



# PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 10.3

Autumn 2003

## Dear Members and Friends,

The rains have returned. After a very long, hot, dry summer, we are making up for lost time. On October 20th, we broke the record for rainfall in a single day. All of our nearly depleted reservoirs are full again. The colors of autumn are flourishing, and the nights are again noticeably longer than the days.

Autumn Sesshin (9/20 – 9/26) was small in numbers but big in spirit. I was very moved by the maturity in our Sangha; even the members (Marilyn, Ryan & Mary) attending their first full-time weeklong sesshin persevered gracefully. Our Assistant Tenzo (cook), Scott (Ishin) Stolnack, took on the role of Dai-Tenzo for this sesshin and did a fabulous job. ChoBo-Ji must be doing something right when those fulfilling a post for the first time at sesshin can do so well. Carol (Jokai) Perron once again served ably as our Jikijitsu

(timekeeper). John (Daijo) Lowrance, kept us all organized and on task as our Shika (manager). Peter (Shinkon) Glynn, who travels each quarter from California to attend Chobo-ji's sesshins, was our lead Jisha (tea server) after Chris (Zenshin) Jeffries' departure. Our more informal and substantial teas after samu (work period) were blessed with a wide variety of delicious and nutritious snacks and drinks. Carolyn (Josen) Stevens was our Densu (chant leader), and when she was away at class our Tenzo (Ishin) filled in for her. Michelle (Muji) LeSourd was my Inji (abbot attendant) and Peggy (Kochi) Smith-Venturi did the altar flowers. Everyone

worked together, and once again, ChoBo-Ji shines inside and out. At the conclusion of sesshin we had a Jukai (Buddhist Precept) ceremony for Bob Timmer, which you can read about on page 8.

The following weekend, Genki Takabayashi Roshi (Chobo-ji's founding abbot) was in town and on Sunday, October 21st (Bodhidharma's Memorial Day & the 23rd anniversary of my ordination as a Zen priest), he held a small pottery show ex-

Three or four times a year I'm invited to lead a half-day mini-sesshin there, and many EZG's members have attended Chobo-ji's weeklong retreats. The next mini-sesshin in Ellensburg will be Saturday, November 22nd. Recently, I've been invited to Wenatchee, once to speak at the Cascade Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (CUUF), and on September 13th to lead a half-day mini-sesshin. Todd & Sharon Petit, who are ChoBo-Ji members organized both events. Daiki Cadman, who grew up in Wenatchee, traveled with me to both times, and Bob Timmer came with us for mini-sesshin. CUUF has had a sitting group for some time and I am happy to begin an association with them. On pages 2 & 3 you will find some offerings of both Sharon and Todd.



## Autumn Sesshin Participants

clusively for Chobo-ji's students. Genki Roshi sold many of his finest Japanese Tea bowls. Opening the ceremony for Bodhidharma, Genki Roshi read a poem celebrating his 60 years of Zen practice. When asked how his 60 years of training is manifested today, Roshi pointed down the long table filled with his pottery. You can read Roshi's poem and see pictures of his pottery on page 2.

ChoBo-Ji has had a long association with the Ellensburg Zen Group (ReiUnZan-Ji) since its inception several years ago.

idly. Hopefully the Board will be able to select a choice that works for us financially so that the repair or replacement can take place during the week between Christmas and New Years (12/25 – 1/1) when the zendo is will be closed. It has been Chobo-ji's habit not to do year-end fund appeals, but it would be helpful if those reading this considered making a donation to help with the funding of this important project. By the way, I want to thank those who made a special contribution to the paving of our parking area behind the Zen House; it is grand! Please ignore the "No

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Parking” signs; all ChoBo-Ji members and attenders are welcome to park in back.

In addition to the subjects mentioned above, you will also find in this issue my Dharma Talk from the 6th day of Autumn Sesshin, which is dedicated to my dying friend Bill (DaiShin) Foster. In addition, Rev. Genko Blackman writes some more about her experience at DBZ, and all the information you will need to register and attend Rohatsu Sesshin at Camp Indianola is included. Also enjoy Paul Mullin’s piece “Hakuin and the Baby.”

Some additional dates that I would like everyone to be aware of are as follows: Genko and I will be at DBZ monastery with Eido Shimano Roshi from 10/30 – 11/10; the zendo will be closed for Thanksgiving and Rohatsu from 11/27 – 12/8; Toya (winter solstice party) will likely be the evening of Saturday, December 20th (watch your e-mail for further details); our New Years celebration will be from 10 – noon (chanting and potluck brunch) on January 1st, 2004; Josen and I will be in France to lead a three day sesshin for Chiba Sensei’s European Aikido students, we will be in France from the 21st of January to the end of the month.

I hope you enjoy our offerings, and please make your reservation for Rohatsu early.

