



# Plum Mountain News

**Dear members and friends,**

As I write this, the weather forecast is for snow tonight, I'm not sure I believe it, as it feels a bit more like spring today. Genki Takabayashi Roshi, our founding Abbot, just celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 21, 2012. That morning I made some remarks after morning zazen and we sang Happy Birthday to him. These remarks were recorded and sent to him and can be heard at: <http://www.choboji.org/Birthday.mp3>. He also received from us a token contribution of our appreciation and a big bouquet of flowers. Genki Roshi has asked me to go and pick him up from Montana this May so that he can visit us in Seattle and see the new center. I hope this comes to pass and many are able to get to know him better.

We started the year with our first New Year's Day Chant Ceremony and potluck in our new space. It was a gloriously clear day, and we rang the outdoor kansho bell 108 times to ring out all of our delusions and begin the year with a fresh start. The next day we packed up the zendo, received guests from out of town, and twenty of us car pooled up to Camp Indianola for our eight day Rohatsu Sesshin. Rohatsu is most intensive retreat of the year. Wind, rain, surf, raven, eagles and a temperamental furnace met us upon our arrival. John (Daikan) Green as our Shika (host/manager) whipped the furnace into shape, until it could be repaired a few days later. Because so many people commented (Zen students never complain) that it was so cold in the zendo last year, we kept the temperature this year hovering around a balmy 64 degrees Fahrenheit. Our Tenzo was Rev.

Daitetsu Hull, who kept us fed with delicious vegetarian delights, some of which I don't think anyone had seen before. He was assisted by Carolyn (Josen) Stevens, who doubled as Fusu (accounts manager). Linda (Muka) Wehnes was our Jikijitsu (time keeper) and made sure we all kept the pace. Emily (HoU) Ross led our chanting as Densu, and Jonathan (Zengyoku)



Ringin' in the New Year

Schwartz, assisted by Ann (Kugyo) Rice provided us with libations and sweets as our Jisha (tea servers). Absent from our ranks were several other older members who have come to find that their bodies are not up for the rigor and strain of Rohatsu.

It is my hope that by next year we will be offering one or more sesshins geared to older bodies, so that everyone interested in training can continue to do so at Chobo-Ji. Next year's Rohatsu will be held much closer to the traditional time, Dec. 2-10. You will find a transcription of the Teisho (formal Dharma talk) from fifth day and the

closing incense poem from the morning of the eighth day published in this issue.

At the beginning of February, I made my annual trek to the UK to lead introductory zazen in Birmingham and London and a three-day sesshin in a rural community center called the Tatenhill Village Hall. Once again Sensei Chris (Gyoshin) Mooney and his wife Iona were my hosts in Birmingham, Szevone Chin was Tenzo for sesshin and Sensei Davindar Bath and Ivanova Alexandra were my hosts in London. While in London, I also got a chance to spend a few days with my close friend, former business partner and Chobo-Ji contributor Hugh Rogovy. I was home for a week and then off to Canada to do a three-day Zen workshop at the Calling Lakes Retreat Center, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK. We covered the basics of meditation, and how Zen practice can nurture a peaceful mindfulness in our everyday lives. We also examined the journey from a fixed sense of self to the Blue Sky Mind that embraces the universe, and how to look inward and discover the alive Emptiness that is so vast and boundless. Finally, we took a look at the Ten Zen Ox Herding pictures and how they relate to spiritual development from the Zen perspective. I hope to incorporate many of the workshop topics into at least one or more of the six sesshins tentatively planned for Chobo-Ji next year.

During the second weekend in March, Chobo-Ji will begin the Spring Intensive, and simultaneously our residential program will formally begin. Exactly what these programs will look like and how they will evolve in the years to come remain to be seen, but it is a very exciting time for everyone associated with Chobo-Ji. On Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, we will have a workshop led by Rev. Daitetsu Hull on the essentials of Non-Violent Communication, which should help all of us have better tools to communicate within our Sangha and with the wider community in which we find ourselves. On Sunday, March

*Continued on next page...*

11<sup>th</sup> we will begin the day with a mini-sesshin from 5-11AM. This will be followed by our Annual Meeting to elect the board for the New Year and spend some quality time exploring our future together. I hope most everyone in town that weekend can attend these events.

Spring Sesshin is around the corner, the last week of March, and if you are planning to attend now is the time to submit a deposit to hold a place. There will be more on all these topics in the pages that follow, including a listing of the new temple posts for this season. In addition, you will find in this edition our Annual Financial Report, a poem by new member Larry Lee Palmer, a report on [The Book of Mu](#), an announcement about the upcoming Northwest Dharma Association Annual Gathering and finally a comprehensive statement about Chobo-Ji's association with the Zen Studies Society and my relationship to Eido Shimano Roshi. By the way, Chobo-Ji has updated its own Ethics and Reconciliation policy which can be found on our [Literature](#) page, [Ethical Guidelines](#).

Besides all these offerings be sure to consult regularly with Chobo-Ji's Google Event Calendar, which can be found at the bottom of the [Schedule](#) page on our web site. I try to keep this up to date and here you can find our daily zazen schedule plus all sesshins and special events important to our sangha. For example this April you will find that I will be leading short sesshins in Walla Walla, San Diego and Wenatchee. You can also view ahead to 2013 and get an idea of a tentative expansion of our sesshin schedule.

