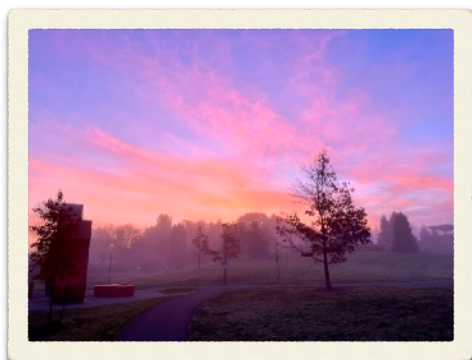




# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

It seemed to me that on the first day of autumn this year the weather in Seattle obliged by all at once shifting from summer to fall. Just a few days ago, the



weather services warned of our first below freezing temperatures, and now it feels as though our weather has shifted again, with the waning light of the sun and the falling leaves, from early to late fall.

I know that with the wars going on, climate change, many forms of social injustice, and political polarization it is hard to be hopeful. Yet, I remain so grateful to our practice which gives us a deep-rooted foundation to face such great suffering, uncertainty and impermanence. With an open heart-mind we become ready to proceed with caring action within our reach. Great Faith blended with Great Determination and Great Inquiry leads to our ability to sustain our Great Vow to care for all beings. We often don't know how to proceed, and by entering no-knowing together, we can be inspired to take some small but concrete step towards more understanding and harmony.

Around this time in 2013, I was returning from my second trip to Poland and a Zen Peacemaker Bearing Witness retreat at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Included in this issue are my recollections from that trip followed by an essay written by fellow



*Autumn Sesshin 2023*

sangha member Larry Palmer about Thanksgiving. Both these offerings feel as relevant today as they did ten years ago.

We had twenty people in attendance at our weeklong 2023 Autumn Sesshin, which concluded on September 29 with a Jukai ceremony. Everyone attended in person except for three courageous sangha members who attended by Zoom. Our Shika (host-manager) was Rev. Seifu Singh-Molares who was diligent assigning us to our samu (work-meditation) tasks. Elijah Seigan Zupancic served us as our Dai-Tenzo (chief cook), and prepared many meals that reminded me of the food our founding abbot, Genki Takabayashi, would prepare for us at sesshins. Felix Wazan Pekar, assisted by Sendo Osho, kept us on time as our Jikijitsu (time-keeper). Eddie Daichi Salazar Sensei reprised his role as Densu (chant leader) and was assisted by Charles Porter, who grew into his wave nature as the week went on. Dan Chofu Beck plunged into the extensive post of Jisha (tea server) and kept us properly nourished with tea, coffee and snacks, and took care that the zendo was ready for zazen each morning.

He was ably assisted by Jeff Jones. Ken Daien Iwata served as my Inji (abbot assistant) and kept the Dokusan room ready and the Dokusan line moving efficiently. In this issue you will read a transcript of my second day teisho, along with my closing incense poem and of course more about the Jukai (Buddhist Precept and Buddhist Name) ceremony.

Also included in this issue is an update from Rinzan Osho on the progress the No-Rank Sangha is making at their newly purchased property. Gendo Osho and Leslie Senko Cohen give brief reports about their sitting groups. Michelle Muji LeSourd offers a report about our Fall Book Group. Finally, you will find announcements for the upcoming Rohatsu Sesshin, Toya party, Holiday closure, New Year's celebration, and winter Odayaka Sesshin. Carolyn and I will again be traveling to Bonn, Germany for a five-day sesshin in January, and then I think we will be spending a few days in southern Spain before returning to Seattle in early February. Please stay warm and cozy as we move towards winter.

With gassho,

*Genjo*

## No-Rank Zendo

Rinzan Pechovnik, Osho

As many readers of the last issue of *Plum Mountain News* may know, No-Rank Zendo has been in the process of purchasing a church to serve as our permanent home here in Portland, Oregon. The sale closed on September 20th, and we are now in possession of the building.