With gassho,

*Genjo Osha*

### **Autumn Sesshin 2002 Closing Incense Poem**

*Nothing lasts.  
The leaves will soon depart.*

*Before they go, glimpses  
of bright hues.*

*Now gone, gone,  
completely gone.*

*Nothing lasts.*

## **Zen Practice Incense Poem**

**Oct. 5th, 2003  
MuHoAn Genki Roshi**

*Autumn Moon Shining Way,  
On Cho Bo Ji temple grounds,  
Reveling Mu Ho An’s  
60 Years of Strong Zen activity.*

*The sleeves of Genpo’s robes,  
Blow in the wind,  
Continuing without end.*

*All mountains shimmer  
with beautiful hues,  
A pure cloud passes,  
going, going going.*

## **This I Believe**

**by Sharon Petit**

I am a Zen Buddhist, as well as a Unitarian Universalist. I find no conflict between my two religions. Both believe you are responsible for looking inside yourself for the big answers. Why am I here? Is there a God? And they both respect all religions and ways of searching for the ultimate meaning of life.

I was first introduced to Buddhism at a Baptist youth convention, where the lecturer admitted to meditation and respect for the Buddha as a great teacher. This was a shock to me as a college freshman who had been brought up in the Southern Baptist Church and believed Buddha was worshipped as a god.



*Genki Roshi Pottery Show*



In January 1968, Lee Petit, the brother of my husband Todd, returned to Wenatchee after living in Hawaii for several years. He openly acknowledged being Zen Buddhist, and my instruction in Zen was under way. Lee continued to give Todd and me books on Zen to read, and the three of us tried meditation. I was not good at it. My knees would never reach the floor and I found being totally still for even five minutes almost impossible. Yet, I recognized some deep truth there that I could not let go. So even after Lee’s death in 1980, when Todd and I abandoned Zen for more worldly pursuits, I felt that someday I would get back to it.

That someday came as a result of a series of family deaths and the tragedy of 9/11. On that beautiful and terrible September morning there seemed nothing to do but to sit down and fold our legs in meditation. That began an intense period of meditation and reading the old books we had inherited from Lee, particularly Phillip Kapleau’s Three Pillars of Zen, where Kapleau talks about experiences of Americans studying Zen at temples in Japan, particularly Ryutakuji Monastery.

Ultimately this led me to search the Internet for a possible Zen group or teacher near Wenatchee. What I found was ChoBo-Ji and Genjo Osho. ChoBo-Ji had grown out of a meditation group that I had briefly sat with at the University of Washington in the late seventies. Genjo had studied at Ryutakuji. It all came together and Genjo kindly replied to my email and invited us to attend our first mini-sesshin in October 2001.

Now I had been having a wonderful experience up to this point with great healing and lovely spiritual feelings. However, when I sat down at ChoBo-Ji I ran straight into what Charlotte Joko Beck calls Pandora's Box. In this box we keep all our fears and the darker aspects of ourselves, like our anger, and our cruelty. Frankly, I broke and left the Zendo. Later I tried to tell Genjo that I had just gotten too hot and felt like I was going to faint. He said, "Just faint. When you sit, many things come up and you just have to sit with them."

Well I returned to the meditation hall and completed that sesshin and another last year. I have said my koan a thousands of times. I have seen the breath that was the Big Bang, I have been forged in the fires of the stars and been one with the bird song and an eagle on New Years Day. Finally, this last month I had Dharma Interview with Genjo and "answered" my first koan.

This is what I have learned. I can go to a potluck picnic and not take a dish and still have a good time. This was a big realization for me. I would have taken a dish to the picnic but I forgot about it. Now anyone who knows me understands how seriously I take my duties to bring a dish to a potluck. Indeed, most think my mission in life is to feed the world. A year before I would have been so upset about not doing the "right thing" that I

would have spent the entire day apologizing and would never have relaxed enough to enjoy myself. Instead I happily announced that I had forgotten to bring even potato chips without one whit of guilt.

What freedom, to act naturally! Okay but what about the big questions like death and what is beyond. I have had to deal with this question up close and personal once again as I wait and watch yet another sister die of cancer. I have found profound comfort in regard to this most basic religious question in Shinryu Suzuki's passage from Zen Mind Beginners Mind on "Nirvana, the Waterfall." "When the water returns to its original oneness with the river, it no longer has any individual feeling to it; resumes its own nature, and finds composure. How very glad the water must be to come back to the original river! If this is so, what feeling will we have when we die?"

What about morality? Christianity has the Ten Commandments. Buddhists have the Ten Precepts.... These guide us until we reach the greater understanding which is the root of compassion from which all moral laws are derived.