May the remainder of your winter be warm and cozy. Just around the corner we have a big spring ahead of us, and I am excited to be able to focus my energies here with all of you.

With gassho,

Genjo



## Nonviolent Communication

**On Saturday, March 10th** Chobo-Ji will be hosting a Nonviolent Communication (NVC) workshop led by Rev. Daitetsu Hull of Great Vow Zen Monastery.

The workshop will be **held between 9am and 4pm** in the Chobo-Ji zendo, 1733 S. Horton St., Seattle 98144. All sangha members and interested friends and colleagues are warmly invited to attend. Our abbot has recommended that all Board members attend this workshop, as a way of strengthening our current focus on Ethics and Reconciliation.

Chobo-Ji has extended an invitation to our brothers and sisters from the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, a group of folks who are locally active in the practice of Engaged Buddhism. Committed to spreading peace with their words and deeds, we trust their spirit will enhance and inspire our group.

NVC is an effective and compassionate communication process designed to resolve conflicts and differences peacefully. Daitetsu (DT) will generously share his talent and passion for teaching this dynamic process, and Chobo-Ji looks forward to sharing an engaging time with him.

Please feel free to pass on this announcement to any other practicing Buddhists or friends of Chobo-Ji who might be interested in this workshop.

*The suggested fee for the workshop \$35. Please bring a sack lunch, Chobo-Ji will provide drinks.*

To sign up for the workshop, or if you have any questions, please email Zengyoku: [ofgardenorigin@gmail.com](mailto:ofgardenorigin@gmail.com). Please confirm your interest ASAP. Due to space limitations, we may fill up.

“This workshop will offer an introduction to NVC as founded by Marshall Rosenberg. During this workshop we will not learn how to be nice. Rather we will investigate authentic speech, and how to be compassionate and authentic even in



difficult situations. We will learn how to speak our truth with skill. We will learn and practice specific communication techniques like making neutral observations, empathetic

listening, skillful interrupting, and honest expression, with the opportunity for coaching and questions. There will be a chance to work with specific communication difficulties. My hope is by the end of the workshop you will have seen a new way to communicate that is authentic, effective and compassionate, and that you will have clarity about how to improve your ability to communicate in this new way.”

~Rev. DT Hull

“In my experience, NVC can sometimes come off as "canned". It's kinda like listening to someone practicing their musical scales -- although it's great to hear an instrument played well, it can be challenging to live with someone who's practicing. This is where DT shines though. DT brings the full potency of his ardent zen practice to the effort. He embodies the spirit of peace and connection that rests at the heart of the NVC endeavor. Right from the start, it's just authentic.” ~Zengyoku

## Annual Meeting

As is our custom, Chobo-Ji will have its annual meeting of the membership and board on **Sunday, March 11, at 11:30** after the mini-sesshin. The primary order of business at the member meeting is the election of the board for the coming year. Several current members will be stepping down from the board, making room for some new candidates who will help chart our future. We need a quorum of the membership to hold elections. In addition we will be exploring how to expand our schedule and offerings at Chobo-Ji. Also we will review financial reports and continue our planning for Chobo-Ji's new residential practice.

## The Book of Rinzai

Jishu: Teaching the Assembly

Chapter 18, part 2 of 3

Someone asked, "What about the Lands of the Three Eyes?" The Master said, "Entering the land of wondrous purity, we put on the robe of purity and talk as Dharmakaya Buddha. Entering the land of non-differentiation, we put on the robe of non-differentiation and talk as Sambhogakaya Buddha. Entering the land of emancipation, we put on the robe of illumination and talk as Nirmanakaya Buddha. These Lands of Three Eyes are all transformations of the self without substance. According to scholars of sutras and shastras, the Dharmakaya is regarded as the essence. Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya are the functions. However, this mountain monk as a different view. Dharmakaya cannot preach the Dharma. Therefore a man of old said,

The so-called Buddha-bodies  
are metaphors for

The teachings of Buddhism.

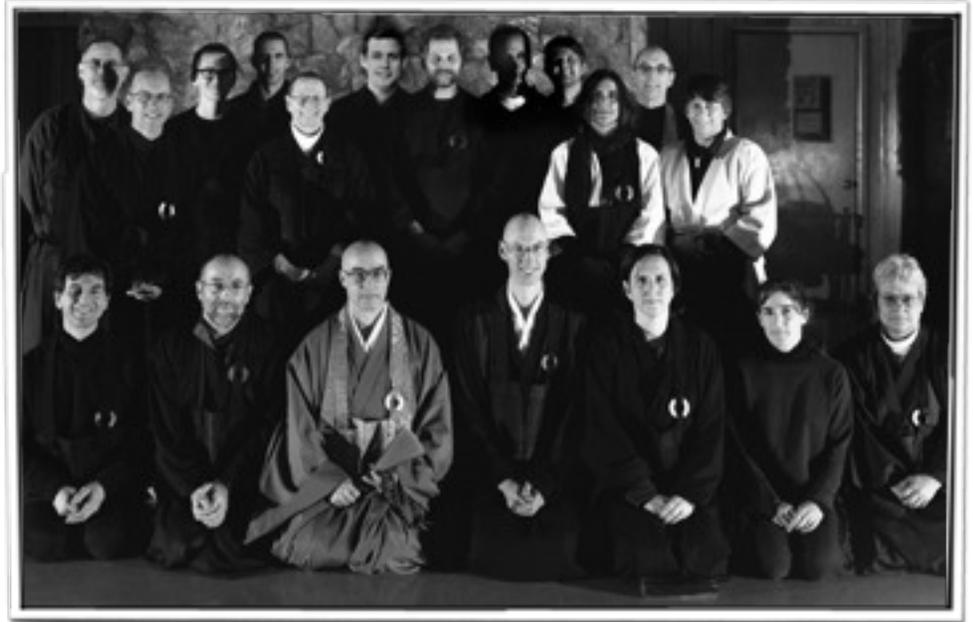
The so-called Buddha-lands are metaphors  
for the Nature of the universe.

