



PLUM MOUNTAIN NEWS

Volume 10.4

Winter 2003-04

Dear members and friends,

My heart is filled with deep gratitude to be affiliated with this Sangha (Buddhist community). We completed 2003 with such a strong Rohatsu (December Zen Retreat) and fun Toya (Winter Solstice Party). Now we have begun 2004 with a festive feast on New Year's Day and celebrated the memorial, January 10th, of Rin-zai Gigen Zenji Dai Osho (Linchi, d. 866) the founder of our lineage of Zen, which also marks the fifth anniversary of my installation as ChoboJi's abbot.

Twenty-five people attended Rohatsu, everyone having done at least one week-long Zen sesshin before. Over the course of the eight days of practice together, our samadhi deepened and our hearts opened. On the morning of the eighth day (December, 8th), we celebrated the Historical Buddha's Enlightenment Day by rising at three in the morning and meditating through dawn. We concluded our time together with a Jukai (Dharma Precept) Ceremony for Rodger, Randal and Brenda (read more about the ceremony on page 8), followed by an informal brunch.

Our Tenzo (Chief cook) for this Rohatsu was John (Daikan) Green. Daikan worked tirelessly so that we could enjoy scrumptious vegetarian meals three times a day. Tom (Shodo) DeGroot was our Shika (Manager) organizing and coordinating the daily samu (work meditation) assignments. Shodo needed to depart sesshin to be with his mother who was gravely ill. She died shortly before the conclusion of sesshin, reminding us all of the impermanence of this physical form, and the importance of our quest to awaken and care for all beings.

In Shodo's absence, Rev. Genko Blackman, ably filled in as Shika. Our Jikijitsu (Time Keeper) was Charlie (TaiShin) Blackman; he helped us all hold a tight container so that we would have the spaciousness to face our true heart or "original face." Peter (Shinkon) Glynn served as our Jisha (Tea Preparer) and was assisted by Bob (Daigan) Timmer. Together they made sure we were served the most delicious tea and nutritious snacks. Dee (Seishun) Endelman was our Densu (Chant Leader) and did a great job learning the Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo sutra that we chant 33 times each morning of Rohatsu. Michelle (Muji) LeSourd served as my Inji



New Year's Day Sutra Ceremony

(Abbot assistant) and calmly directed Dharma Interview traffic when necessary. Frank (Daiui) Apodaca was our strong assistant keisaku holder (Jokai), and with his long Aikido training woke us up with great precision and compassion.

It usually follows that when we have a particularly strong Rohatsu, we have a particularly hilarious Toya, and this was certainly the case. Seishun (a.k.a. Dee-Dharma), Muji and, Daigan and Randal did

the Zen master Wee-Nie Radio Hour. Daiki sang a medley of hip Zen standards, and Taishin produced the Zazen Olympics, with Wayne (Shoki) as sports announcer! To fully appreciate the artistry involved, you had to be there. On a more harmonious note, Taag (Doshin) Ebert serenaded us with his cello.

At the Board meeting following January's mini-sesshin (monthly half-day retreat) we made progress on selecting the kind of new floor we want for our zendo (meditation hall). It looks like we will be going with some kind of bamboo composite. It's gorgeous, strong, affordable and eco-friendly. We also selected the date for our Annual Meeting, which will follow March mini-sesshin, 3/14, and begin at 11:30 am. At the Annual Meeting we elect our Board; therefore, we need a quorum of our membership, so please plan to attend.

In this issue of Plum Mountain News you will find two Rohatsu poems, a transcription of my Dharma Talk from Day Three, our Annual Financial Report, more about Genko's sojourn at DBZ, Spring Sesshin and training intensive announcements, and other indispensable tidbits to enjoy. Carolyn (Josen) and I will be away from January 20th through February 1st (we are traveling to France to do Sesshin with Chiba Sensei's Aikido Group in Strasbourg and to visit Paris); ChoboJi's regular practice schedule will, of course, continue in our absence. Please take care.