I believe with D. T. Suzuki that Christ did not die once for the sins of the world. Rather, there are individuals, often called Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, who sacrifice themselves for the rest of us again and again. I believe that Mother Theresa was one of them. They are of all faiths.

This is only the beginning of my journey and practice. I have a new koan now. This practice lasts a lifetime. I am in no hurry. If I persist then perhaps I will reach the understanding that D. T. Suzuki describes as "when you look at the flower, the flower looks back at you."



Todd & Sharon Petit

## The Diamond Sutra!

by Todd Petit

*Diamond Cutter*

*What dangerous text is this?  
Light bleeds from my  
mind!*

I immediately applied a poultice of delusion and ignorance to the wound, but I think some damage has been done.

## Hakuin and the Baby

by Paul Mullin, 5/28/03

*The Zen Master Hakuin was praised by his neighbors as one living a pure life. A beautiful Japanese girl whose parents owned a food store, lived near him. Suddenly without any warning, her parents discovered she was with child. This made her parents angry. She would not confess who the man was, but after much harassment at last named Hakuin. In great anger the parents went to the master, "Is that so?" was all he would say. After the child was born it was brought to Hakuin. By this time he had lost his reputation, which did not trouble him, but he took very good care of the child. He obtained milk from his neighbors and everything else the little one needed. A year later the girl-mother could stand it no longer. She told her parents the truth—that the real father of the child was a young man who worked in the fishmarket. The mother and the father of the girl at once went to Hakuin to ask his forgiveness, to apologize at length, and to get the child back again. Hakuin was willing. In yielding the child, all he said was: "Is that so?"*

-- from Zen Flesh, Zen Bones

It's the koan-like nature of even the simplest (especially the simplest) Zen stories to keep haunting you until you crack them, or perhaps more accurately, until they crack you. I was a teenager when I first came across this story, quoted in a college textbook of my sister's called Religions of the World. Of

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course, what struck me most back then is that this bizarrely unflappable “Zen Master” would simply take a baby into his care based on accusations he knew to be false. One can only imagine he was completely unprepared for the parenthood (something any teenage boy can sympathize with); and the fact that he met the challenge without even seeming to blink an eye was truly awesome to me. It definitely fanned the flames of my interest in Zen. These guys, it seemed, could face anything, at a moment’s notice.

**N**ow, at least fifteen years later, having practiced Zen for 12 years and having been a dad for one (a stay-at-home Dad for 6 months), what strikes as most awesome isn’t that Hakuin took the child into his care, but that he was willing to give it up when the seemingly fickle grandparents came round to collect it. To me, that is utterly amazing. No way could I do it: not with my own baby boy, not with any child with whom I’d spent the first year of life. You become so invested, so attached—indeed, so in love— with a baby that it’s hard to be away from them for more than a couple of days.

**B**ut there’s Hakuin, a year later, doing what must be the right thing, again merely on the word of some not-so-likeable people. What’s the lesson here? I’m not completely sure. I’m still learning it. I think it has to do with the profound choices we’re faced with, often spur of the moment, and how it’s incumbent upon us to stay as even-keeled as we can.

**B**y all commonly accepted standards, Hakuin has every right to react with moral outrage, both at the initial accusation, and again when the family came round later to take the baby like so much forgotten baggage. So why doesn’t he? Well, the easy answer is: he’s a Zen Master. Such individuals don’t truck much with moral outrage. But I think the question is worth a little more digging than that.

**I**n the West, not really knowing any better, we tend to equate “Zen Master” with “wizard” or “ascended being”, or perhaps more pejoratively, “empty shell,” and further in the more fundamentalist vein, “amoral idol worshipper.” But what if all “Zen Master” really meant, when you’ve stripped away the ritualistic trimmings specific to Zen practice, was “complete human being.” Then I’d say Hakuin’s actions make a perfect sort of sense. He saw the truth in front of him—a child that needed care—and he cared for the child. Then later, when he saw a family who recognized their error and wanted to become whole again, he gave the kid up. I don’t imagine that just because Hakuin was a Zen Master, he felt no pain at parting with the child. I imagine that his practice allowed him the equanimity to face the pain with courage and without adding more suffering to the world through outrage.

**T**he world is suffering right now, arguably more so than usual. Many of us on the Left are perhaps rightfully outraged at the ignorance, self-righteousness and high-handed hypocritical moralism that has brought us to this pass. Maybe we should ask ourselves, though, how far our outrage will get us in solving the problem. I seek counseling from Genjo Osho-san, abbot of the Seattle Zen Temple, ChoBo-Ji, in the Rinzai Dharma tradition. (Hakuin is an extremely important reformist link in the Japanese Rinzai line). When I expressed to him my anger and frustration over the current political situation, he told me the best thing I could do for the political future is bring my son up well. Talk about long-term solutions to short-term problems! How can you argue with that?

