

# PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 14.4

Winter 2007-08

## Dear members and friends,

I think you will find this winter issue of PMN particularly enjoyable; many great offerings are included from the Sangha (community). Though the mornings can still be quite chilly and damp, the sun is returning and hints of approaching spring are everywhere. There are even a few tentative blossoms.

Genki Takabayashi Roshi's 75th birthday is only a few days away (Feb. 21st) as I write this. I am happy to report that we reached our special fundraising goal to celebrate his birthday and Roshi's 30 years of furthering authentic Zen practice in the West. There is no telling how much longer our founding abbot, or any of us, will be here in physical form; therefore, it is vital to treasure this living Zen ancestor while we can.

In December, Chobo-Ji Sangha members Mukan, Seishun, Myodo, Daigan, Seimu, Tozan and I traveled to the Catskill Mountains of New York state to participate in Dai Bosatsu (DBZ) Kongo-Ji's annual eight-day Rohatsu sesshin with Eido Shimano Roshi. We were joined by our own Rev. Shinkon Glynn (who began his training with Genki Roshi many years ago and now resides at DBZ), Robert (Ryugan) Savoca (a longtime Chobo-Ji associate from Brooklyn) and about forty other participants from around the globe. It was a fittingly arduous and sublime experience, and the Chobo-Ji presence was strong.

Chobo-Ji's own Rohatsu sesshin took place January 3-11, at Camp Indianola, on the Kitsap Peninsula along the waters of

Puget Sound, with 27 participants. Daigan was our Dai Tenzo, and sacrificed much to be our Chief Cook this training period. He made a Herculean effort to provide us all with sufficient sustenance, which became particularly hard to do during the power failure that followed a windstorm. Of course everyone present, especially the assistant Tenzo, Choko, helped out, but even so, Daigan showed

training ran deep, and we were able to feel at one with with the rich natural environment.

The last weekend in January, I flew to NYC to attend the bi-annual Zen Studies Society board meeting. I was able to stay at Shobo-Ji, and twice had dinner with Eido Roshi and ZSS friends including Roko Ni Osho, Fujin, Seigan, and Jokei. Before the board meeting, Roshi and I were able to spend some time furthering the details of the Dharma Transmission ceremony, May 21st in Seattle. The ZSS Board spent most of the time brainstorming ideas for the upcoming fortieth anniversary celebration of the opening of Shobo-Ji.

The first week of February, Josen and I traveled for the second time to Birmingham, England to do a three-day

sesshin, with 17 people, Zen students affiliated with Birankai International. Chris Mooney Sensei along with British Aikikai were our hosts. Josen served as Tenzo in rather primitive conditions (we had to borrow a pot from the local tavern). Nevertheless, it was a *very* strong sesshin and it is my hope that in a year or two the group will be up for a five-day sesshin.

In this issue you will find three poems, a Dharma Talk transcribed from our Rohatsu, two excellent book reports, an update on Chobo-Ji's prison work, new posts and plans for our upcoming Annual Meeting, Visioning Meeting, Spring Intensive and Spring Sesshin. Please enjoy these offerings, and I look forward to training with you all this spring.

With gassho,

Genjo



*Chobo-Ji Sangha at DBZ Rohatsu*

great determination and dedication to his task. JoAn was our Shika (host/manager) and oversaw work assignments, before, during and after sesshin. In fact she was so dedicated to her duty to make sure the retreat camp was in good order before our departure that she almost got left behind! Shodo was our pinch hitter Jikijitsu (timekeeper) and kept us marching on. Zenshin, of course, was a practiced Densu (chant leader) having held this post before. Seimu, Myodo and Mukan were our Jisha (tea servers); I see future posts at DBZ. Taishin served ably as my Inji (assistant). Daikan and Josen both served as Jokei occasionally swinging the keisaku (waking stick), and of course Josen continued to serve as our faithful Fusu (treasurer). There were five people who traveled from California to do sesshin with us, but only one person who had never done a week-long sesshin before. This meant that our

## Chobo-Ji works with Incarcerated

Recently Rev. Genko Blackman was appointed to the Religious Services Advisory Committee (RSAC) of the Washington State Department of Corrections. The committee's tasks include reviewing existing policies that have an impact on religious programs and advising administration staff and facility chaplains when specific faith-related issues arise. RSAC has a current membership of 12, representing as closely as possible the diversity of faith traditions in the prison system.