With gassho,

Genjo

Rohatsu Sesshin 2003
Closing Incense Poem

*The sun rises
over the eastern mountains.*

*Students of the Way,
Who sees the Zen dream
for what it is?*

*An eagle passes without trace,
Over the setting full moon.*

Daiki's Rohatsu Poem

Kinhin on the Deck of Totem Lodge

*Back and forth
Forth and back over
Long rain-wet boards
Step by step
Over reflections
of tree and sky
Over fir needles
Spread across the way
Like galaxies.*

*Stepping, stepping,
Leading, following,
Genko back and forth.*

*Winds shake the fir limbs,
While arrows whiz by
Back and forth,
forth and back
Across the universe.*

Spring Sesshin
March 27 - April 2, 2004

Please send a deposit by March 14th, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check to ChoBo-Ji. The cost of sesshin is \$210 (less dues). Sesshin begins promptly at 5 am the morning of Saturday, March 27th, so plan to be there at least 20 min. early. Sesshin will end around 11 am, Friday morning.



Rohatsu 2003 Participants

DBZ Sojourn
by Rev. Genko Blackman

Having returned from a six months' stay at Dai Bosatsu Zendo monastery in upstate New York this past September, it's taken me several weeks, and one return visit to the monastery, to begin to process the experience.

This was not my first prolonged stay at Dai Bosatsu, and so the details of daily routine and many of the people living at the monastery or attending sesshin were familiar to me. The biggest difference was waking up a half hour earlier than I had remembered – 4:30 most days and 4 a.m. during sesshin. While this may seem like a small thing, day after day of the earlier wake-up meant that everyone at DBZ was palpably more tired than before.

I arrived at DBZ in late February, and was astounded at the amount of snow on the ground and how cold the buildings were. Residents assured me that it had been even colder before I got there, not much comfort. There were so few residents at the end of the winter interim period that activities were pretty much limited to zazen, cooking, eating, and keeping the wood-burning furnaces going - a difficult task as the wood on hand was somewhat damp.

Shortly after I arrived, Jiro Osho, who had been Vice Abbot for the last ten years, left DBZ, and Denko Osho, another Dharma Heir of Eido Roshi's, from Pine Hill Zendo in Katonah, New York, replaced him. However, Denko Osho had obligations to his zendo and was not able to live at DBZ for some time. With the small number of us heading into spring kessei, and with the recent transition in Vice Abbots, it was clear that DBZ was undergoing a transformation. When the new officers for spring kessei were announced, I found I had become the Jisha for the term – one of the most physically demanding and time-consuming posts. I was lucky; almost everyone else had two posts, and one person had three.

The daily routine throughout most of kessei was the same – up at 4:30, sutras and zazen at 5, breakfast at 7, morning meeting, and then samu work practice from 8 until noon. At 12:30 we had zazen again, followed by lunch and more samu, an hour break, then more zazen and lights out. Sunday afternoons and Mondays were rest days in theory, although there was always more than enough work to spill over. I made it a point to set aside a couple of hours on Monday to practice tea ceremony, but the rest of the time was spent doing personal chores and Jisha catch-up – chores that hadn't been competed during the week. It actually didn't bother me to

keep busy running from chore to chore. And I was quite literally running – in my bare feet on the beautiful wood floors and slate stairs. In April my left foot began to swell painfully. At the local hospital I was told an x-ray showed no broken bones, and the doctor sent me back to the monastery with an Ace bandage. A week later my foot hurt so much I went to the orthopedic specialist, who took one look at the x-ray and said I had not one but two broken metatarsals. He sent me home with crutches and instructions to stay off my foot for four weeks, which I ignored. My foot healed slowly but adequately in spite of that.

I also experienced several episodes of high blood pressure, one of which was serious enough to keep me in the hospital overnight. And in August two more broken bones – this time in my right foot – finally got me in a cast and on crutches.

It was disconcerting to face one physical problem after another, and disappointing to feel that physical issues were dominating my time at DBZ. In the end it was clear that I could not continue on in this fashion, and so I decided to return to Seattle in spite of having told Eido Roshi that I would stay through Rohatsu Sesshin in December.

