



Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

Autumn colors abound. I find that my own practice is settling with the falling leaves. It has been a rough few months, so I am very grateful for the settling now taking place both inside and outside this physical form. In early September, there was a very important meeting of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) in New York City; at this meeting much was shared and much was set in motion. From this meeting Eido Shimano Roshi the founding Abbot of Shobo-Ji and Dai Bosatsu Kongo-Ji found inspiration to write a public letter of apology to the Sangha, which I have included in this issue of Plum Mountain News.

Since the more recent revelations of ethical misconduct by Eido Roshi arose in late June the following steps have been taken: Eido Roshi resigned from the ZSS Board and stopped taking new students in July. Eido Roshi will resign as Abbot effective Dec. 8th of this year. My Dharma Sister, Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat will be installed as the new Abbot, January 1st. In 2011, access to Eido Roshi will be limited to well-informed senior students who choose to work with him during restricted dokusan opportunities under the supervision and discretion of the new Abbot and ZSS Board. The ZSS Board is slowly getting all accounts in order for a complete 2011 forensic audit. Shinge Roshi and I have been regularly consulting with several of our colleagues and we are actively working on new bylaws for the ZSS. We are shifting the structure of the ZSS Ethics Committee to be a committee of three, at least two of these members will be outside volunteer professionals who will investigate any further or past ethical complaints and report to the ZSS Board for action as necessary. I am confident the new administration headed by Shinge Roshi will be able to move ZSS fully into the 21st century, evolving the culture of the training into what is

needed for our time. Former Chobo-Ji students now training in New York continue to be instrumental in supporting and leading changes from within the organization. I am very grateful for their tireless efforts.

I will next be traveling to Dai Bosatsu for Rohatsu Sesshin (Dec. 1-8), which will be the last ZSS sesshin led by Eido Roshi in his fifty years of training generations of Zen students in the West. John Daikan Green will be traveling with me for this historic event, and we will, of course, extend everyone's greetings to the former Chobo-Ji students training there.

Autumn Sesshin (9/25 – 10/1) here at Chobo-Ji was just a little smaller than usual and experienced a couple of bumps that appeared to me to be partly caused by ripples of karmic distress arising from events occurring in New York;

Manager), assisted by Genko Ni-Osho, and organized our many samu (work) assignments and projects. Sally Zenka Metcalf took her first turn as Jikijitsu (Time Keeper), and Scott Ishin Stolnack kept the beat as Densu (Chant Leader). Charlie Taishin Blackman served as Jisha (Tea Server) and helped train Emily Ross and Jonathan Schwartz. Emily and Jonathan concluded sesshin by doing Jukai (Dharma Precept Ceremony), which we will say more about later in this issue. Last but not least, Josie Seishin Backhouse served in her first Chobo-Ji post as Inji, Abbot assistant. It is always a pleasure to be nurtured by those who freely give their time and energy to serve this Sangha. I want to give special thanks to Genko Ni-Osho for her inspiring Dharma Talk on second day, serving whisked green tea on middle day, and being a pillar of support in all that she does for the Sangha.

October 15-17, I traveled to Doylestown, Pennsylvania to do my annual sesshin with George Lyons Sensei at the Bucks County Aikido Dojo. I believe this was my seventh year of helping to lead this event, and with each year we all can feel the practice



demonstrating once again that we are all seamlessly interdependent on one another. The Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook) for this sesshin was Carolyn Josen Stevens; she was significantly and lovingly assisted by Diane JoAn Ste. Marie and Rev. Daitetsu Hull. Edward Daiki Cadman served as Shika (Host/

deepening. There were 20 people in attendance. Patti Lyons and Robert Ryugan Savoca Sensei were the primary Tenzos and served up the best food I've ever had at sesshin, and that is saying a lot, as I am a great fan of Chobo-Ji's many excellent cooks. Rodger Tozan Park Sensei assisted as Jikijitsu

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during dokusan and he, along with Coryl Crane Sensei from San Diego, helped anchor the sitting and Aikido weapons training.

The first weekend of November, I traveled to Walla Walla with Josen to do my semiannual half-day sit with Walla Walla Dharma Sangha at the Vista Hermosa Retreat Center. Janaki and Chris Howard were our hosts for the weekend. There were 20 people in attendance. I also was fortunate to have a two-hour sit and dialogue with the Washington State Penitentiary inmates on Friday, and an animated talk with over 40 Whitman College students and community members on Sunday; both of these events were hosted by Sonja Aikens.

Beyond the subjects already mentioned, this issue has many additional offerings, including Genko's column "Thoughts on Practice," and offerings by Zenka and Steve Hanson. You will find a Horton Street update and be able to read our fund appeal letter to assist with the remodel and expansion. We have a great team assembled and I am very confident that we will all be delighted with the development when it is complete. To help with our fundraising efforts, a sometimes Chobo-Ji participant and artist, Mike Hoffman, will be offering a new painting to be raffled. You can see a color picture by viewing this issue on line. Finally be sure to read the details about Chobo-Ji's upcoming Rohatsu Sesshin, January 2nd through 10th; please send a deposit soon if you are planning to attend.

I wish everyone a happy holiday season. Please note that we will be having our customary New Years Day Potluck and chanting service beginning at 10AM. Please come and help ring in the New Year by attending and sharing a meal with our community. The Zen House will be closed for public sitting from November 25-27 and from December 25 – January 10th. May your autumn be colorful and joyous.

With gassho,

Genjo

Eido Roshí Resigns

September 7, 2010

Dear Friends,

I would like to acknowledge the pain and unnecessary suffering you went through in your hearts due to my faults. I have a profound feeling of remorse for my actions.

