



# Plum Mountain News

## Expansion Property



### Dear members and friends,

The days have rapidly grown shorter; the Seattle sky is full of passing clouds and falling rain. The autumn winds scatter the leaves of red, brown, orange and gold. Almost magically a new property to expand Chobo-Ji's practice opportunities became available. The deal has not yet closed, but most initial hurdles have been surmounted. The board met at the end of August to discuss one property that we had been cautiously considering for some time, then unanimously began to pursue a different property that had just become available on Beacon Hill. This property on South Horton Street, two blocks north of Spokane Street and only a few blocks east of the I-5 Spokane Street exit, was immediately attractive. It is a block-long, 10-unit apartment, brick facade building in a quiet neighborhood, two miles south of downtown, five blocks from the Beacon Hill Light Rail station, and includes the adjacent lot to the south, which provides parking and garden areas for the tenants.

Over the Labor Day weekend an offer was made and accepted. Just last week the contingency phase of the purchase was passed, and the bank tentatively approved our loan application. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I think Chobo-Ji has found its new home.

This building should meet our hopes for an expanded zendo, program and residential practice. It will take some time to get the proper permits and complete the necessary remodel of the basement to suit our needs, but I have little doubt that we will be ultimately successful, thanks to the talents and contributions of our remarkable Sangha and the wider support community. We have a very exceptional team of experts in many fields working with us to help see that we realize our dream in an affordable, timely way. Nevertheless, we will need to draw on the good will, hard work and financial support of everyone to see us through this transition. I am excited and honored to work with such a fine group of people who

are steadfastly proceeding with care and concern towards a common goal.

Just before Autumn Sesshin I met with Genki Roshi, our founding Abbot, in Montana. He continues to have significant health concerns, but he was brimming with enthusiasm about our expansion plans. I showed him pictures of our potential new space and he related his determination to be present at the formal opening ceremony, whenever that will be. When I told Eido Roshi, abbot of Dai Bosatsu (DBZ) Monastery, about it he was also wholeheartedly supportive. If all goes as planned, the real estate sale will close by December; perhaps we will be able to begin to occupy the building by this time next year, which means that probably the earliest we would plan a formal opening would be the spring of 2011. At this point there are just too many variables to allow accurate estimates. Genko Ni-Osho, our board president, writes more about our expansion plans later in this issue.

Autumn Sesshin was scrumptious, in part due to the good efforts of our Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook) Michael (Mukan) Blome and his many helpers, but also because we bit deeply into the silence. This sesshin we made a successful effort to be more quiet and respectful of sesshin atmosphere. Daigan fell ill early on, and did sesshin from his bed (he is fine now), and Scott (Ishin) Stolnack seamlessly stepped in as Shika (host/manager) and assigned everyone his or her samu (work meditation) tasks. Linda (Muka) Wehnes took her first turn as Jikijitsu (timekeeper) and paced us well through the week. Peter (Shinke) Ilgenfritz served us as our Densu (chant leader) and brightly kept the beat on the mukugyo. We were all well juiced and sated by our Jisha (tea servers) Virginia (Myoshin) Dunthorne and Steve (Shinkai) Garber. My Inji (attendant) was Edward (Daiki) Cadman who skillfully cared for me. One participant who literally stood above the others was an unsui (Zen monk) from Great Vow Monastery in Oregon, Rev. Daitetsu Hull. He was so enthusiastic

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about his participation that he has already signed up for Chobo-Ji's Rohatsu (winter retreat) in January. Daitetsu told a funny story at the conclusion of sesshin that he attended Chobo-Ji over a decade ago, and told me of his desire to become a monk. Evidently I thoroughly tried to disabuse him of this idea, which made him all the more determined!

The annual three-day sesshin in Doylestown Pennsylvania was held October 16 - 18, and hosted by Aikido Sensei George Lyons and his wife Patty at Peace Valley Lavender Farm. There were 25 participants coming from as far away as California, Michigan and Connecticut. This was the seventh year that I have been invited to lead this gathering and each year



the practice deepens. Many participants over the years have gone on to further training at DBZ, in particular, Robert (Ryugan) Savoca, Rodger (Tozan) Park and Carl (Yuho) Baldini. I am particularly grateful to Yuho for watching over me during the Aikido weapons practice on Saturday. Patty and Ryugan were great Tenzos, and I think one day Ryugan will be Tenzo at DBZ. At the conclusion of the sesshin, Bob Burns from Aiki Farms, who has often attended Chobo-Ji Rohatsu, and his daughter Bridget graciously transported me to Connecticut for one truly spectacular New England day before my return home Monday night.