There has been a lot of work to do since purchasing it. First, the old tenants had it filled with what cannot be called anything other than junk. We recycled and repurposed what we could, but most of it



was unredeemable, and we loaded what amounted to three dumpsters of trash to empty the place out.

This was quite a harrowing experience given that, as we dug deeper and deeper, we discovered more and more of the mouse and rat infestation the building had been suffering. There were huge amounts of scat and dead critters tucked in all the corners. Our crew bravely overcame their dismay and cleaned it all out so that we could begin the work of remodeling.

So far, the work has been slow but steady. We've installed new stairs, closed off a bathroom stall, pulled up carpet, torn down



a chimney, installed upgraded electrical service, torn out the gas furnace, begun installing a new heat pump, and have gotten estimates on sundry other jobs that are outside our skill set.

In the end, virtually the entire interior will be reworked, including refurbished floors, additional bathrooms and storage space and an upgraded kitchen.

My hope (my great determination!) is to have the place good enough for at least zazen by January first. There are days when it seems utterly doable and others when it seems impossible, but we go straight on, one project at a time, and continue to plug away.

Once the place is finished, we'll have a grand opening ceremony to which everyone will be invited. Until then, you can look at our website and the link to be found on the home page directing you to pictures of the process. ([www.norankzendo.org](http://www.norankzendo.org)). Here, you will also find a link to give donations to the project. We have received a lot of generous Dana thus far, but as you can imagine, every bit helps.

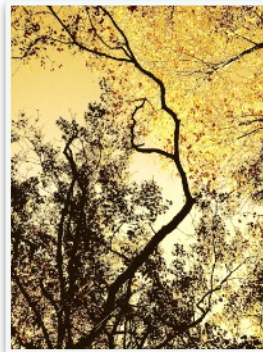
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## Fox Forest Zendo

Gendo Testa, Osho

Our sangha ([www.foxforestzen.org](http://www.foxforestzen.org)) participated in our first silent forest walk in October. We met at a nearby nature preserve and proceeded to walk kinhin on a trail along the edges of a large pond, stopping on occasion to meditate on the beauty before us.

The trees dropping their crimson-colored leaves, the sky reflected in the pond, the cool crisp morning air. Our kinhin line was strong and focused. We completed our event with bows as the northern winds began gently lulling the forest towards its winter slumber.



## Scripps Ranch Zen

Greetings from the San Diego Area:

I originally began my zen practice with my aikido teacher Chiba Sensei at San Diego Aikikai in the early 1990's, and subsequently became a student of Genjo Roshi who, with Genki Roshi, co-led and then led sesshin for us in our dojo. I was a keen student and was fortunately able to attend several Rohatsu Sesshins in Indianola with Chobo-Ji during that era, cementing my connection to both Genjo Roshi and the sangha.

In 2012, I started Scripps Ranch Zen. We had moved to this suburb north of San Diego a few years prior, and I always longed to have a local sangha, but had not yet found one. I hoped to build something to include my aikido dojo people who also lived nearby, and also attract new local attendees. For 8 years we met in a nearby Tai Chi/Kung Fu school on Sunday mornings. With the support of my dojo folks, and a small crew of new attendees we enjoyed several years of healthy regular attendance and budding friendships. But as does happen with adults and life, people moved away, or lost interest; in one case, we sadly lost a member to cancer.



In 2020, as the pandemic unfolded, we left our space. By then we were only a few still meeting there, so honestly, this was a bit of a relief. For all of those years, Alan, my longtime and primary sitting partner, met with me early each time to sweep and mop and set up the space; I also prepared tea for us to share with attendees each week. While the activity of those things was part of our practice and bound us together, we both had families and busy lives and very little free time at this point, so meeting early on perhaps our only "day off" felt like a strain, primarily because by then it might be just he and I showing up. I was grateful for Alan's commitment, but also felt a change was needed.

We immediately moved over to Zoom meetings. Again, we had some highs and lows with attendance. After losing a few more regulars to moves out of the country, we are currently a power trio of myself, Alan, and Anekoji (another dojo member). We meet on Thursday evenings. I lead the Heart Sutra, and then we sit for 30 minutes.

