

PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 15.2

Summer 2008

Dear members and friends,

Exciting things are brewing at Chobo-Ji. We had our Second Visioning Meeting on June 7th, where we further explored possibilities surrounding our potential expansion to a larger space to accommodate a residential practice. This meeting specifically examined potential growing pains and how to address them. From this meeting a subcommittee was formed to approach other Zen groups with a residential practice on what works and what doesn't. After this information was collected, we had a meeting to propose an expanded prototypical practice schedule. Next we will hone in on a Vision Statement at the Board Meeting set for September 28th. Then we will hold our Third Visioning Meeting, Sunday, October 5th, to examine what has been compiled and proposed. If at this meeting we are collectively ready to select a range of possible expansion options then we can establish search and fundraising committees. You can read more about the process so far in the Expansion Subcommittee Report found later in this issue.

On another very exciting front, Chobo-Ji is about to send two of our cherished students, Matthew (Myodo) Perez and Tina (Seimu) Grant to do Fall Kessei (formal training period) at Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) as a prelude to unsui (Zen monk) ordination next spring. The Chobo-Ji Sangha has contributed generously to the Kessei/Unsui fund, and the monies have been recently distributed. If all goes as

hoped, Chobo-Ji will soon have two more monks, in addition to Rev. Shinkon Glynn, training at DBZ for a 1000 days. It is hard to find the words to explain what an important development I feel this is for the future of Zen training in Seattle. When these students return after their 1000 days at DBZ, I have no doubt that we will all benefit from their training.



Chobo-Ji Summer Sesshin Participants

Our Summer Sesshin was held a little later than usual this year, June 28th to July 4th. For those who had already arrived, we began sitting Friday night, June 27th. Sesshin was very full, 23 people in attendance, most fulltime, and we had to turn away one person. This points out our need for a bigger space, and I am hopeful that in the next year or two we will have a larger zendo (meditation hall). At sesshin Bob (Daigan) Timmer ably executed the post of Shika (Manager). Mary (Choko) Cabaniss-Ballard was our Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook) who really blossomed in this post. Choko was assisted by Scott

(Ishin) Stolnack and the whole sesshin Sangha. I contributed the traditional middle day noodle dish by cooking spaghetti with vegetarian red-sauce. John (Daikan Green) kept us focused by punctually prosecuting the post of Jikijitsu (Time Keeper). Seimu and Myodo again shared the posts of Densu (Chant Leader) and Inji (Abbot's attendant) to expand on their experience before departing for DBZ. Rev. Zenmu Nightingale and Sally (Zenka) Metcalf served as Jishas (Tea Servers) and kept us well hydrated in the heat. Tom (Shodo) DeGroot stepped in as Jokei (keisaku holder) from time to time. With posts filled by such competent practitioners, there is hardly anything for Genko and me to do.

Carolyn, my daughter Adrienne and I traveled to Montana the weekend of July 18-20, to see my mother and Genki Roshi (our founding abbot) who both live only miles

apart in the Bitterroot valley. Genki Roshi and his wife Genei were in good form. Roshi appears a bit thin but in good health and much recovered from his recent exhaustive trip to Japan. After our visit with Roshi on Saturday, Sunday morning Adrienne, Carolyn, my mother and I took a two-hour float in river inner tubes down the runoff swollen Bitterroot. It was quite an adventure. Shodo and Daiki will also be visiting Roshi over Labor Day weekend. Both Genki and Genei were featured in a recent "Missoulian News" article about their efforts to establish a "Little Zen Museum" in Victor (you can find it on the WWW by googling this title).

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Genei with Genki Roshi in the Missoulian

September 11-15, I will be traveling to New York City to attend Shobo-Ji's 40th Anniversary sesshin and celebration. As you know, Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife Aiho-san founded Shobo-Ji these many years ago. I mark it as one of the most significant events in the foundation of the Rinzai Zen lineage in the West. Thirty of Chobo-Ji's most active Sangha, with the authorization of the Chobo-Ji Board, were included in a recent mailing from DBZ soliciting contributions in honor of this event. Regardless if you have received this letter or not, I would like to strongly encourage anyone reading this to consider making a monetary donation of gratitude directly to the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). The ZSS of course also oversees the financial health of DBZ and they put out a fundraising letter about twice a year. If you were one of the thirty who received 40th Anniversary letter, and do not want to be included in future mailings, just let me know, and your name will be removed from the list.