So what did I learn from this? Each of us has his or her own unique issues to puzzle through, and certainly one of mine has been learning how to read my own physical limits. But why has this been so difficult for me? This was perhaps the biggest revelation to me, when I finally got it. I had to loosen the grip of my attachment to my physical form to be able to read accurately when I was approaching that limit. As simple as that may sound, it was a new experience for me, and one I will continue to practice with for some time before I can consistently and reliably know how to truly take care of this physical body as the monastery it is. It is only through loosening attachments that we are able to get a better perspective – a broader view – of whatever our issue is. And the tighter we cling, the more difficult it is to see that we are clinging. A lifetime practice, and I am so grateful for it.

2003 Financial Report

2003 was another stable financial year for the zendo. Our income and expenses held steady, as did the average number of dues-paying members, about thirty per month. Revenue for the year was \$60,067, and expenses were \$31,704, leaving a net income of \$28,393. Most income came from dues and sesshin payments, and we also received donations for special projects including the pending project to replace the zendo floor. Our major expenses remain support for Genki Roshi, sesshin costs, and the house mortgage.

Using our positive net income, we were able to make principal payments on our loans, and our current indebtedness stands at \$131,242. This time last year, we owed \$155,283. In February, we were able to refinance one of our loans and shave off two percentage points. Although it's still a ways away, I'm hopeful that we'll be debt-free before the end of the decade.

Though I rush to prepare financial reports before a board meeting, I very much appreciate the opportunity to care for the zendo's finances. The generous support of every sangha participant is clearly evident. While each of us chooses how and when to donate, all of us together create the financial security which strengthens the spiritual container of our practice.

With palms together,

Josen Carolyn Stevens
Fusu/Treasurer



New Posts Beginning March 1st

John Daikan Green: Shika
(Host - Manager)

Scott Ishin Stolnack: Dai-Tenzo
(Chief cook for Sesshins)

Tom Shodo DeGroot: Tenzo
Assistant

Chris Zenshin Jeffries: Jiki Jitsu
(Timekeeper)

Dee Seishun Endelman: Jiki Jitsu
Assistant

Diane Joan Ste Marie: Densu
(Chant Leader)

Michelle Muji LeSourd: Densu
Assistant

Bob Daigan Timmer: Jisha
(Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Bryan Dairin Chaix: Jisha
Assistant

Charlie Taishin Blackman: Inji
(Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn Josen Stevens: Fusu
(Treasurer and financial manager)

Daiki Cadman & Genko Blackman:
Introduction to Zazen Leaders

Annual Meeting March 14th

Our Annual Meeting will be held after the Sunday, March 14th mini-sesshin (5 - 11:30 am). At this meeting we elect our Board of Directors for this year. The Board is the legal and fiscal guardian of the temple. If you are interested in serving, please let Shodo know beforehand. The Board meets 4-6 times a year. A quorum of at least half of our active (i.e. dues paying) members is required, so please plan to attend this important meeting.

Hekiganroku: Case 80 Joshu's "A Newborn Baby" (3rd day, Rohatsu Sesshin, 2003)

MAIN SUBJECT

A monk asked Joshu (d. 897), "Does a newborn baby possess the six senses or not?" Joshu said, "It is like throwing a ball into the rapids." The monk later asked Tosu, "What is the meaning of throwing a ball into the rapids?" Tosu said, "Nen after nen without ceasing."

SETCHO'S VERSE

The question: the six senses.

Purposeless.

Well acquainted with it, the masters.

A ball thrown into the rapids;

Do you know where it is carried?

When we do Sesshin we face our true Heart-Mind [*kokoro*] and learn in the process to care for all beings, great and small, animate and inanimate. The direction of our practice can be said to be the path of unfolding, or opening our hearts. By following this path of opening we naturally develop compassion for all of nature. Over time, we actualize our potential for being a *caring* voice of the Dharma.