Speaking of DBZ, I heard from Rev. Shinkon Glynn, one of three Zen monks training at DBZ who did Jukai (Dharma Precepts) at Chobo-Ji, that he is very aware and grateful for the "tremendous" support that has been coming from our Sangha to help with the environmental cleanup of the DBZ property. He also reports that Jodo, Zuiho and he are doing well. Jodo has been serving as assistant Tenzo and Zuiho was recently a key person in the planning

and execution of a tea ceremony for about fifty guests from West Point. Daigan, John (Daikan) Green, Ryugan and Tozan will be joining me for DBZ Rohatsu, December 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>.

Halloween morning Genko and I will be traveling to Ellensburg for a one-day sit with the Raiun Zan-Ji Sangha. Our zendo will be closed for Thanksgiving from Wednesday evening, November 25<sup>th</sup> through Saturday morning, November 28<sup>th</sup>. The zendo will close again from December 25<sup>th</sup> through the morning of January 1<sup>st</sup>. Our usual New Year's Day ceremony and potluck will start at 10 AM. There will be sitting, Saturday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, and we will depart for Chobo-Ji's Rohatsu that afternoon by 4 PM; therefore, regular zendo sitting will not resume until Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. On January 18<sup>th</sup> I leave for a sesshin in Birmingham England, and I will return on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

In this issue of Plum Mountain News, Genko Ni-Osho begins a regular column titled "Thoughts on Practice." Each quarter she will illuminate some corner of our practice and tradition; this time she will be covering the significance of Ryogon Shu chanting. I hope you will enjoy this and the other offerings found in this edition.

With gassho,

Genjo

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## Expansion Report

As most everyone knows, we have been in the midst of the feasibility or due diligence period following the acceptance of our offer on a property in Beacon Hill. Over the last few weeks the building has been inspected and assessed for suitability for our new zendo, and after considering everything we have learned so far, at a board meeting October 11 the Chobo-Ji Board decided to proceed with the purchase. We are currently putting together a financing package, refining plans for the zendo, communicating with the building residents, and beginning the process of seeking permits to allow renovations to take place. We are very hopeful we will be successful with both the financing and the permits.

Since our last communication, we have learned that the bank has approved our loan application, subject to several conditions including the bank's appraisal of the building's value (the loan would be for 70% of this appraised amount), an environmental evaluation (principally a database search for nearby toxic waste superfund sites), and de-commissioning by the current owner of the old oil tank on the property.

As expected, this purchase and renovation will be a bit of a stretch for us as a group. We are so grateful for the support of so many, and particularly for your donations and pledges, both large and small, which altogether have put this project within reach. We will continue to keep you informed as to the extent of financing we are able to obtain and the scope of the planned renovation, and what is feasible.

We have retained an architect to help us through the permitting process with the city. As part of this process, we will be submitting drawings of our planned renovations. Zendo members and friends have done a lot of the groundwork for these drawings, which helps to defray some of the cost. As we continue with our planning, there will be more opportunities for everyone to pitch in and help. Currently we are visualizing a larger zendo and associated dokusan room, kitchen, and bathrooms in the basement, which should serve us well for the foreseeable future.

If we are able to close this purchase by or before the scheduled closing date in early December, we expect that with the permit process and renovations, it could take anywhere from six months to two years, depending on many factors, until we have the new zendo in place.

Please take the opportunity to drive by the building, at 1727 S Horton Street, and through the neighborhood, if you have not already done so. But please be very respectful of the current residents. We want them to know us as good landlords for the entire time they reside on the property. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact any board member.

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# Hekiganroku: Case 99

## Chu Kokushi & the Ten-bodied Herdsman

(5th day, Autumn Sesshin, 2009)

Transcription help from Seishun

**Engo's Introduction:** When the dragon calls, mists and clouds arise; when the tiger roars, gales begin to blow. The supreme teachings of the Buddha ring out with a silvery voice. The actions of Zen masters are like those of the most expert archers, whose arrows, shot from opposite directions, collide in midair. The truth is revealed for all ages and all places. Tell me, who has ever been like this? See the following.

