeting held in February. There is increasing interest in correspondence with people in prison, and a number of Chobo-ji members have expressed an interest in beginning correspondence. Seishun will coordinate that.

A subcommittee of JoAn, Jodo, and Michael Blome was formed to look at earthquake preparedness at the zendo.

If you have not had a chance to look at and hear the new water feature at the rear of the zendo, please stop by to see it. Many thanks to Ken Daien Iwata, Jodo, Daigan, Genjo, and Randal Daigetsu Tanabe for their work on this.

Chobo-ji is very fortunate to have an increasing membership, and especially to have so many folks from out of the area join and participate in sustaining our zendo. The growing number of out of town members does mean we need to take another look at our bylaws, which require a quorum of 50% of our membership present to conduct business. The idea was floated of changing the quorum to 30%, which would still mean a group larger than just the board itself would need to be present in order to conduct membership busi-

ness. The bylaws also allow the possibility of a mail ballot, but this is not so useful when discussion of issues is required. There was general support for the idea of a 30% quorum, and the board will take this issue up formally at its June meeting (amending the bylaws is board business). If any of you who were not present have any thoughts on the matter, please feel free to contact any board member with your input, or to attend that board meeting if you are able.

In general the board meets at 11:30 on the day of the mini-sesshin just prior to each week-long sesshin. This year we will plan to meet June 11 and September 10, and will let you know if the schedule changes for any reason.

Again, thank you all for your support and we look forward to another good year at Chobo-ji.

Gassho,  
*Genko*

## Genki Roshi's Pottery and Calligraphy

For the second time in the last two years, Genki Roshi was invited to the San Francisco branch of the Urasenke Tea School to show his pottery and calligraphy. The opening took place March 18, and the show continued for a week after. Quite a number of people came to the opening to hear Roshi's thoughts on Zen creativity, and there was considerable interest in his tea bowls and his calligraphies, with a number of purchases made the first hour. Genko accompanied Genki Roshi and his wife Joshin, helping to set up the exhibit and assisting with sales. Interest extended beyond the tea school, with Genki Roshi being interviewed by the local Japanese language newspaper.

An added feature at this show was a memorial offering of tea to Sesso Roshi, Genki Roshi's teacher at Daitokuji. This is the result of a most in-

teresting and uncanny occurrence. The first time Genki Roshi went to San Francisco, Christy Bartlett, the head teacher at the tea school, had hung a scroll of Sesso Roshi's in the alcove as a display. Of course she had no idea of the connection between Genki Roshi and Sesso Roshi.

Upon seeing the scroll, Genki Roshi was struck dumb. He could not get over meeting the calligraphy of Sesso Roshi again after so many years. He said he was frightened, expecting to hear Sesso Roshi scold him for being lazy - he had always complained that Genki Roshi did not grind enough ink for him to write with! For this second show, the same scroll was hung, and Genko assisted Genki Roshi in offering tea, in a new bowl made specially for the occasion, along with sweets and an incense poem, in front of the scroll. All who attended agreed that Sesso Roshi would have been pleased to see both Genki Roshi's pottery and his calligraphy after all his years of Zen practice.

We are happy to announce that Genki Roshi will soon be having a **Tea Bowl and Calligraphy Sale** here in Seattle:

**Date:** Saturday, June 24, 2006

**Time:** 10 am - 4 pm

**Where:** Salty Dog Studios, Downstairs  
4602 - 14th Ave. NW  
Seattle, WA

**Phone:** Tom DeGroot (206) 547-7891  
Genko Blackman (206) 523-9950



## Summer Sesshin June 17th - 23rd

Please send a deposit by June 5th, 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 17th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.

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## Prison Correspondence Opportunity

For the past many years, Genjo Osho-san and Rev. Genko Blackman have been engaged in various prison works, leading Buddhist services and meditating with prisoners at county and state facilities.

As a natural outgrowth of this work, we have become aware of prisoners who are interested in corresponding with Buddhist practitioners. These are people practicing behind prison walls, sometimes under circumstances more difficult than we could imagine. They are interested in sharing the Dharma with others in mutual learning. Five Sangha members have recently decided to begin corresponding with prisoners and all have "pen pals" now. The prisoner correspondents can be from throughout the country; a number of our current "pen pals" are from Texas as well as Washington.