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Followers of the Way, you accept words from mediocre masters and take them to be true, saying, 'These great masters are wonderful and I, a bumpkin, don't dare to judge such worthies.' Blind idiots! You have spent your entire lives so far holding such views. You are betraying your own eyes. You are like donkeys walking on ice, shivering with fear, saying, 'I don't dare to slander these wonderful masters, because I am afraid to create speech-karma.' Followers of the Way, it is only the great master who dares to slander the buddhas, dares to slander the patriarchs and dares to judge the rights and wrongs under heaven. He rejects the teaching of the Tripitaka, scolds immature students, and looks for a person of Dharma in favorable or unfavorable circumstances. Therefore, looking back over the past twelve years, searching for a single speck of karma, it is impossible for me to find anything, even as small as a mustard seed. The Zen master who is like a new bride is afraid to be kicked out from the temple with nothing to eat, with no peace or comfort. Since old days, our predecessors were misunderstood by ordinary people. Only after they were

kicked out did people realize how worthy they were. If they had been readily accepted by ordinary people, what good would they have been? Therefore, it is said, 'The lion's one roar splits the jackals' brains.'"

He says in effect, "To see clearly with the Three Eyes is like putting on the robes of the Three Bodies of Buddha." In our closets, we all have different costumes,



Rohatsu Sesshin Participants

Yesterday, we investigated the same opening paragraph but I didn't talk about the Land of the Three Eyes, which in this context is referring to the Three Bodies of Buddha. I didn't speak of the Three Bodies of Buddha yesterday, because the time was not yet ripe. Somebody said to me in Dokusan, "Yeah, that first paragraph is a little heady" and that's correct, it's full of Buddhism and you've got to watch out for that! But still there is something here, and it has taken me awhile to be ready to delve into it.

I believe the person asking Rinzai is using Buddhist terminology to ask, "What is it like to see clearly?" That's not necessarily a Buddhist question; it's a very real question asked of many sages in different traditions. What is it like to see clearly? Rinzai goes on to answer quite eloquently, but this is unusual in some ways because normally his response is so brusque. This time he waxes poetically and speaks at length. Rinzai opens up and tells about his own experience, although this might not be immediately obvious because he also makes use of Buddhist terminology.

some of our "robes" might be for formal occasions, some are for digging in the earth, and there are others for every role and activity in our life. Depending on what robe we put on, we take on that persona and embody the character represented by those robes or clothes. It's not like those robes are the True Person of No Rank but the True Person can put on any clothes. The Deep You or True Person can put on robes that best fit the circumstances in which you find yourself. We put on whatever robes that work. Rinzai says that his experience of clarity is freely and appropriately blending with circumstances as they arise.

The first Buddha Body, called Dharmakaya Buddha represents, as Rinzai tells us in the text, essence. Buddha Nature is synonymous with Dharmakaya Buddha. This so-called body of the Buddha represents Nature itself with a capital "N." When seeing through the eyes of Nature itself, there's no "you." At such a moment, there is no experience of "self" as separate from "Nature," there is only "Nature" alone. It's as though when you put on this robe, your body and your sense of self becomes entirely transparent. The essence of the

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Dharmakaya Buddha view is that there is no self, nor other than self. From this view your own identity disappears or perhaps it is more revealing to say your idea of “self” becomes temporarily transparent. And if you enter fully into this experience, the sound of the surf, rain or wind, the eagle flying, the tree standing, or the flower opening is the whole universe and beyond. To have such a unifying, transcendent experience is said to be putting on the robes of Dharmakaya Buddha. In this view there is no you because “self” and “other” are seamless with Nature.

**A** number of people listening to this discourse have had this kind of experience where there’s only Nature and no sense of self. It’s as if your body dissolved entirely. In addition, while in this experience there is no thinking, “Oh, I am having this kind of experience”, because there’s no “I” to proclaim such a thought. If this kind of experience resonates with or touches some remembrance and you acknowledge, “that feeling is familiar,” then you may accurately conclude that you were symbolically wearing the robes of Dharmakaya Buddha. However, if these words don’t somehow feel familiar, then you may have not put on those robes just yet. It’s not that they are not in your closet. You already possess them. Nevertheless, it may be true that in your adult life, you have yet to put on this set of invisible clothes.