**Main Subject:** Emperor Shukuso asked Chu Kokushi, "What is the ten-bodied herdsman?" Chu Kokushi said, "Go trampling on Vairocana's head!" The emperor said, "I cannot follow you." Chu Kokushi said, "Don't take the self for the pure Dharma body."

### Setcho's Verse:

*"National teacher" was forced upon him;  
He made the name his own.  
He helped the son of heaven  
Trample on Vairocana's head.*

*With an iron hammer  
He smashed the golden bones;  
What else is left  
In heaven and earth?*

*In the three thousand worlds  
The lands and seas lie sleeping.  
Who will dare enter  
The dragon's cave?*

In Dokusan this morning, I asked someone the question: "Which is superior?" She took a moment then, though she was tempted to respond "yes" or "no," she smiled and said in deference to yesterday's Teisho (Hekiganroku Case 98, Tempyo's Two Wrongs) "Wrong, wrong!" (laughter) In which case, I smilingly rang the bell. It's good to know that you all are listening.

Yesterday, there was a thundershower and today it is much cooler. There's the term "Indian summer" where, in fall, the

summer season seems to hang on. Yesterday, it felt like there was a deep shift into autumn. There was that great wind, billowing clouds, thunder, rain and summer gave way. Even though it is a beautiful, bright sunny autumn day, it can't be confused with summer any longer.

Engo's introduction says, "When the dragon calls, mists and clouds arise." In Chinese mythology, it was thought that when great clouds clamor, rise up and thunder with lightening and rain — a dragon was calling. The dragon was thought to fly up to the heavens through the mist, the clouds and rain making a bridge between heaven and earth, a pathway for the dragon to climb.

As we know from mythology, a dragon keeps a jewel in its lair, a precious treasure. This jewel is symbolic of the key or source of reality itself. In Zen, this jewel is vocalized as Muuuuuu. Our job is to steal this treasure, but we fear that it lies deep at the bottom the ocean, kept within a locked chest, protected by a fierce dragon. Sounds difficult!



Scary!  
Traacherous!

This journey and path of awakening feels like it is all these things. It is quite scary to go into the depths and vastness of multidimensional True Nature. It is

difficult to face the rigor of arduous training, which strips away the walls of our defenses. Our fences segregate self and other, bumpkin from Buddha, right from wrong, life from death. To take down these barriers —artificial as they may be— is to lose the self and that can be problematic if one is not sufficiently ready. It's odd, but you must have a positive sense of self to lose before you can dynamically and positively lose your self. And it's very true that, for someone who —because of karmic circumstance or biological imbalance— is schizophrenic, zazen is contraindicated. Schizophrenics don't have the ability to distinguish self from other, dream from waking; therefore, they don't have sufficient confidence in "self" to lose it.

Also, anyone who has been severely beaten down, abused or abandoned possibly doesn't have a firm enough grasp on a positive self-image to maturely fully release self. Remember zazen is stripping away the barriers between so-called self and other. If you are not ready for this release, it may be frightening and confusing. Whether or not we are fearful, if the boundaries of self are released prematurely, we become overly vulnerable, sensitive, suggestible and susceptible and this can be outright hazardous. It is also possible that some in this category relish the familiar feeling of loss of self, and essentially hide from their past in this familiar feeling, never really fully facing their history or wounded personality.

In any case, it is very likely that how tenaciously we hold on to a sense of separateness is directly proportional to how much we *need* to hold on to our sense of self. There is something right about how tightly we hold on. We hold on as long as we need to hold on. We are all here trying to let the barriers and defenses drop away, but we must realize that we naturally hang on as long as we must, because if we were to let go prematurely, it can be very messy and actually lead to one or more kinds of mental breakdowns rather than breakthroughs.

Occasionally, when someone is attracted to serious Zen practice before they have developed a sufficient dynamic "self" and has a breakthrough or even gets close to a

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breakthrough, it can manifest as a nervous breakdown or even a psychotic break. This is far from a funny situation; it is not to be taken lightly and may be dangerous. Because once you've lost self prematurely it can be so frightening or confusing that we lose touch with reality: we may perceive that others are against us or out to get us. We may feel we are immaterial or even invisible, and we may become forever fearful that we will lose self repeatedly. For such a person, he or she may never be able to return to serious Zen practice in this lifetime.