Over these years I have sometimes felt internal pressure to make my practice/group look a certain way, and felt like it was failing if it didn't. Herein lies my biggest lesson: Think of the old adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." For me and my personality, the challenge has been, "if it ain't broke, don't break it!" I am ever so grateful to still have the opportunity to sit with my people, and am thankful for the deep connection and commitment we have cultivated to meet week after week.

Gassho, may we all continue our practice,

*Leslie Senko Cohen*

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## Fall Book Group Savors Sid

Michelle Muji LeSourd

The Chobo-ji Book Group spent five fall Thursday evenings reading passages from and sharing reflections about *Sid* (by Anita Feng), a spare, poetic parallel story of the historical Siddhartha and present-day Sid. Anita Feng is Guiding Teacher at the [Blue Heron Zen Community](#) in North Seattle; she was a guest speaker at Chobo-Ji on June 4 of this year.

Compared to other book group formats, addressing this concisely written, 176-page work in five weeks allowed for us to feel less hurried and more thoughtful and spontaneous. We also had the opportunity to engage more holistically by reading passages that stood out for us and then sharing our reflections, rather than offering an analysis up front. As with a poetry reading, listening to others was embedded into the experience.

The book's sparse yet somehow dense storyline is interspersed with short passages and simple, beautiful ink drawings (by Seattle artist Linda Davidson) featuring several animals, other beings and even the

cosmos itself, who serve as a "chorus" making pithy observations, often in the first person. It felt to me like these touchstones offered a chance to step out of the storyline for a moment to reflect "who is this reading right now?"



The storyline structure is based on the phases of Siddhartha's life from birth through awakening, teaching, and death (and a roughly parallel journey for Sid). Anita Feng's treatment of this well-known life course is delightfully different in her detailed, loving inclusion of the females in Siddhartha's life, including the strong, supportive presence of Avalokitesvara; we are made acutely aware of the emotions the Buddha's loved ones experience and the sacrifices they make. Another refreshing turn is where Sid's path diverges from that of Siddhartha, which was for me a subtle but powerful moment of recognition.

It is easy to recommend this work to fellow practitioners. Many thanks to the Program and Practice committee for the choice of this book and the group meeting format!

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## Auschwitz Reflections

2013, by Genjo Marinello, Osho

*Hell on Earth,  
no words can properly convey.  
Millions of men, women and children  
reduced to objects,  
toys to be sadistically played with,  
refuse to be burnt and discarded.*

*At first no one could believe such horrific  
events were possible in the 20th century.  
Who could have guessed genocide would  
continue almost unabated?  
Have we learned nothing from the past?  
How many more centuries  
or millennia will it take  
before humankind more fully realizes that  
we are all one body, one soul?*

*A man sees his parents, his wife, his sisters,  
his children take the path to the left.  
Only the smell of burning flesh and smoke  
from the chimneys remains.  
This same man finds the courage  
not to be slave labor  
for those who have taken his loved ones.  
Full of determination and repose he walks*

*into the electric fence.*

*Decades later the grass is green,  
a rabbit scurries between barracks,  
a rainbow arches over the camp,  
Peacemakers remember  
with meditation and song,  
among them two find love  
and courageously marry.*



*Elie Wiesel writes upon receiving the Nobel  
Peace prize: "We must take sides.*

*Neutrality helps the oppressor,  
never the victim. Silence encourages the  
tormentor; never the tormented. Sometimes  
we must interfere. When human lives are  
endangered, when human dignity is in  
jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities  
become irrelevant. . .*

*Both the Jewish people and the Palestinian  
people have lost too many sons and  
daughters and shed too much blood. This  
must stop, and all attempts to stop it must  
be encouraged. Israel will cooperate I am  
sure of that. I trust Israel."*

*I for one do not. I have no solution,  
but I am confident that when the conflict  
concludes, and it will,  
it will be because peacemakers dared to  
trust where nations would not.*



*Who sees the golden sunset through the  
fences of Birkenau?  
White tailed deer bound down  
the old path of death.*