This August marked my 50th anniversary in the United States. During this half-century I have received so much from people the world over. Over time, I took your kindness for granted and arrogance grew in my heart. As a result, my sensitivity to feel the pain of others decreased. Now, as I reflect on the past, I realize how many people's feelings and trust in me were hurt by my words and deeds. Please accept my heartfelt apology.

My mother was the person who encouraged me the most to follow Buddha's path. Tomorrow is her memorial day, as she passed away on September 8, 1986. Hearing her voice, I have decided to observe my 50th anniversary in the United States by stepping down from my position as abbot of the Zen Studies Society on the last day of Rohatsu sesshin in 2010.

Even though I carry sadness in my heart, as a Buddhist monk, my vow to practice will not end. In order to preserve the Dharma legacy, ensure the training of future teachers, and to purify my own karma, I must march on.

Gassho,
Eido Shimano

Thoughts on Practice

by Genko Ni-Osho

This time of year is New Years in the world of Japanese tea ceremony. The tearoom is cleaned from top to bottom. The tatami mats are taken up and rearranged, exposing the sunken hearth in the middle of the room. Everyone looks forward to the warmth generated by the hearth's larger charcoal fire used to heat water for tea, special meals are planned for tea gatherings, and in Japan the traditional old tea families will grind the first leaves of this year's tea harvest.

The feeling in the winter tearoom is very different from that of the more formal Chinese style brazier used during the warmer months. Flower arranging principles change as the garden changes. Even the smell of the tearoom is different, as the austere sandalwood incense is set aside for the spicy complexity of kneaded incense used in the sunken hearth.

This week I'll introduce my tea students to the hearth; I'm really looking forward to it. And with my tea classmates we'll hold a special gathering as well, with everyone giving extra effort towards making it memorable. In looking through all my tea papers to find a particular recipe for our gathering, I came across a wonderful old article by Genshitsu Sen, the retired head of the Urasenke tea family. The subject is *aisatsu*, or greetings. I'm so glad I took time to stop and read it again, with a deeper understanding than my initial reading years ago.

In this culture we tend to think of greetings as limited to Hello, Goodbye, How are you. *Aisatsu* is a great deal more than greetings in this sense. In tea, each time there is an exchange between host and guest, it is *aisatsu*. Dr. Sen reminds us that *ai* means to push open or become close to, and *satsu* is the state of being imminent. *Aisatsu* means that in each exchange, we should open our hearts, recognize our common humanity, and build mutual trust. Proper *aisatsu* is as important to tea practice as the stylized movements used to make and serve the tea.

All of that may make it sound as though everything said in tea has some great import. In fact, most of the phrases and

exchanges are very utilitarian: How's the tea? Very good, thank you. Who made this teabowl? Genki Roshi did. Do you want another bowl of tea? No, thank you. Excuse me for going ahead of you. And so on. Each of these is considered to be *aisatsu*.

As a Zen student, it is easy to make the leap from the prescribed posture and movements we use in the zendo to the prescribed posture and movements in the tearoom as a practice of mindful awareness. Cleaning the tearoom, caring for the utensils, preparing the meals in the proper way are all easily seen as practice, and in fact can help us greatly in making the transition from the cushion to daily work activities. Of course there is a progression we go through, beginning with very self-conscious activity, never quite focusing on one movement wholeheartedly, as we try to remember what we are supposed to do next.

To learn the movements in our bodies so that they no longer require thought takes years, and many repetitions, for most tea students. And once you reach this point, there is a risk of coasting along as a "good enough" tea practitioner, never moving beyond the level of physical competence. In fact, this is considered just the first step in true tea practice. The next step is learning to make appropriate creative adjustments when going "off script."

And finally we move past the stages of proper form and creative adjustment to a level of practice that transcends both. At this level one does not need fancy props or a beautiful tearoom – a single rough teabowl and campfire will do, out under the trees. The phrase that comes to mind is from the Admonition of Daito Kokushi: "If you find someone in a forsaken place who lives in a hut with a leaky roof and who makes do with a few discarded vegetables cooked in a cracked pot, but who is fully aware of the wonder of things. . ." Of course initially we all aspire to this level of practice, but it is well beyond that place and time, when we have forgotten all aspirations.

Coming back to the notion of *aisatsu*, just as the movements in tea are tightly prescribed, most of the exchanges in tea are set in terms of who speaks when, and even in terms of the specific formula of words used. For those who are not native speakers of Japanese, learning these phrases can take

an inordinate amount of time and effort. Often even native speakers simply learn the phrases and parrot them back at the appropriate times. This first stage of learning the phrases and when to use them can take years.

Just as with set physical movements, set phrases free up the practitioner to focus ever more deeply on the true purpose of the phrase or movement – to allow the host and guest to meet heart to heart, with no barriers or ego involved. This is the opportunity each and every time we exchange *aisatsu*. The exchange can be new and fresh from the heart, even though the words have been repeated again and again, even though the topic is mundane.

For those of us who are not native speakers of Japanese, these phrases may never become second nature no matter how hard we try. That's OK, use English. The important point is that the phrases, in whatever language, be used in the appropriate time and way. Once we are well-grounded in "appropriate time and way," we can move on to the stage of creative adjustment, and finally to the stage of transcending both form and adjustment.

Among the steps of the Eightfold Path, the focus of my own personal practice right now is Right Speech. It's a big topic, rather daunting. Much of the time we recognize Right Speech by its absence. Re-reading Dr. Sen's words about *aisatsu* inspires me to approach the practice of Right Speech from a slightly different direction – respecting even these most humble exchanges made time and again on a daily basis. This is the practice that enables us to move freely and spontaneously in more complicated circumstances, and finally to move beyond self and other, host and guest entirely. With the fresh start of the new tea year, I look forward to renewed commitment to the deep practice of *aisatsu*.