Buddhists have been represented on the committee for several years, beginning in 1999 with the late Dharmachari Aryadaka, who later served as Washington state's (and this country's) first paid Buddhist chaplain. Aryadaka was succeeded by Eido Frances Carney, Roshi of Olympia Zen Center. Since Eido Carney Roshi has stepped down from the committee, Genko, who has been volunteering at the Minimum Security Unit at Monroe Correctional Complex, was recently appointed to fill her slot.

Genko has also been teaching twice a month at the King County Jail in downtown Seattle. Originally she and Genjo Osho were teaching together, but Genjo's schedule has not allowed him to continue, and so several other Chobo-Ji members have been or are in the process of being approved to go in as well. Currently Dai-kan John Green and Seimu Tina Grant are joining Genko, and Rev. Zenmu Nightingale will be joining them once she arrives in Seattle in March.

Several Chobo-Ji members are also corresponding with inmates in other parts of the country.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering in some aspect of prison Dharma, please speak with Genko about it.



## Visioning Meeting Sunday, March 9th, 2008

Please plan to come to the zendo Sunday, March 9, for our annual meeting to elect the Chobo-Ji board, as well as a visioning session to begin planning for a larger Zen center, including some residential space. We want as much of your input as possible as we begin this process, to ensure a well-balanced picture of the desires, needs, and concerns of members in this major undertaking.

### Schedule:

5 am – 11:15 am Mini-sesshin

11:30 am – noon Annual meeting of membership and board

Noon – 1 pm Potluck lunch (Please bring a dish to share)

1 pm – 4 pm Visioning session

## Points of Departure

### Review by Tina (Seimu) Grant

*Points of departure.* Such a simple title, simple sentence, but what does it mean? In order to open to the words in Eido T. Shimano's book on *Zen Buddhism with a Rinzai View*, I sensed it was important that I begin to grasp this koan of a title. After grappling with it for longer than I care to admit, it came to me that each breath we take is a point of departure, therefore, in a minute, a year, or a lifetime we experience innumerable points of departure.

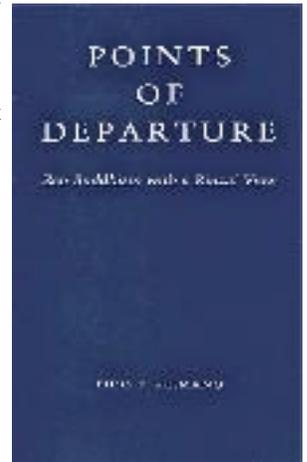
Eido Roshi opens the book by explaining that he is explaining the unexplainable, and is doing so with the understanding that, for the Cartesian mindset of Westerners, "...the intellect and imagination must be engaged to sustain an arduous lengthy practice."

There is a phrase Eido Roshi uses, "Speaking on the level of essence" that revealed for me why I am sometimes surprised by what I write or speak. "There is

no Buddha apart from us. There is no Dharma apart from us. (Or no *activity* of Buddha Nature.) We are none other than the manifestation, revelation, temporary formation of This Matter, called Buddha, Buddha nature, or in our training, MU. And therefore, apart from us, there is no such thing as Buddha." When ego steps aside, even I speak on the level of the essence. This practice of zazen is designed to allow us to experience these points of departure, is designed so we will feel this essence as the gateless gate through which all flows.

I wrote this piece three times. Each was different and, in my mind, some were good and some bad, or some Buddha some Bumpkin. Eido Roshi writes, "But bumpkins and Buddhas are not two different things. The problem is the sticky nature of our mind... This is just two aspects of One Matter, which we say is unnamable but which we call Mu."

It is no wonder I found the task of writing this report so daunting. Everything I discussed is on pages nine and ten, and page ten is only a partial page! My ego believed that I *must* report on the book as a whole in this short report. The essence knows the impossibility of this task and that it is only by opening up to the possible, to Mu that the words could flow.