In this issue of PMN you will find additional information on our proposed expansion, a Teisho transcription from Summer Sesshin, the summer closing incense poem, a book report by Zenka, a list of New Posts for fall, and announcements for Autumn Sesshin and Fall Intensive. The Zen House garden is in good form with many flowers in bloom; I hope you are able to come by and enjoy it and stay for a sit or two.

With gassho,
Genjo

Expansion Subcommittee Report

by Daigan Timmer

The subcommittee, which was formed after the Second Visioning Meeting, 6/7/08, has been actively pursuing an expansion vision.

The Second Visioning Meeting was concerned with the risks and fears of a proposed expansion. We identified several concerns including: the potential loss of the close relations that now exist between us in our small group, concern that a new hierarchy might develop that is not as supportive of lay practice, and worry that Genjo Osho might move to New York. Some of these concerns were allayed; Genjo Osho does not see a move to New York in the making. Other problems may occur, but we can be watchful to minimize their effect.

Following the Second Visioning meeting, the subcommittee interviewed Zen centers whose situations were somewhat similar to ours. The Zen Center of Los Angeles, Zen Center of San Francisco, Zen Center of Syracuse, and Zen Center of Rochester were contacted. Questions for these centers revolved around finances, governance, attendance, and property. The committee has incorporated the findings from these interviews in their ideas for a prototypical expanded practice and visioning statement.

The committee is currently refining its prototypical practice proposal and examining options for property that might match the practice. The expanded practice schedule will include expectations for residents, intensive participants, and unsuis. A complete proposal with property options, practice prototype, and visioning statement will be discussed, debated and hopefully finalized at the Third Visioning meeting now scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, October 5th. Please keep this date in mind; more details will follow as the time approaches via our Zen mailing list.

The next step for the subcommittee and the Chobo-Ji board is to draft a Mission / Vision / Core Values (MVCV) statement. This meeting is scheduled to be in the afternoon samu period during the Autumn

Sesshin, September 28th. The need for this became apparent in the course of the interviews with other Zen groups.

At the Third Visioning Meeting, Oct. 5th, 1-5 pm, it is hoped that the Sangha will agree on a range of property options to go with an expanded practice, and after input, agree on a Vision Statement. If we are united as a group, we will then begin active searching and fundraising for a new property.

Summer Sesshin 2008 Closing Incense Poem

Sweat drips from the brow.

*A clap of thunder and rain
falls from the sky.*

Who dreams of the cool breeze?

*Who sees the hummingbird
bathing in the fountain?*

No knowing.

Autumn Sesshin Sept. 27th - Oct. 3rd

Please send a deposit by September 17th, 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, Sept. 27th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.

Optional zazen will be offered the Friday before sesshin, 7:30 - 8:30 pm. If you are available please be there.



Hekiganroku: Case 66

Ganto Laughed Loudly

(6th day, Summer Sesshin, 2008)

Transcription help from Seishun

Engo's Introduction:

Adapting himself adroitly to circumstances, displaying the spirit to capture a tiger; attacking now from the front, now from the flank, planning to seize the rebel; combining light and dark, holding fast and letting go; dealing with deadly serpents—this is the master's task.

Main Subject:

Ganto asked a monk, "Where are you from?" The monk said, "From the western capital." Ganto said, "After the rebellion of Koso had been suppressed, did you get the sword?" The monk said, "Yes, I have got it." Ganto stretched out his neck before the monk and let forth a great yell. The monk said, "Your head has fallen." Ganto laughed loudly.

Later, the monk visited Seppo who said, "Where are you from?" The monk said, "From Ganto." Seppo said, "What did he say to you?" The monk recounted the story. Seppo gave him 30 blows and drove him out.

Setcho's Verse:

Since the rebel was suppressed,
The sacred sword has been restored;
Why the laughter, the master knows.
Too small a reward, the thirty blows;
One gains, one loses.