Residential Practice Center Update

Compiled by Dee Seishun Endelman

The design team is still meeting regularly to work on details such as lighting, floor materials, kitchen finishes, courtyard patio materials and trim. The committee will meet with the Chobo-Ji Board on November 20 to review plans and obtain Board support. Construction plans for permitting purposes should be complete by December 10.

Daiki Cadman has done another parking survey requested by the City for the conditional use permit. The final submission to the City for the Administrative Conditional Use Permit was made November 10th. We expect to hear by the end of November if it will be granted as submitted. After we are notified, the decision will be published for a two-week public comment period. If there are no appeals, then the permit will be issued. This brings us to mid-December.

The cost estimate for the remodel going forward is approximately \$500,000. This figure includes an assumption that some of the apartments in the building might be vacant during construction. This is approximately \$150,000 more than we were originally anticipating. This is because the City required more improvements to the property than we originally expected. However, this is not all bad, as we will be ahead of where we thought we would be at the completion of the remodel.

With a combination of two new significant donation pledges from two Dharma Angels and already-anticipated bridge loans, we will be able to cover the majority of this additional amount. However, to be prudent Chobo-Ji Board has authorized a fundraising campaign to raise an additional \$50,000 for construction.

Work is continuing on drafting ethics, practice and residential policies.

Fundraising Letter

Dear Sangha Members and Friends:

Thank you so much for all of your support and good wishes as Chobo-Ji embarks on its expansion at the new location on Beacon Hill.

For months the design committee and board have worked with our architect and construction firm to express concretely our collective vision for the new Horton Street zendo space. At this time we are waiting for the city's final word on parking requirements, and look forward to sharing the finished drawings with you as we embark on the construction phase of the project. This is a very exciting time!

Now we are asking for your further financial assistance with a final push to complete the zendo phase of the project.

The cost estimate for zendo and overall remodel construction going forward is approximately \$500 thousand. In addition, about \$100 thousand has already been spent on design, demolition, and other preparations for construction. We have included in our estimate the possibility that some of the apartments in the building may be vacant during construction.

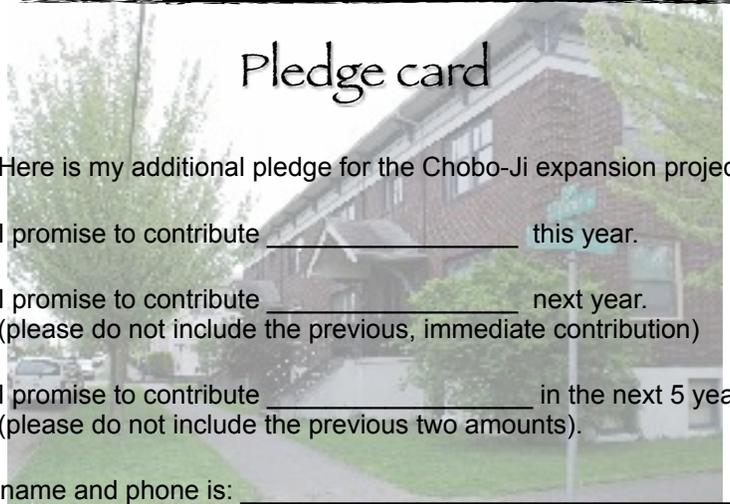
We are very grateful to those of you who have made and paid pledges for the building project so far. And we are delighted to report that recently two significant pledges were made from people who deeply appreciate Chobo-Ji's practice and plans for the future. If you are unsure of what you have pledged, please feel free to contact our treasurer, Josen Carolyn Stevens, for that information. We are counting on each and every one of your pledges to make our dream a reality.

Most of the construction cost will be covered by the sale of our current building and your pledges or contributions that have already been made. However, about \$50 thousand more is needed to achieve the current remodel plans. Please consider what you might do now to help with this. Please fill out the pledge card, and return it as soon as you are able.

Once the final permits are in hand, construction should begin in January. If you would like to see the drawings of the plans we have developed, please see me or give me a call so that I might go over them in person with you. We will keep you informed and look forward to sitting with you in the new space.

With gassho,

Genjo Marinello, Abbot,
and the Chobo-Ji Board



Pledge card

Here is my additional pledge for the Chobo-Ji expansion project.

I promise to contribute _____ this year.

I promise to contribute _____ next year.
(please do not include the previous, immediate contribution)

I promise to contribute _____ in the next 5 years.
(please do not include the previous two amounts).

My name and phone is: _____

The Mumonkan

Case 30 - Mind is Buddha

Koan

Daibai once asked Baso, “What is Buddha?” Baso answered, “Mind is Buddha”.

Mumon’s Commentary

If you can at once grasp “it,” you are wearing Buddha clothes, eating Buddha food, speaking Buddha words and living Buddha life; you are a Buddha yourself. Though this may be so, Daibai has misled a number of people and let them trust a scale with a stuck pointer. Don’t you know that one has to rinse out his mouth for three days if he has uttered the word “Buddha”? If he/she is a real Zen person, he/she will stop one’s ears and rush away when he/she hears “Mind is Buddha.”

Mumon’s Poem

*A fine day under the blue sky!
Don’t foolishly look here and there.
If you still ask “What is Buddha?”
It is like pleading your innocence
while clutching stolen goods.*

Zen Master Baso (b. 709) was one of the most prolific Zen Masters, with a great number of distinguished Dharma descendants. His teacher was Nangaku Ejo, who was a student of the 6th Patriarch. Two of Baso’s most well-known descendants are Nansen and Hyakujo. Following Hyakujo comes Obaku and then Rinzai.