As I read, reread and integrate this book, as my understanding grows that each breath is a point of departure, what I begin to experience in this essence of Mu. Sitting each moment with my breath is to experience this departure, the archaic meaning of which is death, and to begin to feel how vast this thing is we call Mu. I begin to sense how gloriously insignificant the tumbling and turnings are of my mind. The essence of this chapter, this book, and this one life is that this "...speck of dust is the three thousand galaxies of worlds."

## Hekiganroku: Case 51

### Seppo's "What is This?"

(4th day, Rohatsu Sesshin, 2008)

Transcription help from Seishun

### Engo's Introduction:

If you have the slightest choice of right and wrong, you will fall into confusion of mind. If you are not caught up in the ranks, there will be no groping in the dark. Tell me, which is advisable, letting go or holding fast? At this point, if you deal in terms of concepts and remain attached to sophisticated thinking, you are a ghost clinging to weeds and bushes. Even if you become innocent of such vulgarity, you are still thousands of miles from your homeland. Do you understand? If not, just study the present koan. See the following.

### Main Subject:

When Seppo was living in his hermitage, two monks came to pay their respects. As Seppo saw them coming, he pushed open the gate and, presenting himself before them, said, "What is this?" The monks also said, "What is this?" Seppo lowered his head and returned to his cottage.

Later the monks came to Ganto, who said, "Where are you from?" The monks answered, "We have come from south of the Nanrei Mountains." Ganto said, "Have you ever been to see Seppo?" The monks said, "Yes, we have been to him." Ganto said, "What did he say to you?" The monks related the whole story. Ganto said, "Alas! I regret that I did not tell him the last word when I was with him. If I had done so, no one in the whole world could have pretended to outdo him."

At the end of the summer session, the monks repeated the story and asked Ganto for his instruction. Ganto said, "Why didn't you ask earlier?" The monks said, "we have had a hard time struggling with this topic." Ganto said, "Seppo came to life in the same way that I did, but he does not die in the same way that I do. If you want to know the last word, I'll tell you, simply—This! This!"

### Setcho's Verse:

The last word, let me tell you—  
Light and darkness intermingled,  
Living in the same way, you all know;  
Dying in different ways—beyond telling!  
Absolutely beyond telling!  
Buddha and Dharma  
only nod to themselves.  
East, west, north and south  
—homeward let us go,  
Late at night seeing the snow  
on the thousand peaks.

The Zen Masters characters in this case are Seppo (822-908) and Ganto (828-87). We heard about Seppo yesterday, as he is the Dharma father to Ummon (d. 949). Ganto is Seppo's dharma brother and they are both students of Tokusan (780-865). So Seppo and Ganto are peers.

Here we are at Middle Day of Rohatsu Sesshin and by this point many of us have begun to peek through the veil, the veil of our own making. The veil of delusions or our sense of ego identity seems to separate self and other. After three or four days of sesshin, some of our artificial barriers have come down and we are more intimate with our true relations, our relations with beach, surf, cold, rain, sun, wind and each other.

Therefore, when we chant, "Opening this Dharma," or when we chant "Kanzeon" or when we shouted "Mu!" this morning, it has more depth. There's more to it. Somehow, our chanting now begins to go beyond mere understanding or simple vocalization of syllables. We are more intimate with what these verses point at. We are beginning to genuinely feel This Dharma which is "incomparably profound and minutely subtle, hardly met with even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons."

Physicists now tell us that matter, as we understand it, —stardust— is only a fraction of the known universe, maybe as little as 4%. Then there's another kind of matter which isn't stardust. Nobody knows what it is so they call it "Dark Matter," and it is believed that this dark matter holds the galaxies together and accounts for about 25% of the universe. And then there is the completely not understood remainder called, "Dark Energy." The name "Dark Matter" was already

taken, so this "stuff" is called "Dark Energy." They have no idea what that is, but it is supposedly responsible for the flowering or accelerated expansion of the universe. Somehow the Dark Energy is pulling the universe apart ever more quickly, causing it to flower more rapidly. Think about the amount of energy it would take to accelerate the expansion of the universe, against the natural tendency of gravity to pull everything back together again. Then, think about what fraction of stardust throughout the hundred billion galaxies in this known universe (not to say there aren't more unknown universes) has the capacity to proclaim, "This Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle." Now, it's *all* "...incomparably profound and minutely subtle;" yet, we're that infinitesimal fraction of *This* that over millions and millions of eons arises to proclaim, "This Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle!"