While traveling deep into the dragon's cave, at first the trek appears to be a great distance, a highly guarded pathway, arduous and fraught with danger, but in reality this journey is none of these things. The jewel we are looking for is already as bright and unmistakable as the morning star, as immediate as a flash of lightning, as embracing as the morning wind, as ubiquitous as the morning dew, and as unavoidable as the rays of sun or the sound of rain. It's so close, there's no distance at all! And yet, as close as this jewel is, our defenses can be thick. And, to the extent that it takes a long time to wear them away, that is just what's necessary. This process can't be hurried and it shouldn't be hurried, even while we remain quite persistent about it. It will take as long as it takes, and for good reason.

In this case, we meet Chu Kokushi, also known as Etchu, again. This is the third case in the *Hekiganroku* to reference him. He is the direct dharma descendant of the Sixth Patriarch, Eno, and is the first person in the Zen lineage to hold the title of National Teacher. There are others that come to hold this title after him, but he was the first and, by far, the most famous. It is said that he spent forty years in his own temple, remote in the mountains of China, but gained such a reputation that the emperor—referred in Setcho's verse as the "son of heaven"—insisted that he come to the capital and become the emperor's teacher. It is said the emperor came out to greet Chu Kokushi personally when he first arrived at the capital. The emperor was quite taken by Chu Kokushi and would often invite him to have an audience to learn something of Zen wisdom.

In this case the emperor asks, "What is the ten-bodied herdsman?" The herdsman in

this case is comparable to the shepherd in Christianity and refers to the Historical Buddha, who was said to have ten bodies or different aspects. One way to look at the set—and I'm looking at footnotes; I don't have this memorized—the No-Attainment Buddha, the Vowing-to-save-all-beings Buddha, the Wisdom Buddha, the Positive Buddha, the Nirvana Buddha, the Dharma Buddha, the Mindful Buddha, the Samadhi Buddha, the Nature Buddha and the Easy Buddha (laughter). That's the one we really want to know! (laughter) Here it is fifth day of Autumn Sesshin, where's that Easy Buddha when we need him?

Given all these different faces of one Buddha, I think the emperor is asking, "What...or Who... is this herdsman, which is the real one?" Jumping ahead many years to Zen Master Rinzai, he similarly asked, "Who is listening to this discourse, right now?" And, on occasion would answer himself by saying, "That One Shining Alone is listening" or "The True person beyond rank or post." The True Person, and the herdsman are one and the same. This herdsman is none other than you yourself. Even asking the question and making the inquiry is one's true nature in action. You are already Buddhas. One could say, this is the "correct" answer.

However, I suspect that Chu Kokushi is aware that the emperor expects this answer. The emperor wants to hear that his true nature and the herdsman are one and the same and would like to hear Chu Kokushi say so. And he might have thought, "I've invited you to affirm this for me. As the Son of Heaven, it's only right!" (Laughter) But Chu Kokushi says, "Emperor, you go trampling on Vairocana's head." Vairocana, by the way, is another name for the Buddha; it means "Absolute Buddha." We didn't cover that one! So Chu Kokushi says something to the effect, "You're trampling on the Absolute, you arrogant youngster!" The emperor then says, "I cannot follow you," or "You did not say what I wanted you to

say!" If it were Rinzai and the emperor said to him, "I don't follow you. You're not making any sense! Who do you think you are?" Rinzai would just whoosh, with a swirl of his robes, turn and leave without even saying good-bye. But Chu Kokushi was much more kindhearted than this and, as teacher to the emperor said, "Don't take the self for the pure Dharma body." Don't think that your separate sense of self is the absolute. In other words, don't fool yourself; don't confuse your righteous or egoistic perspective with the herdsman or that One Shining Alone.

I don't know why Gandhi keeps coming up for me lately, but here's a paraphrase of a quote I believe I once read of Gandhi's where he contrasts the difference between so-called self and the Absolute and said, "The self is like a drop of ocean. The drop has all the qualities of the ocean but is not the ocean. Self is nothing but the ocean and it's not the ocean." Each one of us is like a drop. We have all the qualities of that One Shining Alone and are not, by ourselves, that One Shining Alone. We may falsely think that we're separate from that One Shining Alone. Mistake! Alternatively, we may perceive ourselves to be the entirety of that One Shining Alone. Mistake!