We all have the potential to realize our true nature, but we are hindered by what we call "ignorance" or "delusions." When we don't see through our ignorance, then we are very narrowly self-focused and identified. As we combust, or see through the surface of things (ignorance, delusions and attachments), our "third-eye" opens. The opening of our third-eye is like seeing past the two-dimensional surface of those popular "magic-eye" pictures. What on the surface looks like chaos, when seen through, opens up to a much wider vista where we say, "Ah, yes, now I see." When we see the true nature of the universe we have the feeling of being at home, right where we are, no matter how pressing the circumstances or painful the situation. We are at home; we are with it.

My daughter once had an autoimmune disorder where her immune system started attacking healthy cells after responding to a common virus. This happened just before her fourth birthday, and she had what were described as "target lesions." She was hospitalized, and from day to day either her digestive system would totally shut down because it was being attacked by her immune system, or she couldn't walk because her limbs were being attacked. It was all pretty frightening and there was a chance that she could go into some kind of organ failure and die. Well, the situation was complicated, and as you can imagine, horrific for her parents. Of course, it was none too pleasurable for her, either. And on occasion I'm sure she felt abandoned and attacked at the hospital. However, I remember that year she did get about four different birthday cakes! (laughter)

As a parent in this frightening, complicated, situation, full of unknowns, it would be easy enough to go off into a kind of panic. Certainly, I had fear and anxiety, but to the credit of my Zen training, I could settle past my fears and reach a calm strong root. I'm sure that most everyone has had the experience of being in some crisis, where they nonetheless felt perfectly clear and settled. In such a moment, we seem to know *exactly* what to do and how best to respond. At these times, what needs to be done is done. It's taken care of; we are with it. In crisis situations, we don't know how it's going to turn out, but if we have reached this calm and centered root, it is easy to see what's right in front of us to do, and we do it. There's no hesitation or analysis. There's no, "Oh, maybe I should do this." Whenever we are feeling rooted or at home right where we are, we are likely to be very clear about what needs doing right now.

When we are feeling rooted and open, we may also feel a great inner strength and purpose, even though we really have no idea how things will turn out, or where we will end up. This "no idea" about outcome, or lack of attachment to outcome is what Setcho refers to in his verse as "purposeless." Katsuki Sekida in his commentary on this koan relates "purposeless" this way: "The sun shines silently, without purpose, without motive, without seeking profit or trying to earn merit. In this sense, Bodhidharma's coming to China was purposeless and meaningless. A mirror's reflection is purposeless, meaningless and empty. A Zen master's activities also are purposeless on this level. Of course, they are also purposeful but, from the viewpoint of a self-centered deluded activity of consciousness, they are purposeless. Pure cognition through the medium of the six senses is also done purposelessly."

The beginning of Sekida's commentary really hits it, "The sun shines silently, without purpose, without motive, without seeking profit

or trying to earn merit..." and without worry about whether it is right or wrong to "shine." The sun's action of shining is without any analysis or judgment. I really was not worried about doing the right thing when my daughter's life was threatened. When my daughter was in the hospital and needed my care and attention, she just had my care and attention.

In the same way, we should not be attached to goals when we care for the world. When we care for our fellow beings, great and small, animate and inanimate, just be caring. Purposeless caring is the best caring of all! Likewise, purposeless practice is the best kind of practice, where we genuinely care and give our all, without clinging to right or wrong, or who's right



Jizo Bodhisattva

or who's wrong.

The faculty that we have of discerning right or wrong is of course not a limitation. The process of rational discernment is completely useful in its realm. For example, my ability to discriminate between a red and green traffic light is very important. To understand on a rational level that if I run a red light, it's going to be dangerous to others and myself is also significant. Yet, we usually don't go through all of that thinking, do we? There's nothing wrong with "understanding," but much more simply, at a red light come to a stop. Understanding how the light works, what's going on and what's the right thing to do is wonderful, but usually superfluous, unless it is the middle of the night, and I decide to go through it anyway. (laughter) "Is this right? Is this wrong?" — that level of thinking is fine, but it becomes very top heavy, especially if you're working on a koan. "Am I right? Am I wrong? Did I get it? Did I not get it," are unnecessary complications to what is really needed to respond to a koan. At a "RED Light!" we almost instinctually put on the brake. This kind of immediate, spontaneous response or insight is what is needed for koan work.