This is what Zen Master Hakuin means when he says, "We are all primarily Buddhas." We are that aspect or lens of the universe that sees itself. We are! How about that? Here we are sitting in this room complaining about our fatigue, our pain and our history, or complaining that we're too cold or that there isn't enough food or that it's too spicy or too bland. All these complaints and *we are* this inexpressibly small fraction of what is that can sing, "This Dharma is incomparably profound and minutely subtle!" How *dare* we complain that "I didn't pass that koan!" or "I'm not sure what Mu is?" I'll tell you this, if you ever *do* get sure of what Mu is, you don't know anything about it!

We now can see This. We can listen to This. Whether it's our chanting—listen to it!—or the surf, gentle today, waves on the beach, or the crows squawking. I've seen the eagles but I haven't heard them yet. We can hear This, when listening to the sound of the rain. Can we accept how incomparably profound and minutely subtle and tremendously fortunate we are to sit here and listen to the gentle waves or feel the warmth of the sun in the midst of this cold winter day? Feel It.

And more than just the stimuli of warmth or cold or sound waves propagating in the air (Oh, what a stale way to refer to

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

things), we can *feel* the essence, the music of This! Those who have cracked or broken through their own defenses genuinely feel the essence, the “Muuu” of it. Somehow we become aware of more than light and sound or whatever the sense organs are reporting. It is some sort of sixth sense where we become directly aware of the profundity, the subtlety, and wonder of it all. Of course the subtlety and profundity are always there, in fact they are always shouting at us! It’s shouting at us from the silence itself. We have to use oxymorons just to hint at it — the thundering silence, the pregnant nothing, the active stillness. It is incomparably profound, minutely subtle...and we’re swimming in it, of course, everything is nothing but it. When we allow our heart-minds to be intimate with it, we can see This, listen to This, accept and embrace This —not hold on to it— embrace This. May we really understand and actualize this realization of our heart. This is the Tatagatha’s call, embrace, be moved and share This!



Someone said to me in the dokusan room, “I followed your dharma talk about particle after particle samadhi yesterday, but I’m still having trouble with Mu.” I said, “You know, it’s like the different sides of the same coin, we hear and see wave after wave and yet within the wave is stillness, within the sound or action is stillness, stillness appears as activity. This silence or stillness is the absolute side of the coin and, when we attempt to vocalize it, in Zen we use this syllable Mu.” Then I continued, “What if you asked Yitzhak Perlman to express the essence of the violin in just one note. It really wouldn’t matter which note he chose, any note could surely serve in the hands of a master. This is what we’re trying to do when we cultivate Mu. In Zen training, Middle C is Mu! Now vocalize the essence of Zen!” (laughter) You could pick any syllable; it doesn’t really matter, but let’s settle on “middle C, Mu” and vocalize the es-

sence of This. How can you use a vocalization of Mu to reveal the incomparably profound and minutely subtle essence of This? Every blade of grass, every particle, every grain of sand, every wave, every drop of rain, every needle on a pine tree is incomparably profound and minutely subtle! Express your feeling or realization of this in one note — Muuu.

If you’re really feeling it, it doesn’t matter what note you use or how you express it. We’ll both know you’ve allowed yourself to feel it. This may seem odd, but we must learn to allow Mu to pass through us, it is not something we have to find, it’s something we have to allow. Instead of staying inside of our own little shell of our personal identity, we must *allow* ourselves to feel it. Let go of the shell of

your own making, then you are immediately able to feel how profound and how subtle This is, and sharing a token of this experience with a single note is not difficult —Muuuuuu.

What pitch you use or how loud or soft you make Mu or how long you hold Mu doesn’t matter. What matters is your intimacy with This. It always comes back to This! Some people rightly have said to me, “You know, I can feel it, I just can’t express it.” Yeah, what’s the problem there? This is when we realize our own home to be our True Home but, for some reason, we’re hesitant, fearful or otherwise hindered in revealing our True Home. What are we afraid of? I think that we’ll be judged, rejected, or not seen if we share our True Home. Risk it! Share your most genuine Home/Heart/Truth. Reveal it from your gut.