# Meditation at Thanksgiving

2013, by Larry Palmer

*If the only prayer you ever say in your  
entire life is thank you,  
it will be enough. — Meister Eckhart*

To be fair I never gave Christianity a fair shake due in large part to the Southern Baptist Holy Rollers. The antiquated Seattle congregation met each Sunday in the basement of a derelict building due south of Dr. Keck's Animal Hospital in Lake City. They drew the line at snakes – importing rattlesnakes from Eastern Washington long abandoned when a circuit preacher's satchel came undone in the back seat of a '54 Ford Station Wagon loaded with parishioners as he topped the rise of Snoqualmie Pass.

That must have been one hell of a Passover.

There is nothing like the sight of poor white folks rolling around the floor foaming at the mouth to put a small boy off his feed. They called it speaking in tongues. It was Grandma Poole's church, and although she never collapsed with imaginary ecstasy like the rest she was rigorous about dialects. An Alabama backwater farm-girl with little formal education, Grandma weighed in at well over 400 pounds and once – overtaken by a mighty shiver as the Lord spoke through her, she launched – with earsplitting Hallelujah – her dentures upward in a heavenly arc and nailed Reverend Jonas squarely on his forehead.

Jesus wept.

So did Grandma, but later on – when mom left for the graveyard shift – we took our nightly communion of pork rinds and orange popsicles and watched the I Love Lucy show. A few years later we buried Grandma in a wooden box at a mournful, down at the mouth funeral home on Lake City Way.

It took six strong men to lift her upward to her promised land. She raised me on Southern Voodoo stories and pork chops

cooked on hot plates. I love her still. When I am low I still hum her favorite song “Just a Closer Walk With Thee/ Grant it, Jesus, is my plea/ Daily walking close to Thee/ Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.”

Still, her chosen view of God – the one where Daddy Warbucks bends low to pluck little Orphan Annie out of trouble – never struck a deep chord. The Holy Rollers were big on sin and guilt. I confess I have kept that part – this might be the place to mention that I stretched the truth a bit about the trajectory of Grandma's dentures.

From an early age I had trouble separating a good story from a lie. I am sure that contributed to my juvenile delinquency. I was breaking and entering houses at the age of 12, and got fairly adept with imaginary truth. It got blurry where my stories ended and lies took off. Alcohol eased the pain some, but it nearly killed me too, and did kill most of my kin. This story, however, is not about confession or miraculous transformation.



This is a story about thanks-giving. As we get older most of us spend time meditating on sins and transgressions. About two years ago a piercing screech lodged itself in my brain. They call it tinnitus. Doctors call it the suicide disease. This is a story of how grateful I am for that affliction.

That is why I rise most mornings and head North on I-5 and take the Columbian Street exit, hang a hard left on Lafayette and ease into the parking lot of the Chobo-Ji Rinza Buddhist Temple on South Horton Street.

A kid starts out as a Southern Baptist Holy Roller and wakes up late in life a rookie Buddhist. Given my penchant for

storytelling it makes perfect sense. I stand awhile in the courtyard by the fountain that gurgles there before I go inside. Sometimes I hear that old refrain there: Just A Closer Walk with Thee.

Inside the Zendo things get more quiet and still. Take off shoes and socks and anything else you cling to – in my case a battered fedora – and bow – gassho, at the entrance to the Zendo, and find your favorite futon and gassho again, and sit cross-legged in the half light.

Candles flicker at both ends of the wide and simple room. Shadows dance on the bamboo floor. Hear the careful steps of the Buddhist priest making his way down the back steps? That's Genjo Marinello, an Italian Zen Abbot who is also a renowned psychotherapist. He walks like Charlie Chaplin. He wears white slippers. He helped me to save my life.

I am grateful beyond words.

The rituals begin. Rituals are simple here. First we have tea. Clackers smack together. A bell rings. The tea is a plum-salt tea. It tastes like bilge water from old galleons, only worse.