If you think that corresponding with a prisoner may be an opportunity for you to deepen your practice, please e-mail Dee SeiShun ([dee@keysconsult.com](mailto:dee@keysconsult.com)).

SeiShun will send you the Prisoner Correspondence Guidelines for your review. If you remain interested, she will see that you receive the name and address of a prisoner who would like a correspondent.

## Mumonkan Case 47: Tosotsu's Three Barriers

(3rd day, Spring Sesshin, 2006)

Transcription help from Dee Seishun

**Koan:** Master Juetsu of Tosotsu made three barriers to test monks.

To inquire after the Truth, groping your way through the underbrush is the purpose of seeing into your nature. Here, now, where is your nature, Venerable Monk?

If you realize your own nature, you certainly are free from life and death. When your eyes are closed, how can you be free from life and death?

If you are free from life and death, you know where you will go. When the four elements are decomposed, where do you go?

### Mumon's Commentary:

If you can rightly give the three turning words here, you will be the master wherever you may be, and live up to the Dharma no matter how varied the circumstances. If, however, you are unable to give them, I warn you, you will get tired of the food you have bolted, and well-chewed food keeps hunger away.

### Mumon's Poem:

*This one instant, as it is, is an infinite number of kalpas. An infinite number of kalpas are at the same time this one instant. If you see into this fact, The True Self which is seeing has been seen into.*

It's the third day of Spring Sesshin and we've been battered about a bit by our own aches and pains, and by the tragic news of seven killed only a few blocks away. Barbara is not here as she fell and scraped herself up pretty good and is at home recuperating. Gina's not here, she is at home taking care of herself, as her cold, which began in earnest yesterday has gotten worse.

We are all buffeted and challenged by circumstances. We don't know when those circumstances will take *us* out. However long we have in this corporeal body, it's short. We're all born with some struggle and tribulation. When growing we face more struggle and tribulation. We live for some while and then we die.

The quintessential question that drives us can be phrased in many ways. But basically it comes down to, "What's it all about?" We're born. We live. We die. This much we know. Is there any more than this? Why are we here? Who are we really? What's our purpose?

This question, "What's it all about?" or "What's the meaning of existence?" or simply "What is this?" is referred to in Zen training as "investigating this matter." Why come to Sesshin? Even if you have had so-called penetrating insights, why do you keep coming to Sesshin? In fact, some people have a penetrating insight and don't return! They think to themselves, "Been there, done that!" (laughter) "Oh, I don't need all that pain anymore. I can just live life more easily"...until life catches up with you. We don't know when circumstances will take a turn for the worse. Are we really prepared for the unexpected; are we prepared to die today?

It's interesting to me that there's an argument about whether a penetrating insight happens gradually or suddenly. There should be no argument. Gradually an insight ripens and then suddenly falls. (laughter) Anyway, when we see clearly -- everything is so simple! And we realize that everything has been simple and whole all along. But, if you think that you know something at the moment of a penetrating insight, you certainly have already lost it! Somehow, after seeing into our true nature, there's no need to know. It's only when we're not seeing into our true nature that we have this deep yearning to know.

After experiencing this wholesome empty simplicity that manifests as this complex multidimensional universe, we are at risk of being satisfied. Don't be satisfied. You may say, "I'm already not satisfied." Good! No problem there. It is necessary

to sustain a continuous deep investigation throughout our brief life. Without it, we will miss so much. If we start to take things for granted, we start to become complacent. As we live our daily lives, at some point we're going to be brought up short. Often at such a time we realize how little we have really lived. Only in the midst of great inquiry, which in Zen, we call "Great Doubt" can we hope to live life fully.

If you've not yet had a penetrating insight that satisfies you, this is not a problem. The fact that you are here now engaged in this deep inquiry is what is essential. If you have had one or more clarifying experiences, I'm so glad you're still coming to sesshin! Please continue to explore and press yourself again to become vulnerable and exposed enough to ask once more, "What's it all about? What is my True Nature? What is to be done?" If we are not actively investigating this matter, we will not often feel present, fresh and creative, and we will miss so much! So, we sit together on our cushions using our "360 bones and 84,000 pores" to ask "What is this?" and "Who's asking this question?"