And then there are many people who will risk saying Mu, but they can’t give it their all. Why? Again, some kind of fear. Also, one could say that they are not sufficiently skillful or practiced at letting go, being vulnerable and real. We’re so trained not to be real. We’re taught to be disingenuous; we are taught that to be vulnerable, exposed and real is too dangerous. It’s hard to get past all that training. Without question, it’s so simple, but so hard to do. And, even after you have managed it, you’ll ask, “Well, why do I have to come back to sesshin? I’ve done it.” Hey, you know why. It closes up. We become falsely secure inside our shell of ego identity **again!** At this point of my life, I’m doing about seven sesshins a year. Yet, for me, I know it’s so easy to collapse into my shell that seven sesshins

just barely keeps the door cracked open. I hope it’s not so hard for you!

If we cling to right and wrong, we fall into confusion of mind. In the midst of This, whether it’s manifesting as dog shit, a blade of grass or lapping waves, is there any right or wrong? No, just is. So, any time you find yourself clinging to ideas

of right and wrong, or good or bad, you know you’re off track and probably not allowing yourself to be intimate or vulnerable enough. Why are you not fully accepting reality just as it is? This goes too far pain and fatigue. There’s no right or wrong about it. It just is. Our trials, tribulations, sorrow and losses, they too just are. And rather than hide from them, in sesshin, they’re all exposed. And this, too, is just as it is! It can’t be anything else.

So, if you find yourself thinking, “Oh, this is It and this isn’t It” or “This is right and this is wrong,” you know you have fallen into confusion of mind. If you’re caught up in assessments of: “Did I get it or didn’t I get it?”, “Is this good enough or not good enough?”, “Where am I on the journey?”, or even caught in the question of “What is the meaning of life?”,

then you know you're groping in the dark. The sun has never asked, "What's the meaning of shining?" It just shines. The seagull has never thought, "What's the meaning of flying and why am I here?" Jonathan Livingston Seagull is, of course, an anthropomorphized version of us; every seagull I know, never thought about it!

"Tell me, which is most advisable? Letting go or holding fast?" This is a reference to Zen's two ways of approaching things, one is "letting go" as in, "It's all It. This is This. Everything is okay." And the second, holding fast, means, "No, not yet, not yet! Go deeper!" Which way is better? They're both necessary and we have to get past this duality too.

"If you deal in concepts and remain too attached to your own sophisticated thinking..." And we are all such sophisticated thinkers! And many of you need to tell me about it! (laughter) Let's just grant that we're all sophisticated thinkers, I understand that you understand, and that's good. We're all sophisticated thinkers, and this is not only okay, but wondrous, and to be expected. But, if we're attached to our sophisticated thinking, we are like "...ghosts clinging to weeds and bushes." Engo continues, "Even if you become innocent of such vulgarities..." Even if you transcend your sophisticated thinking, even if you get past ideas of right and wrong or attempting to find meaning, even if you get past your preferences, your instincts for survival, and become truly genuine and vulnerable...you could say innocent... "you are still thousands of miles from your homeland. Do you understand? If not, just study the present koan."

This is an interesting phrase. Why are we thousands of miles away, even if we become innocent? One way to look at this is to accept that a seagull is completely innocent, a rock is completely innocent, a baby is completely innocent, but that's still a long way from appreciating or seeing that this is "incomparably profound and minutely subtle." It all *is* incomparably profound and minutely subtle; but *seeing* This, *hearing* This, *feeling* This — that's something! And innocence alone is not *feeling* It. It *is* It, but, somehow, feeling it, knowing it in our bones, this is the realm of the so called Zen Masters and sages, but don't think that it is limited to them. Feel This, recognize directly for yourself that reality *is* incomparably pro-

found and minutely subtle. This, this. Do you understand? If not, we can draw encouragement from examining the present case.

"When Seppo was living in his hermitage..." Often we hear that Zen Masters take time to be alone with This. They don't stay in their hermitage their whole lives but it takes time to mature in one's ability to be alone, never separate and caring. Seppo was doing this sort of maturing at his hermitage. The two monks know where Seppo's hermitage is and trek to visit him. He sees two monks coming, knowing they hope to parlay with him.