**I**n the case of Sambhogakaya Buddha, Rinzi says, it is like putting on the robes of non-differentiation. In this case you are yourself but there is no other, there is only self-alone. It corresponds to what Zen Master Hyakujo would say is, “Sitting alone atop a sublime peak.” This also corresponds to the thought I shared yesterday about “sitting alone on the beach and feeling as though you are the only person on the planet or in the universe.” Such an experience can be said to be putting on the robes of Sambhogakaya Buddha. If you’ve had this self-alone experience, where you are aware of a “self” seamless with the whole universe, then you have felt this experience crack into an absolutely joyous, caring heart. In the Dharmakaya experience, there is no caring or joy as there

is no self to comprehend it, there is only Vast Empty Nature as it is naturally. However, in the Sambhogakaya view there is no other than “self” and your heart bursts with deep appreciation, love and compassion. Everywhere you look is the most astonishingly beautiful thing you’ve ever seen before, and is as if it each “thing” feels like your own true face.

**I** think many people have had this kind of experience taking psychedelics. Josen and I once had a journey together on a beach not very far from here. During our journey we would look at something like a rock, a wave or a cloud and we would nod knowingly to each other without saying a word. We did this for hours, and no words were said. We were totally in love with the universe and of one mind, together realizing very directly



Rohatsu view of Mt. Rainier

Not Two. This is the condition of non-differentiation and psychedelics can give a quick view of it. But after the journey, you doubt whether or not your perception was real. The nice thing about Zen training is that you can come to the same view and have every confidence that you’re seeing the world as it really is, that is to say, the Sambhogakaya Buddha perspective.

**T**he experience where you’re alone sitting on the beach or atop a mountain peak in love with everything, this is where the Great Bodhisattva Vow, to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate, arises. Only after encountering this view intimately and directly can it be said that we become truly committed to this Great Vow. Of

course we will fail miserably at our vow from time to time until over the course of decades we learn the skillfulness to live up to our vow at least most of the time.

**T**hen there’s the Nirmanakaya Buddha view, which Rinzi says is entering the land of emancipation and illumination. In this view, you’re freed from your body entirely. There’s no self, there’s no other but there’s mind with a capital “M” and that Mind sails across the universe and embraces the cosmos. This Mind is nothing but unconditional love, disembodied, with no specific location or substance. I think of this as the mind of the Tathagata. And, if you’ve had such an experience, you’ve put on the robes of the Nirmanakaya Buddha. If you haven’t had a “Capital M” Mind view, well, those robes are waiting in your closet. Keep practicing and then you will put them on in the readiness of time.

**I**f you have had the experience of temporarily putting on the robes of Nirmanakaya Buddha, and felt the disembodied Mind or seen world through the eyes of the Tathagata, then you can easily relate to the Diamond Sutra, as we directly realize that “all phenomenal reality is like a dream, a fantasy and a shadow, a drop of dew in the morning sun, a bubble in the stream or a flash of lightening in a summer storm and are thus to be regarded”. This is the view of the Tathagata or the perspective of Nirmanakaya Buddha.

**I**f you think that that’s the end of it, you’re sorely and completely mistaken. Because maturity is not dependent on robes or looking through these three eyes. Maturity requires that we become comfortable and confident enough to know when and where to put on which robes, and not to be attached or repulsed by whatever clothes are needed. Therefore, when we are as comfortable working in shit as seeing through the eyes of the so-called Buddha bodies, then and only then can we be said to be emancipated. When we are just as confident putting on our grubby clothes as putting on our finest duds and there is no hindrance, shame, pride or self-aggrandizement then we will know for certain that any robes are just robes and not

the True Person of No Rank or position. Real maturity requires that we accept all of the robes and roles that may be needed from time to time. When we have experienced most of them, without being puffed up or downtrodden, then we are truly free to pull out whatever robe is appropriate to the circumstances.

Rinzai makes one other point in this first paragraph, in which he reminds us that the Dharmakaya cannot preach the Dharma. Nature (with a capital N) such as the mountain, the waves, the eagle, or the clouds is shouting the Dharma, but not preaching the Dharma. Even though everything is always shining, there is no mouthpiece in Nature, except us! We are the Voice of the Dharma for better or worse (sometimes both), not just on this planet, but, in all likelihood, this whole quadrant of the galaxy. If we survive our adolescence as a species, I have no doubt that we will be good ambassadors to this quadrant of the galaxy. However, it remains to be seen if this species survives its adolescence. We must do our part in this life to live up to our responsibilities as the Voice of the Dharma.

“Followers of the Way be careful not to accept words from mediocre masters and take them to be true.” Don’t think that leaders who wear robes are great masters and you’re a bumpkin. Rinzai is saying, “Don’t you know you have all the same robes in your closet?” If someone is out of line, you have just as much authority to say so as anyone else. If someone is fooling or harming others in the Sangha, call them on it at once. Don’t think because someone wears robes, has a shaved head, or is a leader that somehow they know better than you right from wrong! Don’t be blind and think, “Oh, this master must know how to determine hot from cold better than I can.” Only blind idiots will hold such a view. Don’t be like a donkey walking on ice, shivering with fear worrying about falling, thinking you might slander these wonderful masters because you are afraid to make your own determination. Don’t worry about creating negative “speech karma;” it is always okay to say what you see. On the other hand, be careful not to interpret or charge what you see with your own opinions. It is important not to slander others; however, don’t ignore what is obviously right from wrong. Be careful not to think that leaders or you yourself have

“special karma” that somehow elevates you or them above the precepts.