It is said that Nangaku first encountered Baso doing zazen and asked, “Reverend Sir, what are you doing here?” Baso said, “I’m doing zazen.” “Well, what do you hope to accomplish by doing zazen?” Baso replied, “I’m only trying to be a Buddha.” Hearing this, Nangaku walked away and picked up a brick in the garden and started to polish it with a grinding stone in front of his hut. Baso said, “What are you trying to accomplish by polishing that brick?” Nangaku said, “I’m trying to make a mirror by polishing this brick.” Baso asked, “Can a piece of brick be made into a mirror by polishing?” Then Nangaku said, “Can one become a Buddha by doing zazen?” This

retort, which implies that zazen is not the way to become a Buddha, caught Baso by surprise. How slow or well you count your breath is not the way to become a Buddha, and how earnestly you practice is not the way to become a Buddha. We all think these are important—and they are—but they are not the means to become a Buddha.

“What should I do then?” said Baso. Nangaku replied, “It is like putting a cart to an ox. When the cart does not move, is it better to beat the cart or the ox?” Baso was unable to answer and Nangaku kindly explained to him, “You can practice zazen to try to become a Buddha by sitting. If you really want to know about zazen, know that Zen is not in the sitting or lying. If you want to become a Buddha by sitting, know that Buddha has no fixed form. Never discriminate in living in the Dharma of non-attachment. If you try to become a Buddha by sitting, know that you are killing the Buddha.” You are killing your practice if you’re trying to become a Buddha. If you become attached to the form of sitting, striving or breathing as the answer, you can never attain Buddhahood. And why? It comes to the title of this koan, “Mind is Buddha.”

In reading Nyogen Senzaki’s commentary on this koan, he put it this way, “The actual mind is the actual Buddha.” Your mind right now is the actual mind of Buddha. When you realize that your mind is already Buddha, what is there to polish, attain, grasp or gain with zazen or striving? You may say, “Well, why then am I coming to sesshin? It seems like a lot of pain and striving with nothing to gain.” Our efforts do help cultivate the soil of our true nature and from our true nature springs the insight that we are already Buddha. Anyone encountering this realization says, “Oh! This is already so! It’s always been true! Even my striving, struggle, confusion, ignorance and delusions are Buddha, too!” We realize that what we have been seeking is already ours from the beginning! No attainment is necessary. All that striving to realize that it didn’t take any striving at all. Your actual mind is already identical, or perhaps it is better to say seamless with so-called Buddha-Mind.

I agree that we don’t often have this clarity. But any time we do get clear it’s completely obvious that this little mind, floating up here in this noggin, is identical with Buddha

Mind, seamless with the Mind that embraces the universe. Little Mind and Big Mind are not separate. There are no fences or barriers, just as a leaf on a branch is in a seamless continuum with the tree and the root.

Another useful metaphor is found in the model of the seven chakras. The root chakra is always connected to the crown chakra. Though it’s true that the pathways are not always clear, they are always connected. There’s never any immutable fence between one chakra and another any more than there can be any real boundary between the top of your head and your tailbone, simply a continuum. However, it is true that they are not always in alignment or perfectly open. There’s nothing to attain, but indeed we may feel that we are not entirely clear. In which case we may think that if only we could generate enough “heat” perhaps we could force steam up and down all those chakras so that they become at least temporarily clear, free of any impediments. I think many of us think about our arduous Zen practice in this way, that it produces a kind of cleansing heat or steam to clear or clean us out. And when we are not feeling particularly open, aware or enlightened, I think we approach practice in this way. But anyone who awakens to his or her true nature will feel, “Oh! Nothing was needed whatsoever. No matter what the condition, everything has been and always will be shining. This very mind is the mind of Buddha. How could it be any other way?”

Mumon immediately warns us, “Don’t get a stuck pointer.” Don’t say to yourself, “I have learned or at one time experienced that Mind is Buddha. Now that I get it, I don’t need to train anymore; what a relief!” If you hold on to any mantra, even one as sharp as “Mind is Buddha,” it quickly becomes stale and useless. It’s like chewing an old piece of chewing gum and it becomes really tasteless and has no benefit other than it exercises your jaw, “mind is Buddha, mind is Buddha, mind is Buddha...” On the other hand, if we learn to live it and experience what this mantra is pointing at, then you can never exhaust it. With maturity we come to understand that to manifest Mind is Buddha, our whole day must become practice. Ordinary everyday life must be lived as the enlightened life. It requires more than twice daily zazen for our

Continued on next page...

whole day to be practice. How we enter a room, pick up a teacup, brush our teeth or go to the bathroom becomes our practice, even how we lay our head down on our pillow at night. When everything is practice, then we are living Mind is Buddha. Only then do we have the opportunity to manifest in this life awakened Heart Mind. We cannot limit our practice to zazen and sesshin.

When we wake up to This, then indeed we realize that whatever clothes we're wearing, a t-shirt or a fancy robe, it doesn't matter, these are Buddha's clothes. And whatever food we are eating is Buddha food. And whatever words we speak are Buddha words and this is Buddha's life. Though this may be so, if you get stuck on the words "Mind is Buddha" or "This is Buddha's life" you will find that such formulas are shallow and soon useless. However, Daibai, another of Baso's Dharma Heir's, made this his personal mantra and never exhausted it. How was this possible? It was the same for Zen Master Gutei, raising one finger to all questions. But I can hear Mumon warning, "Don't imitate Daibai or Gutei." I suppose if it's as alive for you as it was for Daibai then go for it. But as I have said, such mantras can easily become like an old piece of chewing gum, tasteless and useless. The same can be said for Gutei's finger, tasteless and useless, unless it's really alive each time.

There's another story about Daibai. When he was told that Baso had changed his tune and proclaimed "No Mind, No Buddha" he did not say, Argh... Now where does that leave me? I thought I had my mantra, and now I'm confused and must change it to No Mind, No Buddha." No, Daibai said, "Well, our old master may say, 'No mind, No Buddha' but I say, 'Mind is Buddha.'" The attendant went back to Baso and said, "Hey, your dharma heir, he's still got a stuck pointer on Mind is Buddha. He hasn't joined the new club." Baso said, "Ah, Daibai (which means 'great plum' or 'great fruit'), has really ripened."