On this our last full day of Summer Sesshin, we almost had Teisho [formal Dharma Talk] a half-hour early. Genko sent the Inji [attendant] upstairs with the unenviable task of telling the Abbot that he was a half-hour early (laughter). ("Did she get thirty blows?" asked someone.) If she had gotten thirty blows for that, this would not be a Teisho.

We all make mistakes and are, from time to time, distracted. Ideally we should be

humbled, rather than humiliated by such a revelation. When we feel humiliation, it is nearly always left over from some childhood trauma that is stimulated by current circumstances, most often some sort of error on our part. The extent that we feel humiliated is probably directly proportional to how much baggage we're carrying from our own troubled childhood. Alternatively, to the extent that we feel simply humbled by an error and say, "Oh, that's right," then this is probably a good measure of how well we have processed or digested our childhood traumas. The Inji said, "Do you intend to have Teisho early?" And I said, "No, there's no need to have Teisho early." That's it. No more need be said.

We think that, in the process of so-called mastery, we're going to become someone we're not, or that we'll realize something that will change us. We may believe that we will in some permanent way transcend our monkey mind, get forever past personal history, or never make a mistake again. And, of course, all this is impossible! We'll never be without our childhood, our monkey mind, or what we call our bumpkin nature.

What our Zen practice does do for us is help us realize that we are so much *more* than our bumpkin nature. In the readiness of time, we begin to come to terms with the vastness of our True Nature — just as our chant "Opening this Dharma" says, "This Dharma incomparably profound and minutely subtle is hardly met with even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons." In other words, *your* True Nature is incomparably profound and minutely subtle. I say, "your" but I don't mean "your" as in possessable by your sense of ego identity. *It* will never be yours in that way. When I use the word "your" in this case, I'm referring to what Zen Master Rinzai called, "That One shining alone" which is never *yours* but always present. You couldn't take a breath without it, and without True Nature there would be no investigation of It. But It will never be yours; It can never be mine. The more aware you become, the more you realize there's no one at all! True Nature is not a "someone," It has no separated self-hood. It's not a someone or a something. It has no form, let alone a name.

As we begin to turn our lives over to this puppet master that has no separate personality, then no one starts to do more and

more everyday work. No one at all chopping vegetables...no one at all swinging the keisaku [waking stick]...no one at all sweeping the floor...no one at all gardening...no one at all folding laundry...no one at all in deep conversation. We get a hint of this when we're in samadhi. For example, I suspect that most of us have experienced riding a bike when "no one" is riding. There's just the motion of bike, body and environment. There's no one controlling the experience! The experience is just "happening." Or perhaps you have felt this way when watching a movie or reading a good book. If you really disappear into the movie or the book, there's no one watching or reading anymore. There's no personality, no separated selfhood. The so-called "you" has become totally absorbed in the story that's being told. This is so, even though the story on the screen or in the book is just a dream and a phantom. In the depth of listening, writing, chopping, or sweeping, no one's directing the show! This "no one" is the same as what Zen Master Rinzai refers to as the "true person without rank or position."

For those who have practiced Aikido and have done *rondori*, where there are many attackers at once, when freely responding to each approach, there's no one to be caught. There's no time to think, the apparent barriers between self and other drop away, attacker and responder flow seamlessly together. Actions become so smooth they are more like a reflex. This unthinking action in Zen is called "no action" or *buji*. And yet, even though this kind of action becomes nearly a reflex, it is built on the skillfulness learned while practicing endlessly on the mat in Aikido, or from falling and failing many times before getting the hang of riding a bike. There's something very profound and subtle going on in this development.

We think of ourselves as a separated selfhood. That's definitely our sense. However, if we examine ourselves more closely, we realize that we're multiple personalities, not a single personality. For example, close investigation will reveal a whole troupe of characters, like a troupe of monkeys in a tree. Each one seems to have its own distinct personality. Which one is the real you? Well, it depends on the moment or the time of day as to which one, outwardly, is moving this body or

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monkeying around. In this inner troupe, there are many different ages, genders, characters and archetypes. But, at the base of all these inner personalities, there's a root that gives rise to them all. This root is incomparably profound and minutely subtle but not a personality. It has no ego identity. It's not a separated selfhood.