We chant the Heart Sutra. The Heart Sutra is made up of 14 couplets, each containing 32 syllables. We chant in Sanskrit, translated from Chinese and Japanese text. I have absolutely no idea what it means. I like the sounds.

We pray for universal sangha relations with all beings, rise and bow three times to the Buddha – which is really bowing to the part of self that becomes awakened. The room grows still. The clackers whack us back to mindful attention. This is important; the Rinza School of Buddhism does not use meditation as a way to relax the mind, but to focus the mind. Samurai warriors championed the Rinza School; focus counts when engaged in matters of life and death.

Focused attention does not explain what gradually – over the course of nearly a year's sitting – begins to happen to me. This is the truth not a lie. Four bells ring softly; you begin to follow your breath, each bell signals descending or ascending levels of concentration--sometimes you get lucky--like a surfer catching a perfect wave: ascent and descent meld into one focus, One

Mind. Sometimes you enter a kingdom where everything is flying, waves of light passing over you, around you, through you.

Sometimes nothing happens. Sometimes nothing is best.

Thoughts interrupt – where did I leave my keys? Did I make a bank deposit? That woman needs a new hair stylist! – but, with practice, you begin to adjust like a bird adjusts its wings in brisk wind. You begin to ride the light like birds ride the wind.

Everything comes back to light. Waves of light, pillars of light, tufts and wisps and shards and tentacles and arcing tracers of light. What begins as dull awareness evolves – for me – into certainty that we – everything – is made of light.

Josef Mengele, the Nazi Angel of Death? Inward folds of fractured light until he reached the edge of a black hole; nowhere to go. Stuck. Buddha? A human who never claimed to be born again yet eased the suffering of man – eased my suffering – by learning to ride the light in all beings that we remember our true selves. We are leaves on the tree of creation, but not the tree.

There is a corollary to this story; when my mind began to wander back to random thoughts – Where are my car keys? Is my cell phone on? – I learned a trick; I would pick a freight train of thought heading in one of the 4 directions:

Forgiveness.

Gratefulness.

Thanks-giving – and ride the train through whistle stops and metropolis, through thorns and fragrances and black tunnels, and – gradually at first, easier now – the trick would find my little track near a clearing beyond ideas of right doing and wrong doing, beyond thought itself sometimes, until I hit a wall again, the funhouse mirrored wall.

Of light.

Once, long ago, I caught a sailfish off the coast of Zihuatenejo, its body cauldrons, prisms, constellations of dancing light. The guide asked me if I wanted to let it go. I was drunk. I killed that fish, and watched the wonder of light disappear from flesh. I have returned to rivers to fish after a long hiatus, and never killed another, but, if there is a

roll called up yonder and I am marched before a gilded throne, I will be judged harshly on this matter.

Since the beginning mankind has jumped at the terror of our shadow and stabbed at the light that dances around us.

Light or shadow does not need us.

This is the experience of an Okie kid who started out as a Holy Roller and became something of a Buddhist because of a gargantuan mosquito whining inside his head. It's my story. I'm sticking to it.

Now, most times, the mosquito hums a simple tune.

This story is a story of thanks-giving. It is dedicated to a Zen Abbot named Genjo Marinello and presented to our dear friend Vyto Palionis who stands at the edge of our sea of light. We stand here with him, leaves of the same tree.

Genjo just returned from his “vacation” spent meditating with a Zen Peacemakers Organization (ZPO) for 10 days on the grounds of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi Death Camp where 1.1 million Jews were exterminated; the most systematic attempt man ever made to kill the light inside others.

From what I hear some of the Jews and Palestinians in the ZPO got into a snit one night but later patched it up.

Jesus wept. In the beginning God created light.

And there was light, and the light was good.

Don't worry. Have a happy Thanks-giving.

Just a closer walk with thee.



## Hekiganroku ~ Case 40

Nansen's “This Flower”

Genjo's 2nd Day Autumn Teisho

**Enjo's Introduction:** When the action of the mind is stopped and swept away, the iron tree will bloom. Can you demonstrate it? Even a crafty fellow will come a cropper here. Even if he excels in every way, he will have his nostrils pierced. Where are the complications? See the following.