In order to help us in our inquiry, the Rinzai Zen tradition has developed many koans. Koans are Zen parables that most often involve a pithy exchange between an ancient master and a student. They are used to beckon, prod and deepen our investigation of this matter. Should we feel the least bit complacent or complete, the next koan pricks our attention and calls us forth into great doubt, so that we perpetually continue our inquiry into this matter.

Of course, the greatest koan of all is this very journey of life and death. Various disturbing circumstances arise and we might ask "Why me?" or "Why not me?" or "What's this all about?" Gina's cold right now is her koan. Barbara's scraped knees and Parkinson's are her koan. Why this, now? What's my part? How shall I respond? We *must* keep investigating! If we become complacent this brief life will

pass us by, and we will be full of regret that we did not live this life more fully. I pray not to reach the end of this life with great regret. I'd much rather have Great Doubt than Great Regret!

In regards to our investigation, *The Song of Zazen* [by Hakuin Ekaku Zenji] is so clear: "Not knowing how near the truth is, we seek it far away [outside of ourselves]. What a pity! We are like a person who, in the midst of [clear, fresh] water, cries in thirst so imploringly. We are like the child of a wealthy person who worries about having enough money." Remember, we are all primarily Buddhas. "It is like ice and water. Apart from water, no ice can exist."



In your inquiry into this matter, you may feel frozen or stuck. We all do from time to time. Even though we are repeatedly called to enter the Great Doubt, this does not mean that we are to lose faith that ice is water. Ice *is* water! It may not be flowing too well but it's already water. If flowing water might be thought of as the aim, well, the potential for flowing water already exists in the ice. All we need is a little heat to melt it. Zazen and the other forms of meditation and mindfulness are the heat; with heat, everyone starts to flow. Over time the ice-jam of our psychological fixations begins to break up,

allowing some welcome flow. Sometimes tears are sufficient heat; sometimes days of sesshin are needed, other times it may take years to get the water flowing.

We are already everything we need to be. Of this, we need not doubt. However, for the question: "What is flowing?" we need never-ending doubt! As Master Tosotzu says, we grope our way through the underbrush, asking, "What is it?", "What is this flowing nature?", "What does it feel like?" *Where* is your True Nature right now?

Well, it can't be anywhere else but sitting on this cushion here at Spring Sesshin listening to this Dharma Talk. Where the hell else could it be? Your True Nature, after all, is not far away! But we often feel like it's far away, and we cry out so imploringly. We feel like we are lost in the darkness of ignorance, going astray further and further in the darkness. When will we be free from birth and death? We see that we're born in the midst of trial and tribulation, we live in trial and tribulation, and we may well die in trial and tribulation. Please let me out! I want out! Drat! Sorry, no exit. We can't get off the ride! (laughter)

"Zen Master, I'm on the roller coaster of life and death. What should I do?" "Jump off and show yourself in the Ten Directions!" (laughter)

In other words, to live to the fullest we must throw ourselves into this Great Inquiry. Of this, I have no doubt. When we have a penetrating insight, it all becomes so simple. There's nowhere to go and nothing to do. That is to say, we throw up our hands, open our eyes fully and enjoy the ride! And, when we let go in this way, where is your True Nature? It's so obvious. It is said that True Nature is incomparably profound and minutely subtle, transcends life and death, has no beginning and no end, and is bigger than the whole Universe. Show it to me!

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When we have broken through the conceptual barriers that we make and cling to, responding to such a question is simple. But Tosotsu continues: “Ah, now that you can so easily demonstrate your true nature right here in front of me. How will you demonstrate it when your eyes close for the last time and you are dead?” How will you demonstrate your Timeless Transcendent True Nature after your last breath? With true insight, this too is extraordinarily simple.

It’s all so simple but opening to penetrating insight is not so easy and we can’t will such an experience into existence.

Your ego or small self can’t make it happen, and this is quite annoying to your ego! (laughter) Your ego identity says, “But I’m trying very hard and I’m doing all the right things and I’m jumping all these hoops. Look at all the zazen I’ve done; see all the books I read. I’m trying so very, very hard. Where is it? What is it? How come I can’t make it happen?”

I feel so sorry for your ego! Really, I do! I understand personally what it’s like to want to make it happen. How often in my own training have I thought, “Won’t this ever finish? Can’t I make this happen? Just tell me what to do, I’ll do it.”