Paraphrasing Shunryu Suzuki, in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, when he was asked about death, he said something approximating, "It's like a waterfall. Before your so-called birth, you are totally unified with the water of life and death. But, going over the precipice of the falls, you individuate into separate droplets." And then he said, "What a relief to return to the river of life and death at the end of the fall and lose entirely that sense of separateness."

All along, this peculiar form, manifesting as a human being, each individual a unique mix of aggregates and dimensions that has never been before and will never be again is nonetheless never separate from the river of life and death. We can never be separated from the river of Dharma and Tao. We have a false view of separation, but we never can really be separate. Though each drop in a waterfall is unique, it is never more or less than water, coming from the river of life and death, shortly to return to the river of life and death, all along never leaving the flow. We are water



before birth, water manifested as a human being and of course continue to be just water after death. Water, water, water, no difference! And yet, it is also true, that each drop is entirely unique, just as every fingerprint, leaf, flower and snowflake is unique. Each incarnation, entirely unique! Never will a particular drop ever be exactly the same as another. (pause) Or drip. (laughter) This is the difference between Buddha and bumpkin! (laughter)

To say that listening to this discourse is none other than True Nature or That One Shining Alone, and to say, "Don't confuse the self with the Pure Dharma Body," appear to be statements that are like two arrows traveling in the opposite direction. Can they really be saying the same thing? Remember that Joshu, when asked if the dog has Buddha nature—he was asked this more than once—at one time immediately and simply answered, "Yes." Joshu can get away with this. You can't, (laughter) at least not for some time (laughter). On a different occasion Joshu said, "Mu" which is the *kanji* for no, not or nothing. Again we see two arrows coming in opposite directions. They meet in midair and they're really not different at all. Zen discourse, more so than any form I've come across in my limited readings and explorations, is really bent on breaking down our fixed conceptualizations of this and that, life and death, right or wrong, Buddha or bumpkin, crazy or sane.

In my psychotherapy practice, I often have clients who come to a point in therapy where they realize, "Oh, my god! I'm crazy!" And they're hoping I'll say, "No, you're not crazy!" But I say, "Yes, you are, and it's about time you realized it! You're completely bonkers!" (laughter) It is good to realize that you are both crazy and sane, Buddha and bumpkin. When you accept your craziness, you're much saner. When you don't accept your craziness, you're much crazier. When you accept Buddha and bumpkin, you're much more mature.

There's a deeper level in Chu Kokushi's response to the emperor than you might imagine. Don't take your self for the Pure Dharma Body. What's the deeper message? I wonder if the emperor got it? The emperor might have gotten the point I've just made about not being arrogant, but he might not have realized that Chu

Kokushi was also implying, "Don't take the self and don't take the Pure Dharma Body to be real at all." If we get past the conceptualizations of self and Pure Dharma Body then what do we have? If we get past the conceptualizations of you and me, self and other, host and guest, then where are we?

The clouds crossing this morning's sky were brilliant in the dawn.

*"National teacher" was forced upon him; he made the name his own.*

*He helped the son of heaven trample on Vairocana's head.*

*With an iron hammer he smashed the golden bones.*

Is Setcho speaking of the emperor's bones or the Buddha's bones? Both? When all the bones of emperor and Buddha, and Buddha and bumpkin and crazy and sane and life and death and you and me are smashed, what else is left?

*What else is left in heaven and earth?*

*In the three thousand worlds the lands and seas lie sleeping.*

Such stillness! This *is* incomparably profound and minutely subtle. Who will dare enter the dragon's cave?

With gassho,

Genjo

## Autumn Sesshin 2009

### Closing Incense Poem

*With no great rock to stand on,  
How do we face  
the waves of Samsara?*

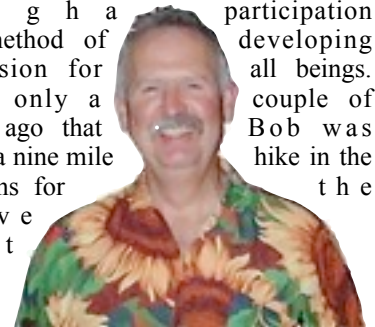
*Watch out!*

*Beneath the waves,  
razor sharp coral branches  
Embrace the bright moon.*

## Bodily Departures

The Walla Walla Dharma Sangha, which has for many years invited Genjo Osho to lead sesshins, lost a founding member recently, Bob Belden. Bob dropped his body peacefully the morning of October 21st. Sangha members had been keeping Bob company in his room as he finished his battle with cancer.