"I should stop at the light because it's the rule" or "I should stop because I'll get in trouble if I don't" or "It would be dangerous not to stop," are all in the realm of ascribing meaning. And there's nothing wrong with this realm. But, again, we often get so caught up in this higher level of rational thought that we can't dance! If you try to drive that way, "Well, now I need to put this here or that there," you're going to get in an accident. Or, if you try to dance that way, not only will you be stepping on your partner's feet, you'll find that you're stepping on your own feet!

Often we are so invested in understanding how something works because we want to get it right, and we are almost petrified that we will get it wrong. However, concentrating on understanding often inhibits or hinders our actions. Often, when we are trying to learn something new it is best just got to get out and try it. If it's a new Aikido move we are learning or any new skill we're developing, the best way to



Kinhin on the shores of Puget Sound

learn it is just to try it and be ready for "failure." We think failure is terrible, but who learned to walk without falling down a lot? Nobody! Of course, when we were toddlers, we had no need to get it right the first time, and hopefully we were not shamed about it. With encouragement and lack of shaming we are happy to try a new skill again and again until it becomes "natural." If we fell down and hurt our knees while learning how to walk, it didn't phase us for long, soon we were ready to try again. We'd cry a little and then get right back up and go for it.

However, every time an adult laughed at us for falling over, we picked up some shame about ourselves and probably thought "Oh, I did it *wrong*," "I'm bad," or "I'm less than." This kind of thinking is all screwed up! It's neurotic. Instead of a time to learn how to walk, we are learning how to hide from the shaming of others by blaming ourselves. Learning to walk, we are breaking through some limitation of "self"; however, when shamed, we end up fixating on a false or limited sense of self. Much later, when it comes time to penetrate a new koan or learn a new skill, we find we are hindered by our own entrenched opinions about ourselves. Zazen helps us combust our false sense of self so that we can more easily be natural at whatever activity we are engaged in.

A monk asked Joshu, "Does a newborn baby possess the six senses or not?" And Joshu said, "It's like throwing a ball into the rapids." If you throw a beach ball into rapids, it's just going to bob up and down in the waves. There are no thoughts about it. The ball doesn't think, "Well, I think I'll go up now, and now I think I'll go down." It just naturally bobs along, no effort, no thinking, no discriminating, no "I." And the newborn baby is a lot like this. In fact, most of phenomenal reality is exactly like this. It just goes along, totally doing THIS, THIS!

You may think Zen is a very sophisticated practice, where we become hyper-adults, very responsible with keen understanding. But, in reality, we're trying to uncover our own original nature, our "newborn" nature. Now that isn't to say that we want to do a frontal lobotomy and return to babyhood by eliminating our discriminating consciousness. This is NOT what we're trying to do. And yet, we are trying to recover our original spontaneity, flow and ease of being in the world. To learn how to be natural as a newborn is not easy, it's much easier to do a lobotomy — you'll get there straight away. So, how can we recover the dynamic freshness of our original nature, that pure newborn ease of freely flowing with the envi-

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Continued from previous page...

ronment? Where has our spontaneous ability to cry, laugh, or dance gone? Just ask a two or three year old to dance, they're so happy to show us how to dance! They are so natural at it; they have no concern about their skill level or whether they are doing it "right."

I'm not saying skill is unimportant. Skill is extremely important, and we're not trying to combust our capacity to be skillful, quite the contrary. Nor is our practice trying to eliminate right or wrong thinking (discriminating consciousness). We're not trying to throw our rational mind away; however, we are hopefully learning how to have it take a back seat. We don't want to be limited or imprisoned by our so-called "higher" rational faculties; we do want to be in free dynamic communion with our own original nature. Of course, we can't possibly be separate from our original nature. Believe me, that baby's in there! Newborn baby nature IS the foundation of every one of us. We are that newborn baby every time we take a breath, without any effort of our rational mind. Breath just happens! Most of the time we don't think, "I'll take a breath now," or "It's time for another heartbeat!" It just goes on!