As we wake up or become more aware of our root, then more of our life becomes directed by the root rather than by one of the monkeys in the tree. The monkeys don't disappear, they simply have less control. At the root there is no self at all; however, this root manifests in myriad forms and countless personalities. If you're not aware of your inner troupe of personalities, you have multiple personality disorder (laughter). If you are aware of them, good (laughter). Someone said to me, "Well, but I don't understand them all yet. I don't know who all these characters are, there are too many." You don't have to know them all. However, it's good to become familiar with at least a few of them (laughter). And you do have to feed them regularly. They're quite demanding. You can feel them jumping up and down inside of you. "Give me attention! Give me attention! I want a turn! Let me drive!" (laughter) Some of them think they're real special. Some of them think they're inferior. But they're all just monkeys! And there's nothing wrong with this troupe of personalities, but, as I've said before, it's not great if they're driving the car, running your life. They easily make a mess of things, and do so repeatedly. It can be quite humbling when they get a hold of the car! But it doesn't need to be humiliating, just humbling.

It may be that through this process of Zen practice that you are disappointed that it is not you who is the master. Look out for the monkey that wants to take credit and claim that they're in charge and that they have achieved satori! "Yes, I have achieved satori," says one of the monkeys. How ridiculous! We all have this root; it's impossible not to have it. There isn't anything to celebrate about having this root. In fact there is no one to celebrate or treasure satori; if there is someone to treasure it, then it is no longer satori. After a flourishing *rondori*, where all comers are accepted and released, there should be no one taking credit. It's not *you* who did it.

You've heard me talk before about the Barry Manilow song that goes, "I Write the Song that Makes the Whole World Sing." I write the song. [A clap of thunder is heard.] That's right, thunder! (laughter) John Lennon in his last interview before he was assassinated was asked, "Where do the songs come from?" And he said, "I don't know." That's so much closer to it! Bodhidharma was asked by Emperor Wu, "Who do you think you are?" and said, "I know not." No one is a separated personality, and we cannot know the vastness that is exposed at this realization. When someone says, "I built a great bridge or building or wrote a wonderful symphony," that's not it! "I had a wonderful idea," that's not it! A great idea may have indeed come to you, and you may be very grateful, but don't think that *you* are great for having it. Just because one of the monkeys grabs on to it and says, "See?? See how great I am?" No one should take credit for a true insight; yet, someone usually does — just a monkey playing. When you have a great realization, it's not you.

Ganto asked a monk, "Where are you from?" The monk said, "I've come from the western capital." Ganto said, "After the rebellion of Koso had been suppressed, did you get the sword?" Now at this time, at the close of the T'ang Dynasty, at the end of the 9th Century, the emperor was taxing heavily, trying to stay in power. Koso led a rebellion and it's said that a sword fell from heaven for him to use in the rebellion. The rebellion was eventually suppressed. But Ganto is saying, "Do you have this sword of heaven?" This is Ganto's way of asking, "Have you experienced satori? Do you have mastery? Can you snatch the sword from General Kan? Have you recovered the sword from the rebel Koso?"

The monk said, "Yes, I've got it!" Anyone who says, "I have enlightenment" does not have enlightenment. It's not yours or mine to have! It's something that bubbles up — this realization, sense of power or mastery — it may come through you but it's never yours and an insight is never complete. A good insight always reveals more questions than it answers. So, if you're looking to be the master — forget about it!

But we can turn ourselves more and more over to That One Shining Alone, the One that is no one at all. That One is incom-

parably profound and minutely subtle. So subtle because it has no personality. It's not an aspect or archetype. It's not a monkey in a tree.

I have no doubt that this monk had a genuine insight; yet, when the monk says, "Yes, I've got it!" we see that a monkey in the tree is proclaiming, "That satori is mine! This is my awakening, my kensho! I must be great and I am complete."

You know, when Einstein had the insight that gravity warps space-time, which is at the core of the Theory of General Relativity, he truly saw something clearly about reality. It's a fantastic insight. However, I doubt that even when he won the Nobel Prize in Physics he thought, "Oh, those insights are mine. I invented warped space! I must be great!" It's not his. No one should take credit for it; however, many insights did indeed bubble up in the so-called human vessel named Einstein. It is not difficult for me to conceive of warped space and have a sense of it; perhaps this is true of most of us. However, just because I can conceive of warped space, this is of little significance. On the other hand, each of us has the potential to intuit, as Einstein often did, something of the true nature of the universe, and this is why we are all called primarily Buddhas. However, having insights into the nature of reality doesn't make us a Zen master. Seeing reality clearly is simply seeing reality as it is.