Bob will always be remembered for his commitment to zazen. In a meeting of Sangha members during this past summer, Bob had urged that the Sangha work to become a true source of support for members that they could depend on during important and difficult times of their life. In his final work of service, Bob helped elevate the Sangha to that level. Bob wanted service to be an integral part of Sangha participation as a method of developing compassion for all beings. It was only a couple of months ago that Bob was leading a nine mile hike in the mountains for Native Plant Society.



Recently, when Bob was in Seattle for an operation, Genjo Osho chanted the four great vows with Bob while his head was shaved by a nurse. Both Bob and Osho commented that it felt like a Battle Field Jukai (Dharma Precept) Commission. Dai Segaki was chanted at Chobo-Ji for Bob on October 22nd.

John Daido Looi Roshi dropped his body, the morning of October 9th. He was a Dharma Heir of Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi, founder of the Mountain and Rivers Order and was abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, NY. Chobo-Ji did a Ryogon Shu practice and service for him on October 10th.



# Thoughts on Practice

by Genko Ni-Osho

Just recently we have begun to schedule practice sessions in Ryogon Shu chanting a couple of times a month here at Chobo-Ji. Many of you have heard the Ryogon Shu and struggled along with us as we have chanted it on memorial days for various teachers in our lineage.

The Ryogon Shu is the Surangama Dharani, the Dharani which, when chanted, supports the Surangama Sutra. Although we do not study the Surangama Sutra per se at Chobo-Ji, it is vital to us, as it contains instruction on Samadhi meditation, the basis of our Zen practice itself. For this reason among others, the Ryogon Shu is an important chant in Zen practice, and worth learning.

This is a most difficult chant for us, since the sounds make no sense at all. The syllables really make no sense to anyone, as they are the old Japanese pronunciation of classical Chinese, which is itself based on the Sanskrit form of this chant that was brought to China from India. Add to that the fact that, unlike most of what we chant, the syllables are all clumped together in long phrases that are almost impossible to decipher when chanting at such a fast clip, and it is pretty much guaranteed that we will be chanting in different directions by the end.

When I was at Dai Bosatsu Zendo back in the fall of 2000, we would chant a section of the Ryogon Shu every morning during morning meeting. This daily chanting practice is really the best way to learn any chant, as those who chant the Heart Sutra each morning can understand.

However, it is important when learning anything to practice it correctly – there is no point in learning an incorrect form, and then having to re-learn it. For this reason it is helpful to work together on the pronunciation and chanting style, using the Dai Bosatsu Zendo Buddhist Chants CD as a reference. We have been able to identify some of the more difficult parts of the chant and to improve our chanting of these together. Once we understand the correct form, though, regular practice is essential.

Regular practice is essential, even when we don't want to do it – even when it is not at all easy or pleasant for us. Of course this is not a requirement here; Chobo-Ji's is a lay practice and we commit to what we can in our own lives. I don't "like" this chant myself. I would much rather be practicing tea or, for that matter, sweeping the zendo floor. But I motivate myself by remembering the purpose of the chant: to support and protect the teachings around just sitting, and to honor our teachers who sat for so many years on our behalf. That gets me going, and then the chanting itself sustains me, as each day it becomes more familiar and comes more easily.

As Genki Roshi used to tell us, "Zen practice 100% not instant." We will continue to offer group practice sessions at the zendo, and the materials online to practice at home. The next zendo sessions will be Saturdays, November 7 and 21, at 8:30 am for about an hour each time. If you are unable to attend and would like some instruction, please work with Genko to schedule a time, or contact Genjo for the online materials.

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## Rohatsu Sesshin

Please make your reservations by Dec. 19th. The cost of sesshin is \$350 (less dues). No part-time participation is allowed. We will leave from our Zendo, 1811 20th Ave., by 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 2nd, 2010. Please be at the Zendo by 3:00 p.m. so that we can pack up and make car pool arrangements to Camp Indianola. Formal zazen will begin after a light dinner. Rohatsu ends around 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 10th. Please don't plan departure flights before 2 p.m.