**S**o those are some of my thoughts on Hakuin and his baby. I feel like there’s more to say, but... I have to go take care of my boy. He’s turning one in a week. And you can call me a hypocrite, but I thank the lord I ain’t no Zen Master, and ain’t nobody taking him away from me.

## Returning from DBZ

**I**n September I returned to Seattle after almost eight months of training at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, one of only two Rinzai Zen Buddhist monasteries in this Country. Zen training is very much a personal responsibility; one is left alone to meditate several hours a day, with minimal contact with the teacher. In Rinzai Zen, the teacher focuses on koans, those seemingly nonsensical riddles that force the student to transcend a self-centered, brain-bound understanding of reality and experience life from a broader, deeper perspective. There is very little support and guidance in this except for the companionship of the other students at the monastery. We all worked very hard, waking up at 4:30 a.m. and sitting in meditation before breakfast at about 7, and then a full workday. We meditated half an hour before lunch, and spent the evening in meditation as well, each meeting briefly (five minutes or so) individually with Eido Shimano Roshi to review our koan work.

**O**ur daily work tasks were very basic: laundry, feeding the wood-burning furnaces, taking care of the monastery and grounds, cooking, and caring for the guests who arrived each weekend for yoga retreats or other gatherings. Meals were taken in silence, using the same nested bowls we use here at ChoBo-Ji. It is an austere and difficult form of training, not for everyone. But often our guests would say they truly understood the saying, “No pain, no gain,” after being there. And certainly one can feel the result of this vigorous training in an inner calm and in the ability to act from a deeper center rather than from a more anxious, self-centered place. While it is not possible for most of us to take the time for this type of training, it is possible to focus our efforts in our daily lives toward the same end.

Gassho,

*Genko Blackman*

## Hekiganroku: Case 75

### Ukyu's Unfair Blows

(6th day, Autumn Sesshin, 2003)

## ENGO'S INTRODUCTION

The sacred sword is ever in hand: it is death-dealing and life-giving. It is there, it is here, simultaneously giving and taking. If you want to hold fast, you are free to hold fast. If you want to let go, you are free to let go. Tell me how it will be when one makes no distinction between host and guest, and is indifferent to which roll one takes up. See the following.

## MAIN SUBJECT

A monk came from Joshu Osho's assembly to Ukyu, who said to him, "What do you find in Joshu's teaching? Is there anything different from what you find here?" The monk said, "Nothing different." Ukyu said, "If there is nothing different, why don't you go back there?" and hit him with his stick. The monk said, "If your stick had eyes to see, you would not strike me like that." Ukyu said, "Today I have come across a monk" and he gave him three more blows. The monk went out. Ukyu called after him and said, "One may receive unfair blows." The monk turned back and said, "To my regret, the stick is in your hand." Ukyu said, "If you need it, I will let you have it." The monk went up to Ukyu, seized his stick, and gave him three blows with it. Ukyu said, "Unfair blows! Unfair blows!" The monk said, "One may receive them." Ukyu said, "I hit this one too casually." The monk made bows. Ukyu said, "Osho! Is that how you take leave?" The monk laughed aloud and went out. Ukyu said, "That's it! That's it!"

## SETCHO'S VERSE

Easy to call the snakes,  
hard to scatter them.  
How splendidly they crossed swords!  
Although the sea is deep, it can be drained;  
The kalpa stone is hard, but wears away.  
Old Ukyu! Old Ukyu!  
Who is there like you?  
To give the stick to another –  
That was truly thoughtless!

Plum Mountain News

I am not sure that anyone sitting here in Sesshin today recalls Bill Foster. Back in July of 1997, I gave Bill his Dharma name "DaiShin" which means Vast Heart/Mind, at his Jukai (Buddhist Precept) ceremony. It was the first Jukai ceremony I ever celebrated on my own. At that time, Bill was fighting cancer, and he did not know how long he would live. Before he ever met me, Bill had studied Buddhism for several years in Hawaii, but had never had much success at meditation. After consulting with me as a Zen priest and spiritual director at my office, he started a daily meditation practice and came to one or two of Cho Bo Ji's mini-sesshins. As I recall, he had to sit in a chair because the cancer treatments and ongoing complications with diabetes precluded sitting on the floor. His intense dedication to practice, many years of inquiry, and facing his own mortality, shortly gave rise to a penetrating insight into his own true nature. To celebrate his gratitude for the Buddhist path, he asked to do Jukai. He said, that before he died he wanted to formally take the precepts and receive a Rakusu (a symbolic patch of the Buddha's robe worn around the neck).