Despite how complicated the human condition is, can we all learn, how to "just go on?" When we feel communion with our original free flowing, purposeless nature, we will be like the beach ball effortlessly bobbing in the rapids. In these moments, we transcend all our shaming and conditioning. We are free! Analysis and judgment fall away. The Way is neither easy nor difficult, but give yourself a few decades to be uninhibitedly spontaneous and caring most of the time.

How will we learn or relearn to be as present in our original nature as the day we were born? Can we get "free" or "clear" without having to cut away our capacity to

think discriminately? It could be said that the purpose of Zen training or the purpose of a Zen teacher is to facilitate or create an environment where a free flowing, dynamic integration or opening takes place. Yes, that's our practice; this is why we train together.

But, if we get caught up in this purpose, we will never realize our original nature. So, let it go! Yes, we're here to open up to our original nature, but if we concentrate on "Now I'm going to open my original nature" we will remain lost. Stop analyzing and figuring out how to do it and there is nothing you will not be able to see through. Understanding our purpose calls us to practice, but once we're here, just do it. Just breathe. Just walk. Just eat. Just chop vegetables. Just taste the tea. Just hear the rain. Just feel the



Genjo and his Newborn Daughter Adrienne in 1983

warmth of the sun. Just sit on the cushion. Together we learn to be present to, but not disturbed by, the pain. We are not here to learn how not to think or feel. We are not here to learn how not to have pain or fatigue, but rather we are here to learn how to pass through the unending fatigue, pain, fear, joy, sorrow, boredom and whatever else may arise. With practice there is no fret or worry about anything.

We're not here to subtract anything. When we say, "let go" it doesn't mean, "throw away." It means, "Don't be attached to any layer." Especially don't be attached to the layer of right and wrong

thinking. We're so often stuck in our discriminating consciousness. "Oh, I know the right way and that's the wrong way," and, "This is good person, that's a bad person." Our rational mind is one of our highest human faculties, so don't throw it away, but let it go. For example, a monk asked Tosu, "What is the meaning of throwing a ball into the rapids?" Tosu said, "Nen after nen without ceasing." In the Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo sutra that we chant over and over each morning of Rohatsu, we keep saying lots of "Nens," as in, "*Cho Nen Kan Ze On, Bo Nen Kan Ze On, Nen Nen, Ju Shin Ki, Nen Nen Fu Ri Shi.*" What is a Nen anyway?

It goes back to this original question in this koan, "Does a baby possess the six senses or not?" In Zen psychology, you could say there are three layers of nen, First Nen, Second Nen and Third Nen. The First Nen is hard to describe, but it could be said to be the primal perception or thought before any discrimination or analysis. So, First Nen is the primal perception of rain falling, the breath rising and falling or the heart beating, before any judgment or sense of self has arisen.

In the Hebrew bible, when Moses asked, "When the children of Israel ask for your name, what shall I say?" [Exodus 3:13] God said "I AM; that I am. Tell them I AM has sent you to them." Other versions translate, "I AM; that I am" as "I will be what will be." The Hebrew text says, "EHEYEH *asher* EHEYEH"; or "*Eheveh* has sent me to you." *Eheveh* is the first person of the imperfect tense of the Hebrew verb "to be"; in other words, God tells Moses that God has no name but IS the verb "to be."

Who is it that has sent you? What is your original face? What is the Original Source? What is the Cardinal Principal of the universe? "Becoming!" This "becoming" has no form, no beginning and no end. THIS is the becoming out of

nothing! Everything seen and unseen IS the “no name” that is always becoming or *Mu*. Every aspect of nature is flowing, becoming, unfolding. So, rain falling, breathing, eating, sweeping, chopping, dancing, just living or just dying is IT. All manifestations are like waves in the rapids. All waves are nothing more or less than the non-ceasing, constantly changing manifestations of the river. Dawning awareness or “pure cognition” is at the level of First Nen.