Oh, how I wish it were just some simple formula! In truth, it is as simple as “jump off and show yourself in the Ten Directions.” It is that simple, but to let go in this way is not easy. We cling to our ideas of who we are and are not. There have been occasions when people have heard, “jump off and show your self in the Ten Directions” and they have literally jumped off a cliff or thrown themselves in front of train. This is not what we mean!

Give up this expectation that *you* can make *it* happen. This is like the tail wagging the dog. It’s just upside down. The particular, peculiar and unique manifestation of you as a human being is much too small. On the other hand, this particular, peculiar you, like everything else, is right now a brilliant, shining manifestation of *it*. Of this, I hope we all have great faith! So, what are we looking for from this penetrating experience that is not already so? Whether it’s manifesting as a flower, a corpse, an oil well, a philosophical discussion, the crows squawking, or the sun shining...*it* is shining, brilliantly and sharply. All is fully revealed in this moment as *what is*.



Where does it come from? Hell if I know! Why is it here? Don’t know that either. Where’s it been? Hum...don’t know. Where’s it going? Don’t know. Anybody who tries to tell you they do know, doesn’t know (laughter). But here it is! And it *is* shining. And the particular, peculiar you is already shining. Let go, let go and let go again. Breathe out again. Let everything pass *again, again, again*. Then, in the readiness of time, of course, we realize personally *it* is already shining! It’s always been shining. From such a realization, it is so easy to see what needs doing, and doing what needs doing requires no effort, thinking or analysis. This is what is meant by “buji” or “no

action.” When action becomes like water flowing down hill it is “no action.” Just goes. Like tears flowing when we’re sad. Just goes. Like laughter coming when we’re joyous. Just goes.

And, in such a moment, we’re free from life and death. And how is that? By fully embracing life and death, we no longer have to turn or run away from life and death. Instead we are at once life and death, and in this way life and death disappear. In a moment of clarity, we’ve realized the bigger picture. We feel unity, and we say it’s all One. However, these are just words. In a moment of clarity, we see how 99% of our life has always been shining! Hearts are beating. Breath rising and falling. Blood circulating. Tears flowing when sad, laughing when happy. It’s so simple!

Then, tell me, if you can demonstrate how you will reveal your Timeless True Nature after your eyes have closed for the last time, how will you demonstrate your true nature after your elements have decomposed and your corporeal body has been fully recycled? How will you reveal, right now, where you go, and what becomes of

you after your elements have decomposed. After you’ve been eaten by the fishes or scattered by the wind, with what will you demonstrate? If you’re stuck in your ego identity these are impossible barriers. But, if you’ve embraced your transcendent nature, which is bigger than the Universe and smaller than a string in string theory, responding right here and now to these so-called barriers is so simple, it’s child’s play. In fact you may have noticed answering most koans is child’s play. Those of you who have been working with koans for some time, know that you keep looking for some mysterious truth and again and again realize that it is all so simple, and say, “Oh, is that all?”

Yes, nothing too mysterious, always simple. Of course, it's not easy to be so clear and your ego can't make it so. But if we keep our spirit of inquiry alive then, without question, gradually all of a sudden we see clearly. We see clearly for a while and then we don't! After going around enough times you become okay with the roller coaster, and we call this maturity. With maturity we understand that clarity, too, comes and goes. No longer in such a hurry, we wait more easily, but it's not waiting like a lump on a log. We learn to wait for clarity, but it is a very active waiting/listening, where we are giving our all to it. If you wait like a lump on a log, you're going to be waiting a long time, but if you sit giving your all to be present, from time to time, even the skies of Seattle clear! And we realize that one instant is an infinite number of kalpas. In one instant of clarity, all the waiting disappears. Immediately, you are no longer of any importance and there is the feeling of infinite expanse, and caring acceptance. Infinity easily fits into this one moment of eternity. So, what problem can there be? Seeing reality in this way, the True Self, which is No Self, has been seen into.