Before World War Two, as a young man, Bill was a merchant marine and traveled the world. During World War II he became a U.S. Naval officer and by the time of the Korean War he was also a naval pilot. After retiring from the Navy, he raised a family and lived many years on Kauai, one of the Hawaiian Islands. There he was an avid sailor, fisherman and hiker, and for many years managed the Kauai International Airport. He is very much an "Old Salt" kind of fellow. After a divorce and starting a new marriage, he and his wife

moved to Seattle for several years, before returning to Kauai about a year ago.

We probably met sometime in 1996, and over the years we have known each other, we have formed a kind of mutual admiration society, and expressed much love for each other. I have always felt a soft spot for Bill, and he has always seemed to have one for me. After zazen last night, Bill called from Hawaii to let me know that he had entered Home Hospice care. Beginning with complications from his cancer treatments, which aggravated his diabetes, Bill has seen a long decline in his physical health. Now his kidneys are failing and he is not seeking further treatment. His doctors have told him that he may live a week or two more. Therefore, he said this was his departing telephone call to me.

Bill's voice sounded very strong and clear. He apologized for not staying in touch more often, but wanted to call to say goodbye and express his deep love and gratitude. He said he was ready to leave this life and wanted to depart with as much grace and dignity as he could muster, leaving on his own terms. I told him that though he would soon depart this body, he "would always reside in the hearts of those who



*DBZ Temple Courtyard*

know and love you." I told him that his love and gratitude sustains and contributes to my work in the world, and that through his continuing love and support I have found the strength to face my own fears and shortcomings. He said that it pleased him greatly that he could contribute in some small way to my growth and endeavors, and expressed his desire to have the temple receive some of his many personal

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treasures. I told him that he would always be with me, and he said that this thought unburdens his heart.

**H**e then asked me if I had any advice for his journey. I told him to “go gently, and prepare a place for me.” As soon as I said these words, I knew that they were a holdover from my own conditioning about heaven and hell, and the idea that there is someplace we go after dropping this body. In Buddhism too there is the idea of the Pure Land that may be reached after this life. But as we have learned from Zen Master Hakuin’s (d. 1768) Song of Zazen, “This very place is the Lotus Land of Purity, this very body is the Body of the Buddha.” In other words, even though we are all aware of the ceaseless comings and goings of life and death, from an absolute perspective there is no place to go. This world is it. Nothing is permanent and everything is changing form, but nothing really goes anywhere. This is it! There is nowhere else; therefore, there is nowhere for DaiShin to go, and no way to prepare or save a place somewhere else.

**E**ven though Bill is dying, he didn’t bite, he did not say, “Yes, I will gladly prepare a place for you.” I was so impressed! It was no test on my part, I wasn’t trying to see how he would respond, but he just didn’t bite. He ignored my request! He would not sanction my ignorance; I could feel immediately that he knew that he wasn’t going anywhere. There is no place to go! Of course he phoned me as his friend and Zen priest; in other words, I was in the role of the host and he was my guest, but at this moment the roles reversed and he became the host, and I became the guest. By ignoring my request to “hold a place” he tacitly reminded me that there is no place to go, and nothing to hold. “Where do we go after the body is dispersed into the four elements?” is an important Zen koan.

**F**rom a relative perspective, it is understood that each one of us is an aggregate of composite parts at some temporary intersection of a multi-dimensional universe. From an absolute perspective, it is understood that we have no separate existence

apart from each other and that “existence” is nothing more than myriad manifestations of the Vast Void or Sunyata. Of course, each one of us is a unique manifestation of this multi-dimensional universe, but every manifestation is but a temporary ethereal expression of Muuu.... There is one reality not two. There is no place to go, no place to hold, and nothing to get.

**W**e are all on the brink of life and death whether we realize it or not. This telephone call from DaiShin helps me realize this. Our work here on the cushion also helps us understand this. **THIS** is naked, impermanent, volatile, subtle, profound Muuu... When we open to this truth, we feel a bit more awake. When we are more awake, it becomes easier to prioritize what needs doing. Sesshin helps us set our priorities properly. When we realize that everything is like a flash of lightening, then our priorities naturally simplify and become clear.

**I**f we can get beyond the unavoidable fear of life and death, transcending the temporary nature of aggregate existence, then we find the courage to simply do what needs doing in this moment. And what needs doing? Well, one way to say it is to “love one another,” the Zen way to say it is “chopping wood and carrying water,” or “after breakfast wash your bowls,” or “come let’s share some tea.”

**C**ase number 75 is a wonderful example of transcending host and guest. This case is about how to be courageous and playful on the brink of life and death. This case shows us that we can be both irreverent and serious while riding the waves of this ocean of reality. It is possible to be skillfully present, balanced and open hearted even under the most challenging circumstances.