So, Ganto, hearing the monk say, "Yes, I've got it," stretched out his neck and let forth a great yell, "AHHHH!" The monk said, "Oh, your head is cut off." And Ganto let loose a big laugh. Implying to the monk, "Just right! Just so! My head's cut off. Your sword's so great! Your enlightenment is so sharp that it's cut off my head!"

I'm sure the monk felt as though he'd had this wonderful conversation with Ganto — Ganto laughed and was good hearted — he laughed so hard, his head rolled. After this encounter the monk goes to meet Seppo. Ganto and Seppo are dharma brothers; each was a student of Tokuson. From Seppo comes Zen Master Ummon. Ganto and Seppo are very close; both are quite mature masters. Seppo said, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "I've come from visiting Ganto." Seppo said, "Well, what did he have to say?" The monk recounts the story. Immedi-



Hotei Waking from a Nap by Sengai, 1750 - 1838

ately, Seppo grabs his keisaku and gives him thirty blows and drives him out. Poor monk! I'm sure he was feeling humiliated. Any time you're feeling grandiose or anytime you're feeling humiliated, you're one of the monkeys. It's just monkey nature to feel grandiose or to feel humiliated, ashamed and inferior. This monk's realization, real as it may have been, is far from mature.

In Case 13 of the *Mumonkan* (Gateless Gate) we find a story about Tokusan, Ganto and Seppo. Seppo was older than Ganto by a few years but did not come to maturity until after Ganto. Once the two of them were traveling together and were overtaken by a snowstorm and were forced to spend a few days by a wayside inn. Seppo, as usual, sat arduously in zazen during the break, even though they were snowed in. Ganto asked Seppo about his understanding. "You do such strong zazen (seated meditation). Tell me something of your understanding," says Ganto to Seppo. Seppo answered that, for all of his zazen and years of training, he had not yet realized deep peace of mind. Ganto said, "Oh, I thought you had already realized it but, since you say otherwise, let me ask you this: what use is there in learning from other people's lectures and the sutras? It is what you produce from the bottom of your mind that moves heaven and

earth." At this, Seppo suddenly had his Great Awakening.

Seppo did great zazen. He was the Tenzo (Chief Cook). He was older than Ganto but had yet to come to deep peace of mind. Ganto said in effect, "I think you're still looking for True Insight outside of your root mind. You're looking to what the sages and Sutras and Zen Masters of old have to say about the Dharma. Trying to learn the truth from all those monkeys, yours and theirs, is useless. There are so many! Don't you know that what really moves heaven and earth comes from the bottom, the root, of your Mind." True insight can only arise from the root; you will never find it by trying to find the one true branch or monkey. That which animates heaven and earth comes from the root. It has no personality. It has no form, let alone a name. It's incomparably profound. True Nature is minutely subtle and is the vast void, beyond measure — you'll never know it as a finite personality. It is not a person or a personhood. Upon hearing this, Seppo reached deep peace of mind. He transcended the need to look elsewhere. He realized that True Nature is already fully revealed. In other words, there is no *truth* to find. Mind is the source of all insight, but to attach to the idea of Mind is to be lost once again. In this moment of deep realization Seppo

became confident of this non-personality, this No Self. (At this moment a great clap of rolling thunder is heard in the zendo.)

A few years after this account, Ganto was murdered. As I said, during the fall of the T'ang Dynasty, there was great unrest and there were bands of bandits who went around looting. And even though Ganto was in a remote temple, the bandits came and — looking for something worthwhile to steal — found nothing of great value. The bandits were so an-

gered by this, perhaps thinking that Ganto was hiding the goods from them, that they murdered him, stabbed him with a dagger. At this moment, it is said that Ganto let out a huge death scream, "AHHHHHHH" that was so loud and curdling that it was heard for leagues. Many centuries later, this account troubled Zen Master Hakuin. Hakuin couldn't understand how such a great master could let out such a curdling scream. In fact, it was around investigating this question of Ganto's death that Hakuin had his great awakening and came to his deep peace of mind.