If we go around claiming that we are Buddha, we should wash out our mouths for three days. A real person of Zen will stop their ears whenever they hear the word "Buddha" let alone "My mind is Buddha." Towards the end of formal koan study one comes to Tozan's Five Ranks. There's actually never an end to koan study; if a Zen

Master doesn't give you a new koan, life will. However, I recently saw a t-shirt that says, "I passed Tozan's Five Ranks." I should get one! Errrrr...wash your mouth out Genjo! If we're truly actualizing an awakened life, there is no Buddha and there is no mind. Just sweeping, just chopping vegetables, just whisking tea, just the sound of rain falling. No Buddha, no mind, no passing Five Ranks.

Mumon's poem, "It's already a fine day under the blue sky." Regardless of whether the clouds allow you to see any blue sky, it's always a fine day under the blue sky. Even on a day like today, is it so hard to have faith that the blue sky is just above the clouds? Today is a blue-sky day even if we don't see it.

*Don't foolishly look here and there.
If you still ask "What is Buddha?..."
It is like pleading your innocence while
clutching stolen goods.*



Why? Because your actual mind is already Buddha. Very often, someone will come to dokusan or to my psychotherapy practice, and say, "I did such and such... but I *knew* better. There was a voice inside that said, 'You know better than that! Why are you doing that?'" And I ask, "Whose voice was speaking to you? Who was it that knew better?" *Who?* It was *your* inner voice that said, "You know better. You've been here, done that. Why are you doing what you know will come to no good?" Whose voice is it? I bet everyone here has had this experience. Actual mind is actual Buddha! Already present. You don't have to find it, it has always been your deep true nature. All you have to do is listen!

Nothing to polish, nothing to gain. Already present! What prevents us from listening?

Some people would say it's our discriminating mind. You've often heard me say that it's our instincts for survival that interfere with listening to what Quakers call the "still small voice." It all comes down to fear. We're fearful; we fear we will lose our independence or life. To become courageous and confident enough to listen to the inner voice of true insight is what we are really here doing on the cushion. We may falsely think that we are here to find or polish Buddha, or find enlightenment... no, all we must learn to do while on the cushion is to face and combust our fear. We are often so defended and isolated in our sense of self that we are not even aware of our fear. Yet, I tell you truly, it is because of our fear that we are stuck in our shell of ego awareness. When we penetrate our fear, and exhaust a bit of it, in a moment of clarity, we will say, "Oh, fear, sweet fear... you too have your place." It's important to know that the fire's hot, or to be fearful of the cliff edge. Fear has its place, but more often than not it interferes with our ability to break through our artificial barriers that separate self from other.

We are not here to find Buddha; Buddha Mind is not hiding. We are not here to polish Buddha Mind; *This* can't be polished. No question about it. None! So what are we doing here in sesshin? We are here to face and exhaust or combust our fear. For most, even the idea of doing sesshin brings up a lot of fear. Can I do it? Will I implode or explode? Will I breakdown or pass out? Will I die? Can I hang in there? Fear, fear, fear... even coming to sesshin is a courageous act. To show up for sesshin is to proclaim, "I'm going to face my fears."

Fortunately, more often than not people break through before they break down; therefore, they come back again, because they learn that sesshin works! Which is why I feel so grateful for finding this practice. I used to often think, "How did I end up here? This is all crazy! What kind of fool am I?" Even after I was ordained I thought, "How did I end up wearing these robes, what a big mistake, now people expect me to show up. What awful karmic history makes me go to sesshin after sesshin?" Before every sesshin, especially those at Dai Bosatsu, I was fearful, and

thought, “Will I be able to do it? Will I survive?” All these fears! Yet, time and again, I would find myself at sesshin, facing all of the fear, exhaustion and pain. And still I would ask, “How did I *choose* this? I must be nuts?”

And now I feel such gratitude. Thank goodness there are all these sesshins in my life! The fears and complications of being a human being easily get us tangled up time and again. So I’m thankful for sesshin after sesshin to help exhaust these fears and combust them as they come up. Therefore, my life remains relatively clear! Relatively!

These days, I know better than to seek enlightenment, Buddha Mind, True Insight or *kensho*, this kind of seeking is totally unnecessary and counter productive. It greatly interferes with practice. Now I realize I am here to sit and face and combust, exhaust or burn through the complications and fears that have arisen since last sesshin. There is absolutely nothing to attain. All that is needed is already out and freely available.

Zen Master Hakuin says, “The reason why we transmigrate through the six worlds is that we are lost in the darkness of ignorance.” What is the “darkness of ignorance” and why are we lost in it? We are lost in our own inner entanglements; because of this there is often no unobstructed path from our root chakra to our crown chakra. We are tangled up by our competing desires, preferences and repulsions; this tangle does feel like the darkness of ignorance and we do get very, very lost in it.

Please bear with me while I offer my interpretation of the seven-chakra system of conceptualizing the flow of bodily energy or *ki*: The root chakra is like planting your tailbone deep into the earth. When a tree is

deeply planted into the dark, dark earth, we don’t know where the root leaves off and the planet begins. As we open further to this vastness, the experience leads to a deep realization and vocalization of “Muuuuuu.”

Then comes the sacral or spleen chakra, located below the navel. When this chakra opens, one may feel a lot of sexual energy. This libidinal energy can be used in lots of different ways, but often it brings us to a new orbit of sexual expression and freedom. Remember, that sexual intimacy itself is a kind of union; when the sacral chakra is wide open you are likely to experience “spiritual” union, where the artificial barriers between self and other melt away.