Before the monks can put a question to Seppo, he beats them to the punch, swings open the gate and says, "What is This?" What do you say about It? Tricky, because as soon as you try to say,



"This is Mu" or "This is the essence of Zen" or "This is fill in the blank," you've missed it. So how would you respond to this excellent question?

The monks came back with —they were quite pleased with themselves— "Yeah, what *is* this? We know, we're in on that one! Can't really say, can ya?" Seppo simply lowered his head and returned to his cottage. And the monks, at this point, probably thought, "Ah, we passed this test, Seppo didn't have anything more to say."

Later the monks came to train with Ganto. Ganto asks, "Where have you come from?" The monks say, "We've come from the south." Ganto says, "Oh, did you pass the hermitage of Seppo?" The monks said, "Yes, we did." "Well, what did he have to say?" The monks related the story. On hearing the story, Ganto said, "Alas, I regret that I did not tell Seppo the last word when I was with him for, if I had, then no one in the world

could have pretended to outdo him."

This word, "pretended," must have gnawed at the monks (laughter). Because, at the end of the summer session, the monks came back and said to Ganto, "Hey, we've been thinking about this. Could you share some more of what you meant when you said, 'no one could have pretended to outdo him?'" And what is this last word, anyway?" This idea of a "last word" and this gnawing "pretending" fostered doubts in these monks and by the end of summer they were willing to face their doubt and ask Ganto about it. Ganto said, "What took you so long?" As if to say, "You dolts! Didn't you realize I told you right away that you missed it?"

Ganto was very kind, and said, "Seppo came to life the same way that I did." This is in reference to the fact that they share the same lineage; they were both "born" under Tokusan. And then he says, "But Seppo does not die the same way that I do." In other words, Seppo's way of giving his all, or reveling his insight, is a little different from mine. Each one of us is unique, and though it often feels as though we are also separate, we are not. Nevertheless, we all have our own gifts and ways to share them that are at least a little different from one another. At the root we all share the same Heart/Mind, *kokoro*, and this True Heart is always caring, but how we share it and how it comes through each unique vessel is a little different. Just as each leaf of a tree is different but all share the same root, and every rose is a little different from another, yet they all smell sweet!

Ganto tells the monks that "Seppo and I came to life in the same way but we die into it differently." How different is it? Well, he goes on to say, "If you want to know the last word, I'll tell you — This! This!" Seppo said, "What *is* this?" Ganto's last word is, "This, This." Look, look. Open your eyes! When in doubt or clouded by pain, fatigue or personal history, remember to listen to the sound of the surf. We're so fortunate to be sitting here, the sound of the surf perpetually soothing us. How could sesshin get any easier? In the midst of all our potential distraction, hindrances, doubts and fears, just listen to the sound of the surf, the pounding rain, or whistling wind. Wow! This, this!

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from previous page...*

“The last word, let me tell you—,” says Setcho. Here comes Setcho’s dying into it, he says in his closing verse, “Light and darkness intermingled,” implying of course that every particle or aspect is intermingled with each other and inseparable from Mu. This is Setcho’s way of saying it.

Setcho continues, “Living in the same way, you all know; dying in different ways—beyond telling!” We’re all living the same way. We all have access to This in the same way. We’re all a part of This in the same way. How we each express This will be a little different. And, in the difference beyond the telling—absolutely beyond the telling—I’ve never heard the same “Mu” twice. This is incomparably profound and minutely subtle; there are myriad manifestations, yet somehow all are One. How is that? Can’t figure it out. But it’s so! How is it that *emptiness* appears as myriad manifestations? Even “Buddha and Bodhidharma can only nod to themselves.” There’s no end to the depth and wonder of it all. Your head cannot get around it. “East to west, north to south — homeward let us go!” Let us sit with This, breathe This, listen to This. Let’s just sit, breathe and listen.

Then “late at night,” in the midst of the darkest night of our doubt or from the inconceivable black before black of the Absolute—we sit “seeing the snow on the thousand peaks.” Mt. Rainier came out briefly yesterday, one huge volcano, full of snow. We are surrounded by the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, many more than a thousand peaks full of snow. Even when the clouds are low or the night is dark, we’re sitting in the midst of a thousand peaks, right here, right now. Can you feel This?