In Zen we accept that there is no fundamental or intrinsic right or wrong. However, in a given circumstance, there is definitely a relative right from wrong and it’s quite definite! In the middle of the night, it’s not so definite whether you stop at a red light or go through, but in the middle of the day or anytime there is traffic, it’s definitely wrong to go against a red light. Is it an absolute wrong in the Universe? No. Can a great Zen master discern that better than you? NO!! (laughter)

Rinzai offers this sentence: “Followers of the Way, it is only the great master who dares to slander the buddhas, dares to slander the patriarchs and dares to judge the rights and wrongs under heaven.” This is to say, that with deep insight we are all able to confidently examine and reject the standardized teachings if they conflict with what is truly needed in the moment. The great sages and prophets throughout time, and across all cultures often debunk the going, fixed view that is holding back the evolution of consciousness and compassion. If you consider people like Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, George Fox, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Bodhidharma, Rinzai, Dogen or Hakuin, these guys do end up causing a lot of trouble, upsetting the apple cart! Oftentimes, they are killed because they poke holes in the fixed, conventional wisdom of the day. Looking back over the past, the real movers, shakers and prophets were radicals. They have a habit of turning things upside down, and those who are truly on the cutting edge of real growth, help lead their culture to a significant positive shift in worldview.

Rinzai also reminds us that Zen Masters, or anybody in authority, can be too timid. Often a leader, especially a new one, can be like a new bride who is afraid to upset anyone in fear of being kicked out of the house, not knowing where she will go or how she will eat. Rinzai scolds the abbots or Zen Masters of the day for not being more radical and bold enough to deeply right the wrongs directly in front of them. Isn’t it odd that often only after sages and prophets have been condemned by the populace, and sometimes killed, do we realize how valuable they have been! In fact, if people readily accepted them, they

probably wouldn’t have been very useful in the first place. Think about it, if one is “readily accepted,” then it is likely the status quo has not been disturbed. Rinzai exhorts us to be movers and shakers! To recognize not only what’s wrong, but to be bold and clear about taking significant steps to right the wrongs that have been done, especially if they have taken place in our own house! When you leave this sesshin, wherever you find yourself, be bold! Be dynamic! Be movers and shakers! Call a spade a spade! Do what needs to be done to right past wrongs by boldly implementing redemptive steps with deep compassion for those who have been harmed or fooled.

There are only two days left in this sesshin, it is our job not to coast, but to bore deep into our True Nature. If we go straight on and do our best, we are bound to see things more clearly than when we began.

With gassho,

Genjo

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## Closing Incense Poem

Rohatsu Sesshin Jan. 10, 2011

*Clouds drift by the full moon.  
Jupiter shines brightly overhead.  
Who sees their True Nature?  
Dawn illuminates Mt. Rainier  
Eagle and raven take flight.*

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## Apartment Available

Some minor improvements are now being made to apartment #3 at our new Residential Practice Center. The unit is available for viewing any time. This is a one bedroom, 812 square feet unit, with a sun porch on the first floor. It is on the West side of the building, which has direct access to the Zendo level. Rent is \$900 per month, and ideally we want a Zen person to move in. The requirements to participate in the new residential program are a work in progress, but include attending at least three zazen periods a week, at least one sesshin a year, and at least one hour of samu a week. If you have any interest in the residential program, please speak to Genjo.

# Financial Report

Josen Carolyn Stevens  
Fusu/Treasurer

2011 was another extraordinary year in terms of Chobo-Ji finances. This year we transformed the basement on Beacon Hill into a new Zen Center, and in terms of revenue, we received \$252,623 in income earmarked for that project. Included in that total is \$135K in profit that we realized on the sale of our Capitol Hill property. We were exceedingly fortunate to get a great sales price for that house in this down economy.

Over the course of four years of fundraising, we have received a total of \$633K for the new building. The generosity of our donors made it possible for us to remodel the building without adding debt. Our sole obligation related to the building is the mortgage we took on when we bought the property; the balance of that debt stands at \$812,462 at December 31<sup>st</sup>. Our business plan calls for rents from tenants to cover the mortgage payments, insurance, and taxes, and some of the utilities, maintenance and repairs. The plan is working well, with rental revenue of \$75,906 collected in 2011. At the end of 2011, we received tax exempt status on half the building and land. This will lead to a 50% drop in our property tax assessment going forward.

Overall net income for 2011 was \$411,478, expenses were \$156,727, leaving a net income of \$254,751. Of course, this rosy picture is tempered by the costs of the remodel which flowed to our balance sheet as building improvements instead of hitting the income statement. Since we bought the building in 2008, we have added to total of \$791K of improvements to the building. If you add that to \$1.2 Million purchase price, our total investment in the building is just under \$2 Million. Whew!

Aside from building-related donations and rental revenue, our income consisted of \$24K in dues, \$23K in undesignated donations, and \$20K for sesshins. Our major expenses consisted of \$20K for Genki Roshi's support, \$55K in mortgage interest, and \$9K for sesshin related

expenses (food and the rental fee at Camp Indianola for Rohatsu). We also paid \$13K on building maintenance and \$14K for utilities.

The board of ChoBo-Ji has agreed that the time has come for us to sell the airplane. As we become a bigger organization, this asset no longer fits into our plans. The sale is in the works, and should come to fruition sometime this spring with a minimum of fuss. It will, however, "stay in the family," and our abbot will continue to fly his beloved Diamond.