This life is but a dream, but sometimes it hurts like hell. And when Ganto was stabbed, I'm sure one of those monkeys screamed his head off! Quite natural! Entirely natural, nothing to be ashamed of. Nothing wrong, nothing in error. Just huge death scream.

Upon having his own realization, when Hakuin's own troop of monkeys was quiet, he reported, "After all these centuries, Ganto still lives."

With gassho,

Genjo

Zen and the Sutras

Report by Zenka Metcalf

Albert Low's *Zen and the Sutras* reflects upon the sutras as an intimate part of Zen practice, especially koan practice. He discusses the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, the Surangama Sutra, the Lankavatara Sutra and the Vimalakirti Sutra. As academic as *Zen and the Sutras* may sound, it's been a profoundly personal encounter, twining through my life as a koan might and pulling me tightly against the very things I resist most. Curious how one cannot understand, yet be deeply stirred by certain words in a wonderful book.

Prajna is "aroused, primordial knowing... Knowing that is constantly emerging, surging up...that has no before and after." These words—somehow familiar, yet unfathomable—send chills through me.

"To awaken is to arouse primordial knowing... to get beyond knowing things to pure knowing...Such knowing always is sudden and penetrating... These flashes may not come very often at first, but when they do one must be prepared... This watchfulness, this nonabiding in the meaning, allows the shaft of one's own sunlight to lighten the darkness; it is the fruit of one's faith, but it is also a way by which faith is deepened and strengthened."

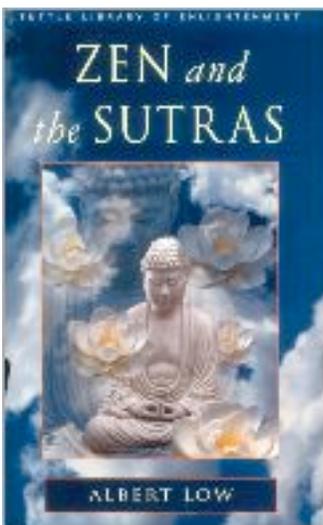
Fortunately, between the *Buddhist Bible* and Charles Luk's *Ordinary Enlightenment: A Translation of the Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra*, I had all five of Low's featured sutras on hand. Though I have a few sutras to go, I passed the winter in front of the glow from my cast iron stove, reading a sutra, then reviewing Low's commentary.

That is, I read when I had time. Almost five years ago, now, my man, John Rudolph, died of pancreatic cancer. To my shock, in December, his daughter, Kristi, who is just fifty-two, came home to me for care with pancreatic cancer and a stroke. She was partially paralyzed, terrified, and weighed only ninety-five pounds.

Kristi returned just three days after my brother passed away of complications due to alcoholism. He'd been estranged from me for some years, and died the week of cataclysmic snows and rains.

What I hadn't faced when my John died, in the forms of illness and death, was laid bare this winter. "...Suffering afflicts most people. Some, however, are able to turn the suffering around, to realize that it is the expression of the human condition and, further, that to free themselves from suffering they must free themselves from the belief that they are something. When they realize this, suffering, instead of being an obstacle, becomes an ally."

Deep winter set in, punctuated by dread that I'd be helping Kristi to her death. Instead, each



month brought her gains in weight, strength, and mastery of fear—all in spite of weekly chemotherapy. And in spite of the loss of her identity as a dancer, and both an

Ashtanga Yoga and Pilates adept. Inspiring to watch her heal.

Vimalakirti taught that, "All Buddha fields are empty." According to Low, "A Buddha field... is a universe. Each of us has a Buddha field. This is the totality of experience that is possible for us. We do not live in the world, we live in a world...All these Buddha fields come together because they are empty. It is the emptiness of the Buddha field that makes interpenetration completely possible."

Last August, I dreamt of my brother—a portent of his death. In the dream, he lived at a wonderful retreat center, and worked outdoors, which he loved. His face was peaceful and happy (in contrast to the deri-

sive expression of a life-long alcoholic). I believe he somehow sent me this dream as reassurance that, at the heart of it all, he was whole. The sweetness I'd loved in him as a child remained untouched and shining within. That dream allowed me to quietly meet his passing in December.