With gassho,  
*Genjo*

## Spring Sesshin 2006 Closing Incense Poem

*The True Person beyond  
rank and post wears many masks,  
Sometimes a Buddha,  
Sometimes a bumpkin,  
Sometimes a sage,  
Sometimes a fool.*

*Who knows their face before their  
grandparents are born?*

*The daffodils bloom, water spills  
over the rock fountain, wind chimes  
play their haunting tune.*

*That One Shining Alone  
holds no disappointments  
and knows no regrets.*

## Eloquent Zen A Review by Genko

Since living in Japan years ago, I have been interested in the history of Daitokuji, a Rinzaï Zen monastery in Kyoto. Our founding abbot Genki Takabayashi Roshi spent nearly twenty years at Daitokuji, and in addition it plays a key role in the history of tea ceremony and the arts in Japan. We chant the admonitions of its founder, Daito Kokushi, every evening during sesshin, and acknowledge his place in our lineage in the Teidai Dempo Busso no Myogo chant each evening as well. (He's Shuho Myocho Zenji, second of the Japanese teachers.)

I was delighted, therefore, recently to find a book by Kenneth Kraft exploring his early years and his influence on the Japanese Zen literary tradition. If this seems way too academic and boring a choice for a Zen student to read, consider some of the stories told about him.

Legend has it that after Nampo Shomyo Zenji acknowledged his deep realization, Daito spent twenty years practicing among the homeless people who lived under Gojo Bridge in Kyoto. At the end of that time, the Emperor Go Daigo was searching for someone to found a new Zen temple and had heard about an unusual beggar at Gojo Bridge. Knowing that Daito was extremely fond of melons, he brought melons to the beggars and handed them out, all the while looking for a particularly clear-eyed beggar. When he found one, he offered the melon, saying you can have it if you can take it with no hands. The beggar could not help himself, responding that he would take it if the Emperor would give it to him using no hands. Thus exposed, he became the founder of Daitokuji.

Another story told about Daito was that he was unable to sit in full lotus due to an injury, and when he discerned that he was about to die, he sat in zazen, wrenched his leg into full lotus, and ripped open his knee in the process. His bloodstained robe is kept at Daitokuji as a relic, brought out only on special occasions. This story took on immediacy for me when Genki Roshi told me he had held the robe himself, and that the bloodstain was quite real.

Daito's story is directly relevant to us in another way as well. Daito's was the first generation of truly native Japanese Zen teachers, who had studied under Japanese teachers trained in China. Daito navigated politically perilous waters as a leader of an upstart new Buddhist sect. Many of the issues facing the new Zen temples seem related to ones facing Zen in the West today, as we struggle with cultural integration and legitimacy.

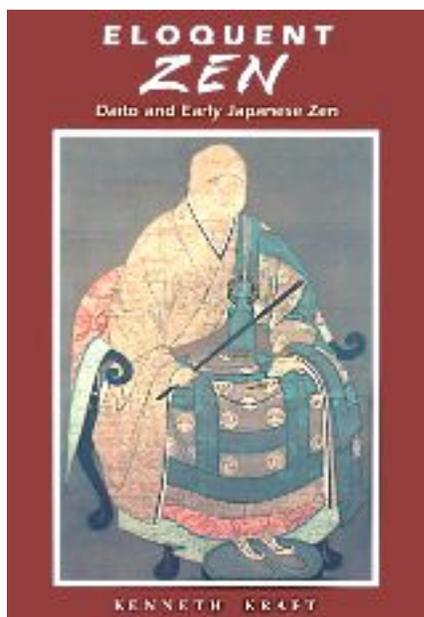
While during his life Daito seemed to be a lesser abbot (he picked the wrong emperor as a patron), over time his strength as a teacher and his ability to articulate Zen both in the classic Kanbun (Chinese characters read in Japanese) and in the vernacular have contributed to the vitality of Rinzaï Zen and related arts coming from Daitokuji. His poetry is particularly formidable. His death poem, in bold calligraphy preserved at Daitokuji, sends shivers up one's spine:

*I cut aside all Buddhas and patriarchs,  
My Mind-sword honed to a razor edge.  
Activity's wheel begins to turn –  
Emptiness gnashes its teeth.*

*I cut aside all Buddhas and patriarchs,  
My Mind-sword honed to a razor edge.  
Activity's wheel begins to turn –  
Emptiness gnashes its teeth.*

Each line is thickly layered with references on many levels, and yet even in translation the sheer power is what comes through.

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I have always loved reciting Daito's Admonitions at the end of the day during sesshin, and now having read this book, I feel even closer to this great teacher in our lineage, one of our Dharma family. In November I will have the opportunity to return to Japan and visit Daitokuji once again as part of a pilgrimage with fellow students of tea ceremony. This time it will have added meaning for me as the temple of the melon-loving monk, and the home of our teacher, Genki Takabayashi Roshi, for so many years.