**O**ur practice leads us to be more awake and free in our actions. Awake to what? Well, a naked realization of things just as they are. If you came early enough to the Dokusan room this morning, what did you see out the third floor window at the break of dawn? Perhaps you noticed the thin crescent moon hanging low in the clear eastern sky, with very distant Jupiter just above playing the part of the brilliant

morning star, and Mercury hanging more faintly just bellow. The Earth’s own reflective power subtly illuminating the moon’s night, so the full face of the moon could be seen above the thin sun-lit crescent. Without the effort we have expended in sesshin, we might not even notice such a sight.

**L**ast night we had what seemed to me to be the most delicious tea and cookie. When I was drinking the tea, I thought to myself, only in sesshin does tea taste this good. Taking a bite of cookie and then a sip of tea, the combined flavors exploded, revealing the most delightful taste. Wow! If it were not for sesshin, this sumptuous taste would likely be missed. Instead, there would be eating with little or no appreciation, and likely I would be a gluten for more, not realizing the subtle treasure of just one cookie, or even just one bite. What a shame to miss the real taste of tea and cookie when life is so brief! What a shame to be up at dawn, but miss the crescent moon and Jupiter. What a shame to not be fully present to every moment and activity. Even spreading the compost mulch in the garden during samu (work period) can be “sumptuous” if we are awake to the richness of this moment.

**I**n sesshin (Facing Heart practice) we really do get a deeper appreciation for this moment; we are able to be more present; we do wake up at least a little. During sesshin important priorities will become clear. It may seem odd to say, but every time I do sesshin I realize what I’m **not** doing and what I now must prioritize. After sesshin I come home determined to do all things that need doing. In some cases, before sesshin, I did not have the eyes to see what needed to be done, let alone any idea of how to proceed.

**H**owever, don’t waste any time in this sesshin trying to analyze what needs to be done. Instead nurture true insight. Don’t try to force awareness and don’t settle for daydreaming. Keep to the intention to be present to the “presence.” Keep your attention on Mu or the “one shining alone” that pervades the universe. “We can now see this! Listen to this!” Express this!

**“The sacred sword is ever in hand”; in**

other words, the sword that cuts all delusions is always with us. "It is death-dealing and life-giving"; in other words, our "true nature" knows when to hold on or let go, when to say "no" or "yes." When we realize our "true nature" or more simply "see things as they really are," of course we know what to cut off and what needs to be prioritized. When we are clear, we use the sword on ourselves, which is quite appropriate. However, there are times in everyone's life where we are in the role of teacher, supervisor, parent or senior peer, where we have the occasion to be the host and receive guests. After sesshin your sword will be much sharper, so be careful! You may dice up the people you care about the most.

After sesshin, you will be able to see and call the bullshit right up front. If you wield the sword a little too ferociously, the ones you love may be taken aback. Yet, we must be ferocious, there is no sense in wasting time, this life is far too short. But how is it done without causing an inordinate amount of problems? When we are clear, we are effective at giving and taking, holding fast and letting go. With clarity we know when to stop and repeat, and when to move on. "Tell me how it will be when one makes no distinction between host and guest"; in other words, give me an example of when host and guest are transcended. See the following.

"A monk came from Joshu Osho's assembly to Ukyu," note this is not the same Joshu of "Joshu's Mu." Joshu Sekizo in this story is a Dharma grandson of Shinshu the founder of the so-called "Northern School" of Zen. Both Shinshu Zenji and Eno DaiKan Zenji are Dharma Heirs of Gunin DaiMan Zenji the fifth patriarch. Eno Zenji is known as the founder of the "Southern School" and all current schools of Zen descend from him. Ukyu was another of Baso's (Eno's Dharma grandson) outstanding Dharma Heirs, which include his more familiar Dharma brothers Nansen and Hyakujo (Rinzai's Dharma Grandfather). The monk from Joshu Sekizo represents the Northern School and Ukyu Zenji represents the Southern School.

Ukyu, says, "What do you find in the

Joshu's [Northern School] teaching? Is there anything different from what you find here [Southern School]?" The monk said, "Nothing different." Ukyu said, "If there is nothing different, why don't you go back there?" Now, what did the monk mean when he said "Nothing different?" Did he mean that the teachings of the Northern School and Southern School are indistinguishable, or was he hinting that all differences are superficial and that there is only one Dharma, one reality? Since the differences in style and method of the two schools must have been well known, we should probably presume the latter. On the other hand, perhaps the poor monk really couldn't discern north from south. At this point, we don't know for sure. Nevertheless, Ukyu launches right in with "If there is nothing different, why don't you go back there?" and hit him with his stick.