Second Nen is the “I” in “I AM.” To have a sense of self is not so extraordinary. Most mammals, many birds and other creatures have a sense of “I.” Each one of us has a sense of existence, and from this perspective we claim, “This is mine,” and say, “Keep off!” or “Keep away!” My dog, Bruno, has a very strong sense of “I” and without words makes it plain “This is mine” and “I found it first!” (laughter)

An example of Third Nen is “I think, therefore I am.” Bruno never says to himself, “I am a dog. You are a human being. I have dog nature.” (laughter) “I have dog nature” or “I have Buddha nature” are examples of Third Nen.



Bruno

Reaching Third Nen should be cause for great celebration! “I think, therefore I am” or “I have Buddha nature” is impressive. But we all laugh if we think of Bruno saying, “I have dog nature.” “I have Buddha nature” is a great advance over Bruno’s ca-

pabilities. As you are probably aware, scientists [see: www.koko.org] in the last couple of decades have had some success teaching higher primates like gorillas and



Koko Reading a Magazine

chimpanzees sign language. I once saw a show about Koko the gorilla who was taught sign language and asked to comment about a magazine picture of a human being and a gorilla. Koko signed back, “That’s a human being, that’s a gorilla.” Then Koko proudly gestured, “I am a beautiful gorilla!” Koko had demonstrated Third Nen! (laughter)

There is nothing wrong with Third Nen. I am a human being with Buddha nature. But we often get locked into this level of thinking, locked into a separate sense of self and fixated on our “higher” cognitive functions. Zen practice is about revitalizing, recovering, or integrating our original newborn nature, the level of First Nen. That place where, in the immediacy of the moment, you do what needs doing with no thought or effort, where you feel completely at home and one with your environment. At a red light... (Brake sound)!

Does a newborn baby possess the *six* senses? The five primary senses (touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing) match our “external” sense organs. In Buddhist psychology the brain is considered to be an “internal” sense organ. From the Buddhist

perspective, our ability to sense our thought, feelings and more is a sixth sense; the brain senses thoughts, which implies that “first” thoughts are independent of the brain! We have a phrase from “Verses on the Faith Mind” by our Third Zen Ancestor (Sosan Ganchi Zenji) that goes, “In a *single* thought is 10,000 years.” If you *really* listen to the rain falling and it becomes... (Genjo makes the sound of rain drumming). What’s being listened to and the hearer disappears, just... (sound of rain drumming), just patter of rain, no hearer. In that instant of pure listening there’s no “I” recognizing it; when there is no self, a single Nen is timeless.

At First Nen appreciation, Sosan Ganchi Zenji (Seng-Ts’an, d. 606) said, “mind clings not to discriminations, the ten thousand

things are as they are, of single essence. To understand the mystery of this One-essence is to be released from all entanglements. When all things are seen equally the timeless Mind-essence is reached.” The ball just bobbing on the rapids, the rain just falling, the warmth of the sun, the bite of a cold breeze are all manifestations of “the timeless Mind-essence” or “Nen after nen without ceasing.” The Zen masters are well acquainted with IT. A ball thrown into the rapids, do you know where it is carried? We don’t know our origin; we don’t know what tomorrow will bring. However, we can feel the flow, ride the rapids and delight in the unfolding journey. And how do we do that? Well, it’s not by trying to get it right or worrying about getting it wrong. At sesshin we must make a full-on effort to be fully present to each moment and each activity.

With gassho,

Genjo

(Transcription help from Dee Seishun)



Jukai Ceremony

On the last day of Rohatsu Sesshin, the Historical Buddha's Enlightenment Day (12/8), Rodger Park, Randal Tanabe and Brenda Nightingale accepted the Buddhist precepts. All of them have had long associations with our temple and have attended at least of two week-long sesshins.

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

Rodger's new Dharma Name is To-Zan (Eastern Mountain). Tozan is the Aikido Instructor for Huron Valley Aikikai in Ann Arbor Michigan. We have spent many years training together, between Tozan coming to Rohatsu sesshin and Genjo's travels to Ann Arbor. Tozan has been like an eastern mountain of continuous presence to practice.