*[PS: You can order this book and many other Zen classics directly from our online bookstore at [www.choboji.org](http://www.choboji.org)]*

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## Successful Women's Workshop

May 20 and 21 the zendo was transformed as a group of 13 women, led by Seishun and Genko, explored the role mindfulness can play in working with our full catastrophe lives. Although a minority of those present were zendo members, the group quickly got the hang of eating with the meal bowls in silence. By the end of our time together, the group had bonded so completely that we plan to meet again in about six months, and have established an email Sangha to continue sharing what we are learning.

The workshop included a series of meditations interspersed with discussion and journaling on the life experiences of group members and ways in which we could care for ourselves in the midst of those experiences. The workshop ended with each participant stating the next step they would take towards self-care.

Words, however, cannot convey the very special feeling we all developed towards one another as we supported each other in this work. We are very grateful to the Zen group for allowing us to meet in the zendo space, and look forward to similar events in the future.

## Women of the Way Workshop, June 16 - 18

5 pm, Friday – 1 pm, Sunday

Zen Master Dogen said that "veneration of the ancients is just experience of the self." When we examine the lives of our ancestors in Zen, our own lives can be revealed to us in startling ways. Throughout Buddhist history, women have faced unique



obstacles to formal practice, both in cultural and religious contexts. Join us as we examine the lives of remarkable Buddhist women in history, the nature of our obstacles, and the meaning of honoring the ancestral lineage in every form. This weekend retreat will include meditation and services, silent activity, creative work and discussion.

Sallie Jiko Tisdale is the author of several books, including *The Best Thing I Ever Tasted* and *Talk Dirty to Me*. She is a consulting editor at Tricycle. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Harper's*, *the New Yorker*, *New Republic*, *Allure*, *Outside*, *Vogue*, *Tin House*, *Anti-och Review*, and *Creative Nonfiction*. Tisdale is currently training as a priest at Dharma Rain Zen Center in Portland, Oregon.



The text used will be Women of the Way: Discovering 2,500 Years of Buddhist Wisdom by Sallie Tisdale.

Men are very welcome, and child care will be offered. Call for details.

This weekend retreat will be at **Great Vow Zne Monastery**, PO Box 368, Clatskanie, OR 97016

Phone: 503-728-0654

Fax: 503-728-0654

E-mail: [yuko@greatvow.org](mailto:yuko@greatvow.org)

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## Proposed Women's Camping Trip

Another idea has come forward for women in the Zen group to spend time together. Kochi and I have been thinking about organizing a weekend camping trip this summer in August. The plan would be to stay together at a campground on the Olympic Peninsula, either one or two nights. Our activities would include morning and evening zazen, shared meals, some group hiking options, and lots of free time.

The weekends we are considering are Friday, August 4 to Sunday August 6, or Friday, August 18 to Sunday, August 20. If you are interested, please let one of us know (Kochi at [p.two@juno.com](mailto:p.two@juno.com); Carolyn at [zenquaker@choboji.org](mailto:zenquaker@choboji.org)). Once we get a firm date, we can make more plans. Nothing's set yet, so please free feel to offer ideas and suggestions.

*Carolyn*





## 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 thirteen "episodes" available, with more than eighty people subscribed to listen to them. These podcasts have continued to get very positive reviews from internet listeners. One reviewer writes:

*For starters, I must mention two Podcasts from **Cho Bo Ji**. The latest teisho is He-kiganroku (Blue Cliff Record) Case 1, Emporor Wu Asks Bodhidharma. The other is Mumonkan's Case 45, Who is He? Both are given by Kokan Genjo Marinello Osho. The expression is penetrating and from the perspective of practice, my gratitude grows. As they say, "the more and more that you listen, the more and more you hear." More than that, I simply cannot do this justice. Check out **iTunes** (free from Apple) and go to the Podcasting section and search under Religion / Buddhism. It's a nice [gift] to give yourself.*

Gassho,  
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 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 early January.

**Mini-Sesshins:** Half day retreats with breakfast, Dharma Talk and Dharma Interview. 5 - 11:30 am, Sundays: 6/11, 8/13, 9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 12/17

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

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

*Rohatsu Sesshin: 1/4/07 - 1/12/07*

*Spring Sesshin: 3/24/07 - 3/30/07*

**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)