Autumn Sesshin 2010 Participants

The third chakra is located from the navel to the solar plexus and corresponds to the *hara* or *tanden*. When clear, this is where what Zen Master Rinzai calls True Insight arises. An insight might be something as simple and mundane as realizing where I left my keys, or as profound as a new understanding of the nature of reality. One has the feeling that insight bubbles up from our gut. Insight does not come from rationally figuring or analyzing a problem or a koan; it just pops up naturally and spontaneously after putting the question to our gut.

Then, there’s the heart chakra. When wide open, we will experience that everyone is our brother and sister. Compassion blossoms when energy freely flows through the heart chakra, and we easily develop a

caring attitude towards all creatures great and small, animate and inanimate.

When the chakras are clear from the root to the throat chakra, we’re able to begin to speak the Dharma, often without saying anything. As we find our voice, we can freely speak and share our truth with others without any attachment to some kind of agenda. At such a time, doing what needs to be done appears to take no effort at all.

As open clear energy flows all the way to the brow or third eye chakra, it becomes easy to see through the words and the metaphors associated with the language of koans. This is a fabulous way to use this discriminating noggin of ours. When our head feels open and free, we can easily play with metaphors that juggle the relative, absolute and transcendent perspectives. As open energy flows up from the root, it can stimulate a deep sense of union and new insight; mix this with feelings of compassion and we discover that we find our voice about what is essential. Once our freely flowing energy

opens the third eye, we have no trouble at all getting our message across in a simple, clear, direct manner, using the fewest words necessary.

The seventh chakra is known as the crown chakra. When all seven chakras are open, you will feel camaraderie with the saints, sages, and ancient masters of all times. If you’ve been working with Zen practice, you will feel a particular camaraderie with the Zen lineage. From the crown of our head we connect to the stream of the collective unconscious.

Our fears animate our many attachments and defenses; when we face and exhaust our fears, our defenses crumble, as does our

Continued on next page...

attachment to this precious temporary life. Through this process of combusting our fears, our chakras begin to slowly open, sometimes bursting open with sudden breakthroughs that we call kenshos. Remember there is nothing to find or do, just sit, breath and listen, accepting whatever we find and releasing the knots as they come up, one breath at a time. We don't need to make anything happen; in the readiness of time, we naturally start to feel clearer, more open, with more energy. As all the portals from the root (Muuu) to the crown freely open, we learn that we have been forever a part of the unending ancient flow propagating our lineage.

Now I will speak for a moment about my Dharma Father, Eido Shimano Roshi. Despite all his shortcomings and blind spots, which we all have, he is a great Zen Master. I say this because for many, including myself, he has unquestionably been a perfect foil and catalyst for growth. He never settles for anything less than dynamic true insight and clear recognition of what is real. Nevertheless, he has repeatedly yielded to an addiction that has caused much consternation in the Sangha. All addictions are an attempt to fill some early developmental gap. Every addiction—whether to cigarettes, work, sex, drugs, alcohol or anything else you can name—is a kind of poultice that provides temporary relief to what feels like a bottomless pit of early need. I think nearly everyone at one time or another has suffered some form of addiction. Unfortunately, Eido Roshi's addiction to the sexual realm has cost him much and psychically injured many. It can't be denied that he has greatly nurtured and greatly hindered the transmission of the Dharma to the West.

Just because we can get clear sometimes—and Eido Roshi acts from that clarity most of the time—doesn't mean that we will never again get tangled up in old wounds and entrenched patterns of behavior that will harm others and ourselves. My old wounds and entrenched patterns have hurt this Sangha, there's no way around it. Recognition of his own entrenched patterns of inappropriate harmful behavior has caused Eido Roshi to resign as abbot, effective on December 8th of this year. This is a great loss for him and for many of the senior students he has brought along so far. But sometimes a leader's stuck patterns can be so egregious or intractable that

withdrawing from leadership is the only possible course.

When all the chakras are clear for a time, we get a great boost in confidence. However, confidence that remains unchecked becomes arrogance. Arrogance can easily mask whatever karmic knots remain unresolved in our history. It is natural and appropriate to feel confidence from being bright, open and clear for a time, but be forewarned that this same confidence may mask our remaining shortcomings, even one as serious as an addiction. So, what kind of lesson can we learn from this? Watch out! Even if all your chakras are open and freely flowing with *ki* (energy) and you pass Tozan's Five Ranks, never for a moment think you are completed or done with your karmic history! Watch out! Confidence can morph into arrogance, which we may use to hide from our remaining attachments, defenses and delusions.

Stubborn karmic knots are lurking in all of us; we must learn to be vigilant in our quest to recognize them, and over time, squarely face them before we can hope to combust, release, or at least compensate for them. As complicated, numerous and mixed up as the pieces may be, none are missing. Thirty years ago, at the time of my ordination, Genki Takabayashi Roshi told me it would take 30 years of practice to gain maturity. However, he also taught me that wherever we are in our journey, we are just beginning. We live in an expanding evolving universe, the Dharma is naturally blossoming all the time; even so, our species—as I often say—is still in its adolescence. We have much to be thankful for and much to be cautious about. Please be vigilant and go straight on with your practice and training.

With gassho,

Genjo

Closing Incense Poem

Autumn Sesshin 2010

*Where is the Jewel of Zen,
At the bottom of Puget Sound?
Warm rain washes the sky clear.*

Zen Chakras?

Thoughts of Steve Hanson

I don't believe in chakras. I don't believe in astrology either. Nevertheless it's obvious that the sun, earth, and moon have a grip on our bodies and souls, and that each season and hour of the day awakens different parts of us. I imagine the sun, moon and earth stirring us like spoons stirring the ingredients in a mixing bowl. And I imagine the chakra system as one of the innumerable ways to divide up our capacities and inner life, just like there are innumerable ways to divide up a pie.