With gassho,

Genjo

## Rohatsu Sesshin 2008 Closing Incense Poem

*Wind, rain and surf  
are the principals in This  
Symphony of Now.*

*Who dares to ask why  
Bodhidharma came from the West?*

*Seagulls and eagles dance  
in the beach breeze.*

*Venus and Mt. Rainier  
make guest appearances  
amidst the swiftly passing clouds.*



## Chosetsu Rift

a poem by Daiki Cadman

*The furious firs  
the distant travelers  
the altar flame so still:  
all are here in my home, "The Daiki Arms."*

*When no thought arises  
(just this wave, this breath, this MUUUU)  
the whole is fully revealed  
BUT!  
obfuscation of sleepy senses--  
wondering what's for dinner  
while dreaming of love--  
And clouds cover the whole mountain  
far across the straits.*

*Wondering where is Daiki's truth  
and just why was I ever born?  
and missed is the timpani  
of wind and stormy branches  
beating on the roof  
above my zabuton and me.*

*Keep breathing. Keep counting. . .*

*Oh I remember!  
Isn't that the poem of Chosetsu Shusai  
which affirms:  
"Living in accordance with worldly affairs  
You will have no obstruction. . ."*

*Ah, Yes. . .  
I play that ditty on my accordion  
and sing and dance to the transcendence  
of life and death.*

*"Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily  
A dream is but nirvana."*

## 75th Birthday Poem Celebrating 30 years in USA by Genki Mu Ho On Roshi

*The years quickly pass;  
Joshu says 30 years more.*

*In Mu Ho's garden, a bird resting  
High in the pine tree,  
Sings about a beautiful world  
Of universal peace.*

*Now, running on the Zen wind,  
Genki and his teacher drink tea.*



# Shobogenzo

## *yui butsu yo butsu & shoji*

Report by John (Daikan) Green

This book is a translation by Eido Shimano Roshi and Charles Vacher of two chapters of the 95 chapter Shobogenzo. The translation is from Japanese into both English and French and published in 1999. The book has the feel of Dogen talking directly to you, pushing you, encouraging you, and even demanding that you let go and cut through your delusions. Eido Roshi complements this with clarifications of the language, the terms, and analogies given the changes that have occurred over the centuries. It is attractive as a printed manuscript with its foldout pages, images of the Japanese text blocks, and maps and photographs.

The book is uniquely constructed providing side-by-side comparison of the Japanese block text sheets with the English and French translations. A flip out sheet accompanies each translated pages where Eido Roshi provides additional commentary on key passages. Preceding each of the two chapters is a preface providing an overview of the key points of the chapter, some history of the chapter, and insights into Dogen's views on Buddhist practitioners.

In the book's introduction, Eido Roshi provides a background of Zen study leading up to the time of Dogen. The Lotus Sutra and The Garland Sutra provided the basis for Zen Buddhism, but it was the records or "roku" of the various Zen masters that followed giving rise to the "Mu", "Kwatz", or Gutei's finger. Dogen drew extensively from these roku's, finding wedges to drive into a students practice, breaking the student practice into smaller and smaller pieces. Until, there is no practice.

### *Yui Butsu Yo Butsu*

The translated title of this chapter is "Buddha alone knows Buddha." This chapter describes the relationship between Buddha's and Buddha's not knowing. Yet also saying Buddha and Buddha not knowing

belong to the same. Delusion and awakening. Dogen writes in the Genjo Koan "When deluded, you are deluded about awakening. When awakened, you are awakened about delusion." Eido Roshi offers a slightly different thought "Actually, *there is no delusion, no awakening*, awakening is awakening to delusion and delusion is delusion about awakening." Dogen continues in this chapter pointing out the flaws in our attempts to pass from delusion to awakening. Thinking is not necessary points out Dogen.