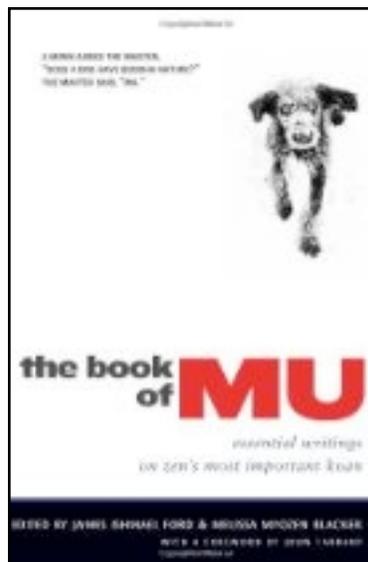
I will present a more complete financial report at our annual meeting on March 11, and welcome your questions and comments.

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## The Book of MU

Review by Ann Kugyo Rice

This soft bound book, *The Book of MU: essential writings on zen's most important koan* was edited by James Ishmael Ford and Melissa Myozen Blacker. It was a wonderful find, and certainly a good read for any student who has interest in koan work. It is a collection of about 40 essays by authors who would most likely be familiar to those who practice either in the Rinzai or Soto sect of Buddhism. And the authors offer a wide array of different thoughts, teishos, and takes on the Mu koan.



The book has several sections with the first being the Introduction. An interesting point in this part explains that in China and Korea the primary form of koan engagement is through a single lifetime koan. (This helped me understand why some readings indicate the many, many years a student would sit with the koan). In Japan, however, the koan curriculum was introduced as we experience it at ChoBo-Ji.

The second section is the Historical Perspective with commentaries by Eihei Dogen and Hakuin Ekaku. Hakuin's words address the Great Doubt and its importance in Zen work... "To all intents and purposes, the study of Zen makes as its essential the resolution of the ball of doubt..." a statement which itself arouses great curiosity.

Then there comes the section on Founding Teachers in the West, including Robert Aitken, Nyogen Senzaki, Philip Kapleau among others. Kapleau recounts the words of an ancient master: "The main thing (of Zen work) is to arouse the "doubt-sensation." Again, a re-emphasizing of the concept of doubt. He goes on to define the concept by saying: "It is a burning perplexity, a fundamental question that gives you no rest."

The last section is entitled "Modern Commentaries" and includes works of Eido Shimano, John Daido Looi, Roko Sherry Chayat, John Tarrant. Teisho titles include "On the Other, Complete, Ordinairness of Mu", "It's Not What You Think", "Even a Dog...?", "No, Nay, Never, Nyet, Iie". Even the titles create interest and curiosity.

As I grow older, I realize that I often do not remember exact points, concepts, or thought presentations of what I have read. And this book is no exception. Different chapters challenged, excited, re-affirmed, bored. But it is a book to return to, and very clearly a "never-failing manifestation of the mysterious truth of Tathagata". I have read that Tathagata may refer to an ancient buddha....or a simple "becoming". This book helps on the journey of becoming....

## Spring Sesshin

### March 23rd - 30th

Please send a deposit by March 11th, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check to Chobo-Ji. The cost of sesshin is \$250 (less dues). Sesshin will start with a sit Friday evening, 3/23, 7:30 - 8:30 PM, followed by a 30 min. orientation. Sesshin formally begins promptly at 5 AM the morning of Saturday, March 26th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 AM, the morning of Friday 3/30.

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## New Posts

### Beginning March 1st

Linda (Muka) Wehnes:  
**Shika** (Host - Manager)

Steve (Ganko) Hanson:  
**Dai-Tenzo** (Chief cook for Sesshins)

Emily (HoU) Ross:  
**Tenzo Assistant**

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

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

Tom (Shodo) DeGroot:  
**Densu** (Chant Leader)

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

Ezekiel (Mudo) Smithburg:  
**Jisha** (Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Steve Paget:  
**Jisha Assistant**

Edward (Daiki) Cadman:  
**Inji** (Abbot Assistant)

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

Edward (Daiki) Cadman &  
Jonathan (Zengyoku) Schwartz:  
**Introductory Zazen**

## Spring Intensive

Chobo-Ji's Spring Intensive will start March 10<sup>th</sup>, with the NVC Workshop that day, and conclude on June 29th. The purpose of the intensive is to give students the maximum opportunity to release entanglements by giving one's self to the Dharma. Anyone can participate who has...

A) made three consecutive monthly dues contributions; and

B) attended at least one weeklong or mini-sesshin in the last quarter.

Then to participate commit to the following:

**1)** Attend two weeklong sesshins full-time (or nearly full-time) during the intensive. This is the most important ingredient of the intensive and the only one that is non-negotiable. Also do 5 hrs. of zazen per week and most if not all mini-sesshins

**2)** Do a minimum of five hours of samu (working meditation - gardening or cleaning) per week. Most of these hours can be in your own home, garden or community, but at least one should be at the temple.

**3)** Do a minimum of one hour of chanting practice per week. For example, along with daily chanting, attending scheduled Ryogon Shu practice would cover this.

**4)** Read two books, one assigned to the group, [Spiritual Bypassing](#) (you can see the importance of this topic after reading the article on the next page, *ZSS & Chobo-Ji*) and a second selected from our reading list found in the Chobo-Ji amazon.com [Bookstore](#). Also, attend the scheduled sessions of the Sunday Book Intensive.