If you are coming from the airport you can take Shuttle Express, (800) 487-7433, about \$36 per person (discounts available for groups and roundtrips), 45 minute travel time. Or, you can take the new Seattle Light Rail for \$2.00 from the airport and then transfer to either the #12 or #43 to Capitol Hill and the Zendo (travel time is about an hour).

Please bring a zabuton and zafu if you have them. Bring clothes for cold, wet



weather (layers are best), and sturdy shoes for outdoor kinhin (walking meditation). Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, towel, washcloth and flashlight. Eating bowls and utensils will be provided (bring traditional nested bowls if you have them).

We serve three vegetarian meals, one large tea and two small teas per day. Leftovers may be available for snacking at the cook's discretion. Hot coffee and tea will be available most of the time. If you want food to munch on, you will have to bring your own. The kitchen and provisions in Totem Lodge are reserved for the planned meals. Totem has two dormitory wings (male & female) with bathrooms, and in Chak Chak, about 50 yards from zendo, there are semi-private rooms. Do NOT use cell phones at Rohatsu!

Morning wake-up bell is at 4:00 am. There are 30 min. breaks after each meal. Structured sitting will adjourn at around 10:30 PM the first two nights and goes later and later the following nights, yaza (personal sitting) follows this.

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## Program Committee

Michael (Daizan) Lyons and Edward (Daiki) Cadman are coordinating a schedule of program events for the Sangha. These events include: introduction to tea ceremony, introduction to flower arranging, introduction to zen calligraphy, and a zen book discussion group.

If you have interest in any of these proposed events or suggestions for other kinds of zen-related programs, please e-mail Daiki at cadman108@gmail.com with your comments or ideas. Thank you.

# Eloquent Silence

Report by Sally ZenKa

“*Silence is more eloquent than words.*” — Thomas Carlyle

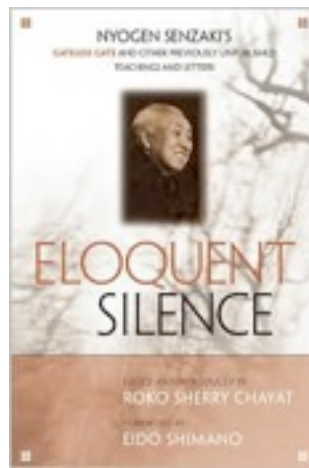
Nyogen Senzaki Zenji often greeted his small band of ardent followers with “Bodhisattvas!” to begin his teishos as recorded throughout *Eloquent Silence*, the recently published collection of his teachings. All through the book, like thorns in mud, his words prod and unsettle, yet at once encourage and enliven. “Just when you think you are entering Samadhi, you are just leaving it,” is an example of his terse and provocative style. Then, after speaking, he often scolds himself for using too many words. Let’s sip a cup of tea together in the quiet, he concludes. This book, beautifully edited by Sherry Roko Chayat Roshi, makes a remarkable collection of Senzaki’s dharma talks, poems, articles, calligraphy, translations and letters available to us at last after half a century of silence since his death and reveals the man and the priest, the first to transplant Zen into the West.

At the age of 29, in 1905, young Buddhist monk Nyogen came to the United States, encouraged by his teacher Soyen Shaku Roshi who was the first Zen master to visit America. Soyen Roshi admonished his student not to teach Buddhism for seventeen years—to be silent, to absorb America to the bone before letting fall a single word of Zen. Nyogen followed this stricture, and refrained from teaching until 1922.

He made the most of his years of abstention. Studying when he could in the San Francisco Public Library, he mastered the English language, adeptly translating into his new language treatises from Pali, Sanskrit, Classical Chinese and Japanese. Also he studied the great minds and poets of Western civilization, James, Durant, Carlyle, Tennyson, Whitman, Shakespeare, Goethe whose work he astutely wove into his teaching for the rest of his career.