Further on in *Yuibutsu Yobutsu* Dogen writes of one's *original face*. He relates seeing one's *original face* as the transition from delusion to awakening or as Eido Roshi says seeing "ourselves before we were born." Can we see things as they actually are, without ourselves getting in the way? Dogen provides the following example:

"For example, when you meet someone and see his face, refrain from judgments. When you see a flower, when you see the moon, do not add any superfluous color and light to them. Just face spring as spring, accept autumn as autumn, neither beautiful, nor ugly."

The *Yuibutsu Yobutsu* continues on with a the truth that "the universe is our Dharma body" and "The unobstructed universe is *the Dharma body of the self*." Dogen's continues with quotations from

master of old along with direct pointing to the student practice. This chapter, like the next, is like an infinitely nested koan, recursively going deeper and deeper, towards no end.

### *Shoji*

*Samsara* is a Sanskrit word that frequently means life death journey and is translated into Japanese as *shoji*. However, as Eido Roshi points out, the meaning of *samsara* has shifted over time toward "delusions about awakening." This chapter starts out with a quotation:

*If there is Buddha in samara,  
there is no samsara.  
If there is no Buddha in samara,  
you won't be deluded by samsara.*

Dogen uses the analogy of looking out the south door of your house for the north-star. The harder you look the further from the truth it will be.

Likewise, there is only now; do not make the past the present nor the present the future. Neither is possible, so don't waste your time. Dogen says, "At the moment of *life*, there is nothing but life. At the moment of *death*, there is nothing but death. Therefore, when there is life, just let life be life. When death comes, face it and offer yourself. Don't love one and hate the other."

Dogen speaks to the reader about the life-death as not-two Buddha. Clinging to the illusion of life creates a lifeless death. The life death that extends from the infinite past to infinite future is the life-death of the Buddha.

Becoming a Buddha is easy according to Dogen, with seven things to accomplish:

- Refrain from all evil.
- Don't cling to *samara*.
- Have deep compassion for all beings.
- Show a reverential heart toward elders.
- Be kind to the young.
- Don't dislike the myriad things.
- Keep your mind free of desire, judgment, and anxiety.

Above all, remember words are not it.

## New Posts Beginning March 1st

Bob Daigan Timmer: **Shika**  
(Host - Manager)

Charlie Taishin Blackman: **Shika**  
Assistant

Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard:  
**Dai-Tenzo** (Chief cook for Sesshins)

Scott Ishin Stolnack: **Tenzo**  
Assistant

John (Daikan) Green: **Jikijitsu**  
(Timekeeper)

Michael (Mukan) Blome: **Jikijitsu**  
Assistant

Chris (Zenshin) Jeffries: **Densu**  
(Chant Leader)

Tina (Seimu) Grant: **Densu**  
Assistant

Rev. Zenmu Nightingale: **Jisha**  
(Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Sally (Zenka) Metcalf: **Jisha**  
Assistant

Matthew (Myodo) Perez: **Inji**  
(Abbot Assistant)

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

Rev. Genko Blackman & Edward  
(Daiki) Cadman: **Introductory  
Zazen**



*Snapshots from Rohatsu 2008 taken by Daiki*



*Sesshin in Birmingham, England*

---

## Spring Sesshin March 22nd - 28th

Please send a deposit by March 9th, 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 22nd, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.

## Spring Intensive

Chobo-ji's Spring's Intensive will start March 9th, with mini-sesshin on that day, and conclude on July 4th 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 to 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 to Genjo Osho-san.

## 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 20 years of tirelessly giving himself to the transmission of Buddha Dharma to the West, in 1997 he retired as our teacher, got married and moved to Montana. In retirement he does the activities he loves best: gardening, pottery, calligraphy, writing and cooking. Many visit him in the hope of learning something about a Zen life.

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 Genko Kathy Blackman Ni Osho. 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-san has continued his training with Eido T. Shimano Roshi, abbot of Dai Bosatsu Monastery in New York State.

## 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: 3/9, 4/13, 5/18, 6/8, 7/13, 8/10, 9/7

*Spring Sesshin: 3/22/08 - 3/28/08*

*Summer Sesshin: 6/28/08 - 7/4/08*

*Autumn Sesshin: 9/27/08- 10/3/08*

*Rohatsu Sesshin: 1/4/09 - 1/12/09*

**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

**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 \$350. Members may subtract their monthly dues from the week-long sesshin cost. For more information see:

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