Here is what I recall of Genjo Osho's Teisho that he gave on the seven chakras during Autumn sesshin:

- The Root Chakra: Located at the base of spine or perineum. It's where you meet the earth and the connection continues down until you don't know where you leave off and the earth picks up. Corresponds to Joshu's Mu.
- Spleen: The source of sexual energy. When this chakra opens you can feel a lot of libidinous power, freedom and union.
- Guts: The opening of this chakra provides our intuitive sense of truth. Corresponds to Zen Master Rinzai's "True Insight."
- Heart: When this opens you feel compassion for all beings.
- Throat: When this opens you feel confident to speak and act.
- Mind: When this opens you can mix metaphors, answer any koan, find the words to speak precisely and accurately.
- Crown: When this opens you feel a continuity with the ancient sages, an eternally unfolding series of sages.

So I speculated what would closed chakras look like?

1. Root: When this closes we feel separation from the Earth and the horror of solipsism, or, if you like, we experience the Earth as Hell.

2. Spleen: It's hard to summarize what a closed spleen chakra would be, since there are so many ways for sexual energy to go wrong. But perhaps closure here creates predatory, instead of uniting, sexual behavior.

3. Guts: When this closes you lose your intuitive compass and can become attached to false insights. Or you might take this chakra much more broadly. The guts digest and sort out nurturing stuff from non-nurturing stuff and so they are our primary interface with the outside world. In this sense, the guts are a more important interface than the skin and senses, since they make our physical being and growth possible. So in this sense, a closed gut chakra might result in a broad based shriveling and shutting down.

4. Heart: When this closes you become susceptible to being cruel.

5. Throat: When this closes your speech become fearful and halting, you might be embarrassed to show yourself.

6. Mind: When this closes you might indulge in chicanery and sophistry and other forms of twisted thinking.

7. Crown: Genjo has suggested that a closed crown chakra might result in being possessed or attached to an archetype or an ideal.

We might apply this system in Zen practice by scanning the chakras, checking in at each one and asking, 'How open or closed is this chakra? Is it opening or closing right now?' And, since we are free to divide up the pie anyway we want, we might look for other chakras. For instance, how do the lungs figure into this system, or the hands?

The Wisdom of Insecurity

By Sally Zenka Metcalf

Love is the organizing and unifying principle which makes the world a universe and the disintegrated mass a community.
- Alan Watts

Recently a friend, observing my uncertainties, recommended *The Wisdom of Insecurity*. Written in 1951, it's a throwback to the era of "God is Dead." But it's by Alan Watts, so I was game.

To understand my insecurity, it is useless to face it, Watts assures me; rather I must be it. This understanding is not found in society's sources of assurance: Planning, control, laudable concepts, ingenious ideas, and righteous judgments. These supposed panaceas to insecurity are the problem, not the solution.

According to Watts, the real reason why life can be utterly exasperating is not because of facts such as death, pain, or fear, but instead because we circle, buzz, and writhe trying to get the "I" out of the experience of these realities. Our pain is constantly re-stimulated by the effort to get away from it. We are lost in the fearful delusion of a separated self we created.

On the other hand, "the more we're forced to admit we actually live in the real world [present experience], the more we feel ignorant and insecure." This presence, though void of certainty, births the unified and loving mind.

Some years ago, I read about calling upon past Zen masters for aid; so, innocently, I asked the late Soen Roshi for help with my practice. That night dreadful nightmares ruled. Startled out of sleep, I had a waking dream of Soen Roshi striding, unannounced, through my front door, trailing darkness and smoke. His eyes! There is a Dai Bosatsu story of him keeping someone out of his room because he'd been working in the Hell realms and his cell was filled with hungry devils. When he entered my house, it felt as if they still clung to him.

The next morning, I shook off the ugliness of the night over breakfast, convincing myself it was all my imagination. Then my daughter came into the kitchen looking exhausted. In the restless dark, she'd woken from her own nightmares and felt a frightening presence in the house. Astonished, I told her what I'd done.

Before that night, I seemed to myself a relatively fearless person. Then Soen Roshi put his powerful finger tip on the very place where I am craziest. Is there an acupuncture point for terror? Gradually, Genjo Osho has brought me to see the lash-taught thread of fear running throughout my life. He's revealed the veiled mechanisms I use to hide this insecurity, not just from others, but from myself.

In the grip of this fear, if I could just do enough, well enough, fast enough—something truly helpful, or courageous, or funny enough—I would be saved. Unfortunately, "enough" is like holding your arm straight in front of you and trying to catch up with your hand. And what is enough? There's no Table of Equivalents where it's clearly defined. Pursuing it leads to inordinate doing. Ultimately, resources exhausted, failure is inevitable.

I can only imagine what this pattern of behavior looks like from the outside. It must be extremely frustrating to deal with. It certainly is from the inside. The temptation to judge me would be almost irresistible. But Osho kept his steady patience.

"Zenka, put out less for afternoon Sarei." I gulped. "Yes, Osho." But each day he asked me to put out even less. Seeing the fear in my face, he spoke with kindness. "Sally, no one is unhappy with what you served. I'm simply asking you to do less as part of your practice." So I did. And I didn't die.

Seems simple enough, you say. Just put out some chips and dip! Yes, but your salvation doesn't depend on it. "Why does yours?," you ask, incredulous. Not wishing to go into my history, I'll say what a little girl once told me about her father. "He doesn't hit me with his fists. He hits me with his words; and it hurts just as bad." The habit of running from that dies hard.

Continued on next page...

Curious how we can do so-called good things, but for the wrong reasons; and can behave badly, but not for the ostensible reasons. This unraveling of gnarled fear isn't tidy. It's been attenuated by disappointments, estrangements and grief, and by the failure of every mechanism of self-preservation so carefully constructed from childhood. Failure for which, I've discovered to my regret, there is no solution. Osho applauded that discovery, but I don't like not having solutions.