**Main Subject:** Riku Taifu, while talking with Nansen, said, “Jo Hosshi said, ‘Heaven and Earth and I are of the same root. All things and I are of one substance.’ Isn't that absolutely fantastic?” Nansen pointed to a flower in the garden, called Taifu to him, and said, “People of these days see the flower as though they were in a dream.”

### Setcho's Verse:

*Hearing, seeing, touching, and knowing  
are not one and one;  
Mountains and rivers  
should not be viewed in the mirror.  
The frosty sky,  
the setting moon – at midnight;  
With whom will the serene waters  
of the lake reflect the shadows in the cold?*

Riku Taifu was inspired by Jo Hosshi's verse. In our tradition we have many verses that inspire us, including Sosan Ganchi Zenji's *Verses on the Faith Mind*, Torei Zenji's *Bodhisattva's Vow Preface*, Hakuin Ekaku Zenji's *The Song of Zazen*, *The Heart Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra* to name a few. The more I'm exposed to these and other verses the more I appreciate them. However, we also have the principle, in our tradition that Bodhidharma taught us not to cling to words and letters – “A special transmission outside the scriptures. Not founded upon words and letters. Directly pointing to one's heart-mind.”

Riku Taifu was a high government official who studied Zen with Nansen. Evidently, he often companioned with him. One day, on a walk with Nansen, Riku Taifu shared his excitement about this verse of Jo Hosshi and exclaimed how “absolutely fantastic” he thought it was. Hearing Riku Taifu's excitement, Nansen could have simply

*Continued on next page ...*

affirmed, “just so”, but instead he pointed to a flower and said, “People of these days see the flower as though they were in a dream.”

This reminds me of the story of the Buddha who gave a talk by simply holding up a flower. As the story goes, only one person in attendance got what the Buddha was trying to impart. Maka Kasho smiled and the Buddha affirmed that a special transmission of the Dharma had taken place with Kasho’s smile. With or without words all of us create a dream of reality that works for us and divides self from other, this from that, life from death, subject from object. However, reality knows nothing of these artificial distinctions.

Whenever we deeply investigate a flower, a rock, a tree, dog poop or any “object” with our whole being we are sure to realize that every grain of sand and drop of dew contains the whole universe and beyond. All of form and non-form are a part of one undulating multidimensional fabric of space-time. Nothing is separate from anything else. By pointing to a flower Nansen was imparting that one’s direct intimate experience of being with a flower, realizing that we are not separate from the flower or any other aspect of the universe, will always surpass any verse, no matter how subtle or profound it might be. Yesterday, M u m o n



reminded us that when we are stuck in our discriminating mind, we are all like phantoms haunting trees and plants. Similarly, today Nansen reminds us that seeing a flower, a verse, or a sage, as somehow separate from ourselves is like being stuck in a dream.

Right now, as I sit here before you, I’m holding this book, folding cloth and book stand. We all think of these “things” as separate objects, but deep down I know nothing is separate from anything else. As I hold these things, I’m inviting a deeper experience that my hands, this book, cloth, stand, the words on the page, and the ancient ancestors are all revealing together one alive, warm, vibrant fabric of reality. I can feel the mind of Nansen, Riku Taifu and

all of us now listening to the Dharma. We are of one being, one mind, one reality, and this reality has no restriction of place or time. Can you also feel it? Sosan Ganchi says, when doubt arises just simply say, “not two.”

Setcho tells us, “Hearing, seeing, touching, and knowing are not one and one; Mountains and rivers should not be viewed in the mirror.” In other words, our discriminating mind can only give us a reflection of reality where subject and object are separate from each other. Our Zen practice allows and encourages us to feel oneness with the mountain, the river, or our maple tree in the garden. When we really dive deep into the cold, serene, deep, midnight waters of Mu, we can’t help but realize that we are all seamless with the warm intimate infinite mind of the Tathagata.