I faced my own physical challenges this winter as the chronic pain in my hip escalated to agony. Genjo Osho asked if I could physically do kessei at Dai Bosatsu. Between my hip, lousy kidneys, my allergy to rice, and a tendency toward adrenal failure without proper rest, I have my doubts. So it may be that ordination is not in the cards for me.

Consequently, the Vimalakirti Sutra, guided by Low's reflections, was especially meaningful. Vimalakirti was a fully-realized being, and a layman. "One of the themes of the sutra is that practice within lay life—with its full responsibilities of job, family, and social commitments—can lead to deep awakening." Awakening is possible precisely because of our negative conditions and emotions. Everyday mind is the way. At Chobo-Ji, I find Vimalakirti alive and vibrant in the body of our exemplary lay practitioners. So, either way, ordained or not, I have strong practice ahead.

Now, Kristi is well enough to be on her own. I have a much-needed and promising new job, and a new home. I wonder if Low's words resonate in your hearts, too. If not, what touches you, tries you, staggers you? Whatever we face, my brother and Kristi reveal that, at the heart of it all, we are whole and shining.

"All of us, intrinsically, are awakened. When we read something and are struck by its truth, moved by the simple beauty and rightness of what it says, we feel that this brilliance comes from what we are reading. But it does not. It is like the dew on the grass on an early summer's day. Scintillating like a million gems, the dew flashes in the morning sunlight. But this brilliance and sparkle all comes from the sunlight. In the same way, the brilliance and truth that seem to shine out of the words of the masters is nothing other than the reflection of your own light, the brilliance of your own awakened nature." -- Albert Low

New Posts

Beginning September 1st

Mary (Choko) Cabaniss-Ballard:
Shika (Host - Manager)

John (Daikan) Green: **Shika**
Assistant

Edward (Daiki) Cadman: **Dai-
Tenzo** (Chief cook for Sesshins)

Dee (Seishun) Endelman: **Tenzo**
Assistant

Michael (MuKan) Blome: **Jikijitsu**
(Timekeeper)

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

Charlie (Taishin) Blackman: **Densu**
(Chant Leader)

Rev. Zenmu Nightingale: **Densu**
Assistant

Sally (Zenka) Metcalf: **Jisha**
(Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Peter (Shinke) Ilgenfritz: **Jisha**
Assistant

Peggy (Kochi) Smith-Venturi: **Inji**
(Abbot Assistant)

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

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

Fall Intensive

This upcoming Intensive, which will go from 9/7 - 12/14 and resume on 1/4/09 and conclude 1/12, the last day of Rohatsu Sesshin, is your chance to commit to a more rigorous practice. To join you must be a member in good standing and agree to the following:

1) Attend group zazen at least five out of seven days a week

- 2) Commit to attending all sesshins full-time during the training intensive (including monthly mini-sesshins)
- 3) Join the Dharma dialogs held at 7:30 pm, 1st and 3rd Sundays
- 4) Make every effort to attend all Dharma interviews 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, writing a brief report that may be published in PMN.
- 7) Attend an additional sesshin (3 days minimum) in the course of a year.

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 by founding Dai Baizan Chobozen-Ji, translated as *Great Plum Mountain Listening to the Dharma Zen Temple*. After 20 years of tirelessly giving himself to the transmission of Buddha Dharma to the West, in 1997 he retired and moved to Montana.

Genjo Osho began his Zen training in 1975, was ordained in 1980, and became 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 and a certificated spiritual director. Our temple is in the Rinzaï Zen School. Since Genki Roshi retired, Genjo Osho has continued his training with Eido T. Shimano Roshi, Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Kongo-Ji monastery in New York. On May 21, 2008, Eido Roshi confirmed Genjo Osho as one of his Dharma Heirs.

Schedule

Introduction to Zazen

Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 pm

Zazen

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

Saturdays, 6:30 - 8:00 am.

Sundays, 6:30 pm, 1hr.

Monday & Wednesday, 7:30 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: 9/7, 11/9, 12/14, 2/8, 3/15, 4/12

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

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

Spring Sesshin: 3/21/09 - 3/27/09

Summer Sesshin: 6/20/09 - 6/26/09

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