**5)** Keep a journal about your practice, at least one paragraph per week, and email a minimum of one paragraph per week each Friday to Genjo Osho on how the intensive is working on you.

**6)** Come to Dokusan at least once a week or if out of town try and schedule a Skype video call with Genjo Osho.

## The Flower Vase

a poem by Larry Lee Palmer

*this is an empty vessel  
that might contain  
all the thorns and  
fragrance of  
the earthly realms--  
To be sure  
I asked the  
butterfly people this:  
'if the world is perfect  
as it is, what  
need is there to think?' ...*

*they seldom reply but  
wings always flutter  
when they choose  
an arrangement.*

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## Northwest Dharma Association

### Annual Gathering

*Buddhist Practice  
and Social Transformation*

**March 17, 2012 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM**  
**Wyckoff Auditorium,**  
**Seattle University**

Each Spring, NWDA hosts a gathering for regional Buddhists and friends to meet one another and exchange ideas and experiences. This year's gathering will be held at the Wyckoff Auditorium in the Bannan Engineering Building on the campus of Seattle University. The theme this year is the connection between the practice of the Buddha's teachings and their impact on society. Please join us, and check <http://www.northwestdharma.org/> for further information.

## ZSS & Chobo-Ji

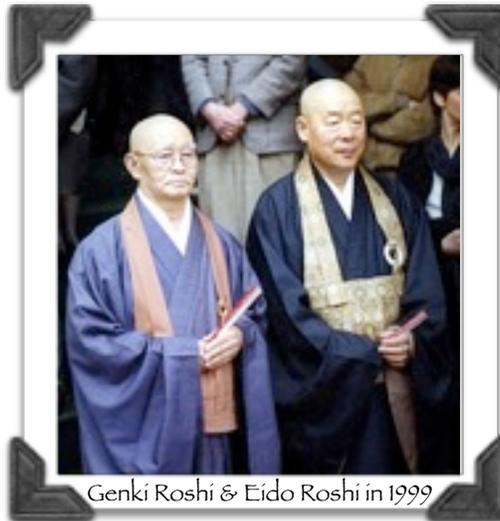
### a report by Genjo

As we are all well aware, back in June of [2010 a scandal broke](#) about Eido Shimano Roshi having yet another sexual liaison with a female student. Immediately pressure was put on Eido Roshi to resign from the Board of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS), which has the legal and fiduciary responsibility for the two ZSS properties, Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) in the Catskill Mountains and the New York City center, Shobo-Ji. This was done so that the extent of his ethical breach could be fully investigated before any further remedies were sought. Eido Roshi resigned from the ZSS Board July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. I was a board member of ZSS at the time, and had been training in earnest with Eido Roshi since 1996. 1996 was the year that Genki Roshi first seriously started talking about retirement, and it was his instruction that I complete my formal Zen training with Eido Roshi.

To assist with our ethics investigation the ZSS Board enlisted the help of the [FaithTrust Institute](#), a Seattle based group skilled at such work. What we discovered over the course of months was credible evidence that the most recent incident was not the only recent breach of ZSS ethical guidelines. However, we often heard Eido Roshi claim that this sort of behavior ended many years ago. In fact, what we learned was that over the course of decades, Eido Roshi abused his position of power and authority repeatedly, and was in the habit of aggressively [pursuing the most vulnerable](#), attractive female students under his spiritual care. In addition, it became increasingly clear that his many so-called [apologies](#) over the years were [vacuous of any serious understanding](#) of the harm he had done. Most disturbing of all was hearing a credible first person account that [not all sexual encounters were started "consensually,"](#) and the fact that [he transmitted STDs to his own students](#).

Eido Roshi resigned as Abbot of ZSS on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Shinge Roshi, my Dharma Sister, was installed as the new abbot January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. In February 2011, ZSS announced that Eido Roshi would no longer teach Zen under their auspices. However, since the recent scandal broke in

June 2010, five ZSS board members, including myself, have resigned because we became frustrated with the board's inability to more aggressively address the sins of the father. Three different meetings have been held to give the ZSS sangha a chance to voice their concerns; the most recent was a weekend late in August 2011. This meeting was facilitated by [An Olive Branch](#), a professional group dedicated to fostering peaceful and effective solutions for Buddhist groups in turmoil. I so wanted to attend this meeting but was turned back by Hurricane Irene. [Much was accomplished](#) at this meeting, but in my mind so [much more needs to be done](#).



Genki Roshi & Eido Roshi in 1999

Recently I was asked by Rev. Marie Fortune, one of the founders of the FaithTrust Institute, and one of two people who investigated Eido Roshi's breach of ethical guidelines at the Zen Studies Society, if I knew that Chobo-Ji's listing at the [Northwest Dharma Association](#) (NWDA) still listed me as a student of Eido Roshi. I responded, "I was his student and I still am, in that he is teaching me even now many unexpected, uncomfortable lessons. The Historical Buddha said take what works and leave the rest. I might say, learn as much, if not more, from what doesn't work." I also spoke to Rev. Fortune about what I see to be the failure of ZSS to adequately respond organizationally to Eido Roshi's serial ethical breaches over decades that seriously harmed and alienated many in his own sangha and repeatedly tarnished the reputation of American Zen.