If the monk really couldn't distinguish north from south, or was deeply disturbed or thrown off balance by the severity of Ukyu's response, he might have left with his tail between his legs, or worse responded violently himself. However, this monk responded by saying "If your stick had eyes to see, you would not strike me like that." In other words, "If you did not strike out indiscriminately, you could be a better judge of character and you would not yet dismiss me." Realizing that this monk had something on the ball, Ukyu said, "Today I have come across a monk" and he gave him three more blows. Evidently, Ukyu was one of the first Zen masters to make such free use of the keisaku (teaching stick). Therefore, there is some of Ukyu in our keisaku. When Ukyu first used the stick on the monk he was fishing to see if the monk could rise to the occasion, now

he was using the stick for encouragement and praise, like a firm pat on the back.

To those unfamiliar with our ways, the keisaku seems very strange and violent. Outsiders often express dismay, and feel sorry for the poor Zen practitioner who submits to such torture. "Those self-absorbed Zen students sit cross-legged on the floor all day, while allowing themselves to be whacked with a stick, even when they get up and walk about they all have to follow in a line. They have no freedom at all, they must all be nuts." [laughter]

The monk began to depart. There was nothing too significant about the monk's departure; at this point, he had been acknowledged and as the guest had nothing more to say. Ukyu, liking this monk, makes a move to test him further. Ukyu calls after the monk and says, "One may receive unfair blows." It is true; life is not fair. Is this all he is saying? In Zen training we come to know that the blows from a Zen master's keisaku may have many different meanings.



that therefore God or Karma is punishing him? Or, is life just unpredictable and impermanent? Is life always so indiscriminate and unreasonable? Why should someone who has just recently flowered and seen into his truth nature die without ample time to appreciate and share it? DaiShin has expressed deep gratitude for the part I played in his opening; when in

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truth, I was simply present when the fruit was ready to fall. With eyes wide open, he sees the errors of his ways, and has new compassion for one and all. And now his diabetes takes him; how “fair” is that?

Ukyu says, “One may receive unfair blows.” Is that not the truth! But, there is more here than first meets the eye. Just this slap [Genjo slaps his hands hard], just this cancer pain, just this struggle, is always revealing that which is inconceivable. THIS mysterious truth is manifesting right here now. With this realization, DaiShin knows there is no place to go, no reason to save a place, or reason to cling to this body. Without worrying about enough time, DaiShin is ready to make good use of what time he has left. He tells me, in tears, he is dying such a happy man. I am pleased for him, and hopeful that there may be this kind of serenity when my time comes to drop this body. Bill has been close to death many times in his life, at war or in storms at sea, but has never before felt such equanimity. No fear at all. “Pardon my blubbering,” he says. I say, “No trouble, I am honored that you are sharing your gratitude, joy and sorrow with me.” Together we shed more tears.

On hearing Ukyu say, “One may receive unfair blows” the monk turns back and says, “To my regret, the stick is in your hand.” In other words, “Yes that is so, but if I were in the role of the host, I would show you how it’s done.” Here Ukyu really shows his freedom to let go or hold on when he says, “If you need it, I will let you have it!” Does this sound very approachable? If you were the monk, would you have the courage to stay your course? The monk does not blink, no, he marches right up to Ukyu seizes the stick, and gives him three blows! Seeing the monk’s strength and clarity Ukyu could not resist, and this reveals Ukyu’s own clarity. He was not attached to being the great Zen Master; he really wanted to see what this fellow was made of. Now Ukyu shouts almost laughingly, “Unfair blows! Unfair blows!” Saying at once, “How rude!” and “Bravo!” He is also sticking it to the monk to further explain himself.

What is behind the blow with the keisaku? What is behind the slap [Genjo again slaps his hands loudly]? Beneath and within everything is the “sound of one hand clapping” or Muuu... The monk then used Ukyu’s own words and said, “One may receive them.” What does this mean? Someone perceives or receives the unreasonable unfathomable slap or blow. What one is that? Ukyu said, “I hit this one too casually.” Ukyu is acknowledging that he caught a live one, someone who displays spunk, courage and insight. “Yes, I hit you unfairly, but look what a fine fellow I found.” At this the monk probably rolled his eyes, made bows and turned about to leave. Ukyu put one last hook in the water and said, “Osho! Is that how you take your leave?” The monk laughed aloud and went out. Ukyu said, “That’s it! That’s it!” as in “Yes, laughing is it, way to go!” and also I think he was saying, “That’s all? Are we done?” Are we ever done or complete? What a fine Zen drama. On the surface it may seem very superficial, but look more deeply and you see “THIS IS IT!”

With gassho,

*Genjo Osho*

## Jukai

On the last day of Autumn Sesshin, 9/26/03, Bob Timmer, who has completed five week-long sesshins at ChoBo-Ji, acknowledged his respect for Zen practice and Buddhist principles by accepting the precepts, chanting the Bodhisattva vows, and receiving a Rakusu (symbolic piece 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. Bob’s new Dharma name is Dai-Gan (Great Rock). Over the short time Dai-Gan has trained with us it is easy to see how he is becoming a great rock in our community.