I remember many years ago when Genki Takabayashi and other Chobo-Ji Sangha members were doing sesshins with Joshu Sasaki in New Mexico. On one cold desert morning, I was doing zazen and felt a vast, warm openheartedness. I don’t remember what koan I was working on at the time, but what came to me to share with Joshu Roshi in dokusan that morning was the verse from *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*. So after saying my koan, I burst into song with (Genjo sings) . . .

*On a clear day  
Rise and look around you  
And you’ll see who you are  
On a clear day  
How it will astound you  
That the glow of your being  
Outshines every star  
You’ll feel part of every mountain,  
Sea and shore  
You can hear  
From far and near  
A word you’ve never, never heard before...  
And on a clear day... On a clear day...  
You can see forever...  
And ever...  
And ever...  
And ever more...*

I don’t think it helped me make any progress on my koan, but that’s indeed how I was feeling that morning in New Mexico.

## Jukai Ceremony

Jukai (受戒 – Precept Receiver) candidates need to petition in writing to the Abbot at least one month prior to the ceremony. Jukai candidates usually have attended regular zazen at Chobo-Ji, or an affiliated temple, for a minimum of six months (including at least two weeklong sesshins), taken our precept classes or completed a course of equivalent study, must be regular financial supporters of the temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha), working to live our Great Vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate. At the ceremony, candidates take the [Precepts and Four Bodhisattva Vows](#), and receive a rakusu and a dharma name.

On the final day of Autumn Sesshin, Sept. 29, 2023, Jeff Lau did Jukai. Before this sesshin Jeff attended two weeklong sesshins at Chobo-Ji and took Sharon Meho Petit, Sensei’s precept class in Wenatchee. When Jeff was asked to write something about why now Jukai, he said:

*I don’t feel any time is better than another to commit to the precepts. I work daily to integrate these principles into my activities. While I may be more knowledgeable in a year, I have already resolved to follow the way. I realize that taking vows does not add weight to my load. This is the right time for me to commit because it always has been and will be the right time.*

When I asked Jeff about what he was looking for in a Dharma name he said:

*My trail name of Silent Achiever was given to me by a fellow hiker. It reflects my desire to do important work and reluctance to accept praise. I pursue quality by persistently pushing myself and others while setting an example of commitment. My mission statement, “I create a world of connection by nurturing relationships with peaceful communication,” guides my effort to align with my values. I am a volunteer mediator and facilitate several listening circles in our community.*

*I am often stunned by the sky. Mottled shades of grey and blue, vibrant red sunsets, and star filled clear nights easily waylay me. In these moments I forget myself and feel oneness – a sense of being right sized.*

*As the heavens subtly add depth to a landscape, I aspire to quietly support those I choose to serve with.*

When looking up possible kanji characters to include in Jeff's Dharma name, I searched for ones that referred to deep silence and not surprisingly the kanji for Zen came up. Therefore I gave Jeff the Dharma Name: ZenKyo "Zen = Silent / Profound Meditation (禅) – "Kyo" = Action (举).



Because Jeff is an active sangha member of the [Stone Blossom Sangha](#) in Wenatchee. I asked Meho Sensei to do the honor of placing the rakusu on Jeff.

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## Autumn Sesshin Poem

by Dan Chofu Beck

*We sit together  
to touch the Grand Immensity  
We listen to the clouds spilling  
beyond space and time  
On a rainy day  
you can hear forever.*

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## Genjo's Closing

### Incense Poem

2023 Autumn Sesshin

*Ask no more questions about the moon.  
Simply listen to the Autumn rain,  
and silently fold the laundry.*

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## Rohatsu Sesshin

Dec. 1 – 9

We welcome both in-person and Zoom participation in our eight-day Rohatsu Sesshin. Full-time participation is expected ([tentative schedule](#)). If you are not able to attend in person or for all eight days you may attend via Zoom for any portion that meets your schedule, but some participation each day is expected. Zoom participation requires [Zoom Registration](#) (which is in addition to the [application](#) required of all participants). Zoom participation will also be available for those who wish to attend morning (5:00 – 6:30 a.m.) and/or evening (7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) zazen Saturday through Friday: use this link (Meeting ID: 83130927949).