Descriptors for this failure might be detachment or surrender. As Osho put it, sometimes enlightenment comes as illumination, other times it comes out from underneath a rock. Is this enlightenment by default?

With failure and surrender comes a sensation of falling—out of nowhere, into nothing, having nothing to lose—falling into the present maybe. The experience “that is always here...always dying...always being born...emerging from that complete unknown we call the future.”

I'm job hunting. This week I had both a first and second interview. I slept well, woke rested, dressed nicely, took the bus to town and, as I walked into the Exchange Building for my appointment, realized my hot-wired fear was absent. The space for it was there, just empty.

A friend recently asked what keeps me going back to Zen when it's dark and painful. Love would be the answer. It seems to always be found at the bottom of the darkness, as well as in the light. I can't sit through sesshin without loving the people there, even those I don't know.

From Watt's point of view, the undivided mind is itself love. Love “is the very essence and character of mind and becomes manifest in action when the mind becomes whole.” These awakenings, sometimes joyous and sometimes painful, are, for me, the mind becoming whole and falling deeper into love. There is the sometimes life-saving love for my teacher, and profound gratitude for his exemplary compassion, and his love for all of us struggling with our darkness. There is also my love for those who've been so patient with me; and my love for those who are impatient, too, because they push me

against what's crazy inside, forcing me to address it. So, in the end, I find a growing measure of peace.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Jan. 2nd - Jan. 10th, 2011

Please make your reservations by Dec. 18th. 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 Sunday, Jan. 2nd. Please be at the Zendo by 3:00 p.m. so that we can pack up and make carpool arrangements to Camp Indianola. Formal zazen will begin after a light dinner. Rohatsu ends around 10:00 a.m. on Monday, 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, 45 minute travel time. Or, you can take the new Seattle Light Rail for \$2.00 from the airport to Mt. Baker station. We should be able to pick you up from there. Or you can continue to the downtown terminus and transfer to either the 11, 10 or 43 bus lines to Capitol Hill.

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 larger tea and two smaller 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!

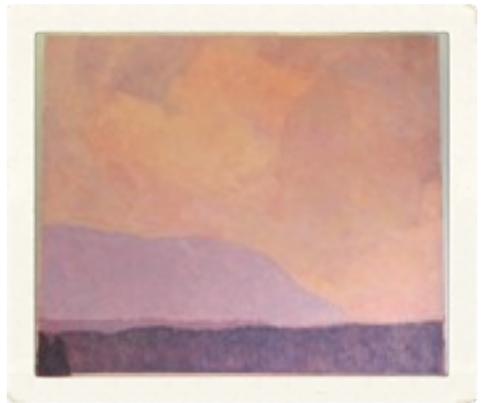
Morning wake-up bell is at 4:00 am. There are 30 min. breaks after each meal. Structured sitting will adjourn at around

10:30 PM the first two nights and goes later and later the following nights, yaza (personal sitting) follows this.

Art Raffle

Painting by Mike Hoffman

Mike Hoffman, an artist in Bellingham and friend of Chobo-Ji has offered one of his recent landscape paintings (pictured below, oil on panel, 27" x 30") as a donation for our expansion fund. His piece will be on display at the December 12th mini-sesshin. Each raffle ticket will cost \$20 and only 60 tickets will be available. The raffle will take place at the New Year's Day Potluck and the proceeds will go directly to the Horton St. Expansion Fund.



Autumn Rain

Jukai Ceremony

On the morning of October 1st, the last day of Autumn Sesshin 2010, Jonathan Schwartz and Emily Ross formally accepted the Buddhist precepts. They are both longtime followers of the Way and have practiced zazen for many years, including sesshins at Great Vow Monastery and here at Chobo-Ji.

Jonathan wrote in his Jukai application letter: “I can see that I am a Buddhist... I have found a teacher... I have found a home in the Chobo-Ji Sangha. I feel so much love and acceptance, and so much samadhi among this wonderful group of people...”

Emily wrote: "I am delighted to report that the time feels right for me to formally commit to giving my life to the Dharma. I ask to receive Jukai, that I may claim Chobo-Ji as my spiritual home. Home is precious place to me, one in which it is safe to love and grow, to develop and contribute..."

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

They then both received Rakus (symbolic pieces of the historical Buddha's robe worn around the neck) and a Dharma Name. A Dharma Name is selected by the abbot to be an inspiration for realizing one's full potential. Jonathan's new Dharma Name is ZenGyoku, which means Zen Jewel. Emily's is HoU, which means Dharma Rain.

Jukai candidates need to petition in writing at least one month prior to the ceremony, explaining why the time is ripe to take this step. Jukai candidates usually have attended regular zazen at Chobo-Ji for a minimum of six months (including at least two week-long sesshins), must be regular financial supporters of the temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha). In other words, they find themselves inspired by practice, feel that the training opens their Heart-Mind, and want to serve the temple community.

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 has been doing the activities he loves best: gardening, pottery, calligraphy, writing and cooking. One day we hope he will return to Seattle to live in our developing residential practice center.

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 Rinzai Zen School. Since Genki Roshi retired, Genjo Osho-san has continued his training with biannual retreats at Dai Bosatsu Kongo-Ji monastery in New York. On May 21, 2008, Eido Shimano Roshi confirmed Genjo Osho as a Rinzai line Dharma Heir.

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.
(most Sundays during Fall Intensive)

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: 11/14, 12/12, 2/13, 3/13, 4/10, 4/24, 5/15

Rohatsu Sesshin: 1/2/11 - 1/10/11
Spring Sesshin: 3/26/11 - 4/1/11
Summer Sesshin: 6/25/11 - 7/1/11
Autumn Sesshin: 9/24/11 - 9/30/11

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



HoU and ZenGyoku



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

Plum Mountain News
1811 20th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98122