Randal's new Dharma Name is Dai-Getsu (Vast Moon). Daigetsu, like all of us, has had his share of troubles in the past, but has used his practice at Chobo-Ji to make a turn in his life. Now he shines forth like the brilliant yet subtle full moon that he is, and has made a habit of sharing his light with us.

Brenda's new Dharma Name is Zen-Mu (Zen Dream). Zenmu comes to us from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. This is her second Rohatsu, and she has come to both of the Zen/Christian retreats Genjo led in Regina, Saskatchewan. Zenmu clearly

sees how this world is but a dream. She says that one day she hopes to move to Seattle to be closer to the Sangha.

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



Rodger, Randal and Brenda recite the Precepts with Genjo

Spring Intensive

In the fall we inaugurated our first three month training intensive. Because of short notice only one person (Daigan) was able to participate, but many expressed interest. Perhaps four or five people will be able to sign on for the Spring Intensive which will start March 27th and conclude on June 27th. To join you must be a member in good standing. Good standing means you have:

- A) Made three consecutive monthly dues contributions
- B) Attended at least one half-day mini-

sesshin or week-long sesshin in the last quarter

Then to participate in the intensive you must agree to the following:

- 1) Attend group zazen at least five out of seven days a week
- 2) Commit to attending all sesshins full-time during the training intensive (not missing more than the equivalent of one day of a week-long sesshin)
- 3) Join the Dharma dialogs held at 7:30 pm most 1st and 3rd Sundays
- 4) Go to at least three-fourths of the Dharma interviews offered during the intensive (Dharma Interview will be offered at least once weekly to all participants)
- 5) Do at least one hour of samu (working meditation – gardening or cleaning) for the temple per week (this requirement can be met by serving faithfully in one of the temple posts, or, on occasion, an hour of work salary may be substituted)
- 6) Read at least one assigned (mutually agreed upon) book on Zen history or practice

- 7) Commit to attending an additional sesshin (3-day minimum) at a more formal training center, such as Great Vow Monastery or Dai-Bosatsu Monastery (this requirement does not have to be met during the intensive but must be planned and completed within a year of the start of the intensive). Alternatively, traveling with Genjo Osho to do three mini-sesshins in Wenatchee or Ellensburg, would meet this requirement.

For those ChoBo-Ji members who live outside of Seattle, accommodations are possible, please speak Genjo Osho-san.

Wenatchee Zen

Genjo Osho-san will be traveling to Wenatchee early Saturday, February 21st to lead mini-sesshin and will be staying over to be the speaker at Sunday's Unitarian service.

NorthWest Dharma News

NWDN is a comprehensive magazine containing a calendar of Buddhist events, articles, and news about the greater Northwest Buddhist community. Subscribe today and keep current with upcoming teachings, retreat opportunities, and news. So much is happening in our community!

The mission of the Northwest Dharma Association, to support Buddhist teachings and foster a network of friendship among Buddhist groups from all traditions, is supported by Chobo-Ji through membership on its Council. Please join us and help support this mission by subscribing to *Northwest Dharma News*.

You can subscribe at the web site -- www.nwdharma.org. Thanks!



About Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji

In 1978, Zen Master Genki Takabayashi was invited by the Seattle Zen Center, founded by Dr. Glenn Webb (at the time a UW Art History professor), to become the resident teacher. He accepted, and by 1983 he formalized his teaching style around a small group of students, and founded Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji, translated as *Great Plum Mountain Listening to the Dharma Zen Temple*.

Before Genki Roshi came to Seattle, he trained for nearly twenty years at Daitoku-Ji, the head Rinzai temple in Japan. In addition, Genki Roshi directed a Rinzai temple in Kamakura, Japan. He entered the monastery when he was 11 years old.

After 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

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: 2/8, 3/14, 4/11, 5/9, 6/13, 7/18, 8/8

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

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

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

Rohatsu Sesshin: 11/30/04 - 12/8/04

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 \$320. Members may subtract their monthly dues from the week-long sesshin cost.