A few months back I asked the Chobo-Ji board to consider terminating our affiliation

with ZSS as a "Related Zen Center" on their web pages. After two months of deliberation, when it became clear that ZSS was ready to move on without taking further steps to address those sangha members who have been most harmed or alienated by Eido Roshi's behavior, the [Chobo-Ji Board wrote a letter](#) requesting that our temple be removed from their listing of [Related Zen Centers](#). It has been nearly two months since the letter was sent, and still the listing persists on their web pages. Please be assured that neither this temple nor I are any longer in any way officially associated with the Zen Studies Society. In my mind, this is one of the saddest outcomes of this whole tragedy; I have now joined a cast of hundreds that feel so alienated by the organization's woefully inadequate response that we find ourselves unable to train there any longer.

It would have been relatively simple for ZSS to respond more adequately to those who were most harmed. For example, the ZSS board, led by Shinge Roshi, has never made a public organizational apology for its part in historically under-responding to Eido Roshi's serial abuses of power. What the ZSS board has done is spend well over a year trying to finalize a highly questionable [Deferred Compensation Agreement](#). ZSS is paying Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife well in excess of 70% of their expensive base salaries, when other benefits are added, rather than working to set aside funds to deal with the trauma of his sexually traumatized victims. The ZSS board has also failed to adequately rework its bylaws to prevent abuses of power of anyone in the abbot's role; namely, they still don't have a board that is in large part elected by the ZSS Sangha. I can't tell you how disappointing this is to me. The properties associated with ZSS are some of the finest practice spaces in American Zen. I fear they will never reach their full potential without better dealing with the history of Eido Roshi's abuses of power. At the very least while Eido Roshi remains delusionary and in denial about his part in this fiasco and [schemes to find ways he can resume teaching](#), he should be excluded from setting foot on ZSS property. Even this simple break has not been possible under Shinge Roshi's leadership; clearly, the ZSS board's continued attachment to the man precludes serious effort to reach out compassionately to those alienated or harmed. This is such a shame, and flies in the face of the deepest insights

that Eido Roshi himself tried to impart about uniting with great compassionate Bodhisattva spirit, *Namu Dai Bosa*. (For a more detailed view of the steps that I think are necessary to turn ZSS around see [http://www.choboji.org/ZSS\\_steps.pdf](http://www.choboji.org/ZSS_steps.pdf).)

My mind and heart have gone through periods of anger, frustration, disappointment and doubt concerning my long association with Eido Roshi and ZSS, but I have learned some invaluable lessons. First and foremost among them is that Zen practice can indeed nurture true insight, but true insight alone, especially when bounded by a bubble of arrogance and self-aggrandizement, is insufficient for deep maturity in the Way. Genuine maturity requires that we examine our lives and vow to root out any repeating pattern or program that harms others. We must always be on the lookout for patterns that cause harm.

These patterns represent gaps in our development and we must vow to expose, examine and face our shortcomings so thoroughly that they are transformed from liabilities to assets. This effort will likely be the hardest and most important work we will ever do. Our gifts will come to naught without this heroic effort. How can we hope to live our Great Vow to care for all beings without truly facing our own shadow?

Some have asked why I don't reject any association with Eido Roshi. I will not throw out the baby with the dirty bath water. I will not deny Eido Roshi's strengths and gifts, in fact one of the most important lessons he helped me realize is that one can never find Buddha in isolation from Bumpkin. We are all a mix of strengths and weaknesses, just because we are weak in some areas, doesn't mean that we can't excel in others. Genki Roshi taught me something that is so important to remember, that from wherever we are, we are just beginning. I love Eido Roshi; nevertheless, I will not enable his grandiosity or delusional denial by keeping quiet about his harmful behaviors or his [schemes to resume teaching](#). We all have work to do; unfortunately, it appears that with the help of others who continue to indulge and financially support him, he won't be facing up to the work he has to do anytime soon.

## 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 Rinzaï temple in Japan. In addition, Genki Roshi directed a Rinzaï 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 Rinzaï Zen School. Since Genki Roshi retired, Genjo Osho-san continued his training with biannual retreats at Dai Bosatsu Kongo-Ji monastery in New York until 2011. On May 21, 2008, Eido Shimano Roshi confirmed Genjo Osho as a Rinzaï line Dharma Heir.

## Chobo-Ji Schedule

### Introduction to Zazen

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

### Zazen (except during quarterly retreats)

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 Spring 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:

3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 5/27, 6/10, 7/15, 8/12, 9/9

Spring Sesshin: 3/23/12 - 3/30/12

Summer Sesshin: 6/22/12 - 6/29/12

Autumn Sesshin: 9/21/12 - 9/28/12

Rohatsu Sesshin: 12/2/12 - 12/9/12

### We Are Located: at 1727 & 1733 S.

Horton St., (one block west of S. Beacon). Main entrance and off-street parking is accessible behind the building off Lafayette Ave. S. After entering the main entrance, remove your shoes and socks in the entry hall and proceed to the Zendo (meditation hall) on your right. 206-328-3944

**Dues and Fees:** go to support the life of this temple. We have no outside support from any organization. Dues are \$75 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 \$25. Fees for the March, July, and September sesshins are \$250, and Rohatsu Sesshin is \$390. 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*

Plum Mountain News  
1733 S. Horton St., unit 7  
Seattle, WA 98144