The cost of the sesshin is \$350, minus a month's dues for dues-paying members. Add a contribution of \$10 – \$20 per day if you are staying on campus. If attending by Zoom please make a donation that fits your budget and level of participation. You can

use [PayPal](#) or leave a check in the bowl at the entrance to the zendo. (Using PayPal please make your donation to [zen@choboji.org](mailto:zen@choboji.org) and note that your payment is for Rohatsu Sesshin.)

We begin at 5:30 p.m. Friday Dec. 1, and conclude around 11:00 a.m. the following Saturday. Please help us get an accurate count by sending an application by Nov. 15, and let us know if you would like to attend in person.

Participants in the zendo are required to test themselves for COVID 72 hours after sesshin begins. Participants flying to Seattle, please also test yourselves before travel. We will serve shared meals. Anyone experiencing flu or cold-like symptoms should not attend in person.

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## Winter Odayaka

Feb. 23 – 25, 2024

Odayaka means "peaceful," and these sesshins are a little less arduous with more dialogue than our weeklong sesshins. We will be offering traditional meals for those attending in person. On Friday and Saturday the beginning time will be either 5:30 (optional) or 7:00 a.m., and we'll close after the Closing Sutras at 8:30 p.m. On Sunday we'll begin at 5:00 a.m. and close around noon, following Council. Please fill out this [application](#) if attending in person.

Requested donations are \$50 for Friday, \$50 for Saturday, and \$30 for Sunday. Please note that if you are attending all three days, you may make a single payment of \$130. You can send your donations using [PayPal](#).

**Registration for Zoom attendance is required for each day.** The Zoom invitations and registration links are below.

*Please indicate the purpose of your donation in the note/memo field.*

**Day 1 – Friday, Feb. 23, 7:00 am**

Zoom only registration use this [link](#).

**Day 2 – Saturday, Feb. 24, 5:30 am**

Zoom only registration use this [link](#).

**Day 3 – Sunday, Feb. 25, 5:00 am**

Zoom only registration use this [link](#).

# Important Dates to Remember

Daily zazen: M-F, 5:30-6:30 AM; Sat. 7-8:30 AM; M & W, 7:30-8:30 PM; Sun. 6:30-7:30 PM

Intro to zazen most Tuesdays 7:30-8:45PM,

Dharma Council, most Saturdays at 8:30 AM – Dharma Dialogue, some Sundays at 7:30 PM

(See Google Calendar at <https://choboji.org/schedule/> for more detail and Zoom links.)

**Precepts Class, Part one .....**

**Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk .....**

**Board Meeting .....**

**Precepts Class, Part two .....**

**Sangha Hike .....**

**Faith Action Network Annual Dinner .....**

**Rohatsu Sesshin (eight-day Zen intensive) .....**

**Toya (Day to break all rules party) ...**

**Nov. 7, 7 - 8:15 pm**

**Nov. 12, 5 am - 11:15 am**

**Nov. 12 noon - 1:30 pm**

**Nov. 14, 7 - 8:15 pm**

**Nov. 18, 10:30 am to 5 pm**

**Nov. 19, 5:30 - 8:30 pm**

**Dec. 1 - 9 (Zendo closed)**

**Dec. 21, Potluck 6:30 pm, fun 7:30 pm**

*Zendo Closed for the holidays ...*

*Dec. 24 - Jan. 1, 2024*

**New Year's Day Chanting, bell ringing, potluck ...**

**Jan. 1, 10 am to noon**

**Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Jan. 14, 5 am - 11:15 am**

**Board Meeting .....**

**Jan. 14, noon - 1:30 pm**

**Zazenkai (1/2 day sit) with zazen, Dokusan and Dharma Talk ...**

**Feb. 11, 5 am - 11:15 am**

**Winter Odayaka (three-day Zen intensive) ...**

**Feb. 23- 25**



*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

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