## Rohatsu Sesshin 11/30 - 12/8

Please make your reservations soon. The cost of sesshin is \$310 (less dues). No part-time participation is allowed. We will leave from our Zendo, 1811 20th Ave., at 4 p.m. on Nov. 30th. It would be great if everyone who is coming to Sesshin was at the Zendo by 3:00 p.m. so that we can pack up and make car pool arrangements to Camp Indianola, (360) 297-2223. Formal will begin zazen after a light dinner. Rohatsu ends around 10:00 am on Monday, 12/8, but it takes time to pack up and get back to Seattle, so please don't plan departure flights before 2pm.

### Transportation:

We will be carpooling from the Zendo at 4 pm. If you are coming from the airport you can take Shuttle Express from the baggage claim to the Zendo address above for about \$23 per person, \$50 for three people, \$60 for seven or less (travel time is 25-45min.) Their number is (800) 487-7433, <http://www.shuttleexpress.com/> (make reservations early). Or, you can take either the #174 or #194 Metro buses from the baggage claim area to downtown, and then transfer to either the #11, #12 or #43 going to the Zendo on Capitol Hill (travel time is about 1.5 hrs.). Bus fair \$2.

The route to Camp Indianola: travel north on I-5 to Edmonds, and follow the signs to the Edmonds-Kingston Ferry. From the ferry dock in Kingston, travel

0.3 miles and turn left onto the West Kingston Road. About .5 miles later turn left again on South Kingston Road. Continue 3.8 miles to Indianola Road and turn left. Turn again left at the stop sign. Drive approx. 0.5 miles down the road and take the last left (forced "T" turn). Follow signs to Camp Indianola. Proceed straight ahead at the crossroads. Parking is available in the main lot as you come into camp, right above the main lodge. From there come straight downhill past the main lodge on foot to the "Totem Lodge."

### What to bring to Rohatsu:

Please bring a zabaton 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).

### Food and Accommodations:

We serve three vegetarian meals, one large tea and two small teas per day. Leftovers may be available for snacking at the cook's discretion. Hot coffee and tea will be available most of the time. If you want food to munch on, please plan to bring your own. The kitchen and provisions in Totem Lodge are reserved for the planned meals. Totem Lodge has the large meeting room that we use for the zendo and meals, the main kitchen, and two dormitory wings (male & female) with bathrooms. There are semi-private rooms in Chak Chak about 50 yards from zendo with an additional kitchen.

### Schedule:

Sesshin begins with a wake-up bell shortly after 4:00 am. Breakfast is at 7:30 am, lunch at 11:30 am, and dinner at 6:00 pm. There are 30 min. breaks after each meal. We will have personal interview time with Osho-san three times a day, and two or more periods of walking meditation. Group zazen will adjourn at about 10:00 pm, with yaza (personal sitting practice) after that.

## 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 Daitokuji, 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 twenty years of tirelessly giving himself to the transmission of Buddha Dharma to the United States, in 1997 he retired as our teacher, got married and moved to Montana. There he is planting the seeds for yet another American Zen group, and doing the activities he loves best: gardening, pottery, and cooking.

Genjo Osho began his Zen training in 1975, was ordained in 1980, became an Osho (full priest) in 1990, and our Abbot in 1999. In 1981-82 he trained at Ryutakuji in Japan. Genjo Osho is assisted by Rev. Genko Kathy Blackman. In addition to his Zen duties, Genjo Osho is a psychotherapist in private practice, a certificated spiritual director, married to wife, Carolyn, and father to daughter, Adrienne. Our temple is in the Rinzai Zen School. Since Genki Roshi retired, Genjo Osho-san has continued his training with Eido T. Shimano Roshi, abbot of Dai Bosatsu Monastery in New York.

*World Wide Web Address*  
[www.choboji.org](http://www.choboji.org)

## Schedule

### Introduction to Zen

Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 pm

### Zazen

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

Saturdays, 6:30 - 8:00 am

Sundays, 6:30 pm, 1 hr.

### Dharma Talks

1st and 3rd Sundays, 7:30 pm, 1 hr.

**Sesshins:** Quarterly week-long retreats last week in March, June, September and the first week of December.

**Mini-Sesshins:** Half day retreats with breakfast, Dharma Talk and Dharma Interview. 5 - 11:20 am, Sundays: 11/23/03, 1/11/04, 2/8/04, 3/14/04

*Rohatsu Sesshin: 11/30/03 - 12/8/03*

*Spring Sesshin: 3/27/04 - 4/2/04*

*Summer Sesshin: 6/19/04 - 6/25/04*

*Autumn Sesshin: 9/18/04 - 9/24/04*

**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](tel: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 \$310. Members may subtract their monthly dues from the week-long sesshin cost.