In these early years, he meditated in Golden Gate Park and worked, and worked—any odd job, multiple jobs for long hours and little pay. Impoverished and an

immigrant Asian, in those days, and in that city, he met with brutal prejudice. Senzaki often had to fight for his life in the streets, and at times carried a gun. No wonder he cut his hair and wore western clothing. He met further prejudice during World War II when he was interned in a concentration camp in Wyoming named, ironically, Hart Mountain. He shared a small room with a couple and their teenaged daughter, and, even here, hosted the comings and goings of students of the Dharma. His poems from that period are poignant. When I think of what he went through at our hands to bring us Zen, and the openness, wisdom and compassion with which he met his suffering and that of his persecutors, I lay my heart in his palm and weep.



In Mumon’s words, as translated by Nyogen, “*If you want to hold up the gate of a falling house, you must climb a mountain of swords with bare feet.*”

For the first half of the century, Senzaki taught small groups of followers in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Among them was Ruth Strout McCandless, with whom he later translated and published *The Iron Flute*, a collection of 100 Zen koans, as well as *Buddhism and Zen*. During these early decades he also struck up a deep and abiding long-distance friendship with our Dharma grandfather Soen Nakagawa Roshi, hence Nyogen’s intimate home in our Chobo-Ji lineage. Because of this connection, Eido Roshi inherited Nyogen’s writings and calligraphy. Mid-century, Nyogen met a young Buddhist named Paul Reps and together they produced one of the most beloved of all Zen classics, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*.

My favorite story in the book is Senzaki’s visit to a Sufi master. A friend set up the meeting between the two. After enjoying a pleasant and leisurely meal, Sufi asked Zenji, “What is Zen?” Senzaki sat quietly regarding Sufi, without uttering a syllable. Imagining Nyogen to be at a loss for words, the kindly friend and Sufi wife stepped into the breach with a flurry of explanations and proffered articles. Sufi and Zenji regarded each other still, both slowly beginning to smile. The wife’s shoulders perhaps began to ease, the friend’s explanations trickled to nothing. A forgotten paper fluttered to the floor.

“I see Zen in you,” Nyogen said, at last.

“And I see Sufi in you!” replied the Master.

About his sojourn in our land, Nyogen Senzaki says, “Essentially, what I am doing is tsuyubarai: cultivating the soil... I am now sowing some inconspicuous Dharma seeds, and I will likewise end my life in this country inconspicuously. But I am convinced that fifty years from now, the seeds I have sown will sprout, and true Buddhadharma will shine in America.” And so it has.

It has been said that music depends entirely upon the silence between the notes. Perhaps Nyogen’s Zen is best found in the silence between his words.

Nyogen Zenji’s words cultivate and till. But his silence, so eloquent, slips from page upon page in this beautiful book, through the reader’s fingertips, lodging in the bones to germinate from the marrow, twine around the heart and flower in the veins. A century after he first stepped upon our soil, many grateful fingers pluck the Dharma fruit he passed on so carefully from our Zen ancestors. Bodhisattvas! Where will *you* plant this Western seed?

“*My wish as a Buddhist monk is to have no permanent place to stay, but to be like a lone cloud floating freely in the blue sky... In fact, I am passing away every day. What you saw in me yesterday, you cannot see anymore... As long as you dwell in such an understanding of anatta, the principle of non-duality, the friendship between you and me will be a Buddhist one.*” — Nyogen Senzaki Zenji

Rev. AnShin Thomas [www.zaltho.org](http://www.zaltho.org) will be visiting Seattle again and staying at Chobo-Ji with his Inji Kenshin from Nov. 7-10. They both plan to attend our mini-sesshin Sunday, Nov. 8th, and then Anshin will give a Dharma Talk that evening after zazen (6:30-7:30 p.m.) beginning at around 7:35 p.m. Please invite people that might be interested in AnShin's work and perspective.



## Chobo-Ji Schedule

### Introduction to Zazen

Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

### Zazen

Monday - Friday, 5:30 a.m., 1 hr.

Saturdays, 6:30 - 8:00 a.m.

Sundays, 6:30 p.m., 1 hr.

Monday & Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., 1 hr.

### Dharma Talks

1st and 3rd Sundays, 7:30 p.m., 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 a.m., Sundays:

11/8, 12/13, 2/14, 3/14, 4/11, 4/25, 5/16...

Rohatsu Sesshin: 1/2/10 - 1/10/10

Spring Sesshin: 3/20/10 - 3/26/10

Summer Sesshin: 6/26/10 - 7/2/10

Autumn Sesshin: 9/25/10 - 10/1/10

**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)



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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