



dharma
CONNECTION
The Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji
2007



DAILY SCHEDULE

Sunday: 9 a.m.-noon, full morning service, zazen, teisho or dokusan
Monday: 7-7:45 a.m., short service, zazen
Tuesday: 8:30-9:30 a.m., zazen
Wednesday: 5:45 -7:45 a.m., full morning service, zazen
Thursday: 7-7:45 a.m., zazen
Thursday: 6-8 p.m., short service, zazen
Friday: 7-7:45 a.m., zazen
Saturday: Tibetan practice, 9-10:30 a.m.

Newcomers welcome; please arrive at least
15 minutes early for assistance with sitting
posture and zendo procedure.

Dokusan is given on the second and fourth weeks of every month,
and by appointment.

Three-day Winter Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008.

Three-day Spring Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, April 10 to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 13, 2008.

Five-day Summer Sesshin

7 p.m. Tuesday, July 22 to 5 p.m. Sunday, July 27, 2008.

Three-day Fall Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 19, 2008.

Please note: to attend, sesshin applications must be filled out, either online at our website, www.zencenterofsyracuse.org, or at the Zen Center. The fees, \$200 (\$150 for members) for three-day and \$250 (\$200 for members) are due two weeks before the starting date. Part-time participants pay \$75 per day (must do at least one full day). Some scholarships available. Jihatsu (bowl sets) for formal meals may be purchased through Sangha Supplies at the Zen Center.

**Sesshin
Schedule
2008**

Letters	4
Ancient Buddhism in Japan.....	6
The Joy of Zen.....	15
Inner Peace Equals A Peaceful Community.....	16
An Unsuspected Journey.....	17
The Dana of Teaching Meditation.....	18
The Empty Mirror.....	19
Baby Dharma.....	20
Leaf, Sunlight, Asphalt.....	23
Haiku - Homeless Wanderer.....	23
The Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program.....	24
On Fleeing the Practice and Returning.....	26
So What Is Kessai Like?.....	27
Million Buddhas.....	29
Moving to Zen.....	30
Haiku - September Locust.....	32
Shodo Harada Roshi's Buddha Mind.....	33
Hold Everything!.....	35
Gaia.....	36
Going Green.....	37
From the Abbot.....	40
Golden Wind Sesshin.....	41
Sangha Passages.....	42
One Time Meeting	45
Calendar.....	46

Table of Contents



Roko Osho Sherry Chayat just finished editing a book of talks, poems and essays by Nyogen Senzaki, titled *Eloquent Silence*. Details: page 40

Dharma Connection is published annually by
 The Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji
 266 West Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, New York 13207
 Telephone and Fax: 315.492.9773. Residence Hall:
 315.469.6029.
 Website: www.zencenterofsyracuse.org

Roko ni-Osho Sherry Chayat, Abbot
 Editors: Roko Osho and Meigetsu Rebecca Beers
 Designer: Tetsunin Pat Yingst
 Hoen Calligraphy: Ven. Eido Tai Shimano Roshi
 Cover: *Pagoda at Koya-san*, photo by Naoko Sasaki
 Photography: Roko Osho, Entsu Scott Rosecrans, Daishin Paul Cook, Tetsunin Pat Yingst, Naoko Sasaki

**Dharma
 Connection
 2007**

Sangha Letters

Every Dear Sangha,
Wednesday
Morning:
Don't
Miss It !

Why wait until the last day of sesshin to chant with all your heart? Join us on Wednesday mornings at 5:45 for a rousing round of morning service, from *atta dipa* to *shujo mu hen sei gan do*. We are small in numbers, but chant with fervor. There is no better way to start the day than with those long drawn-out Pali vowels, reminding us, *You are the light*. The Dharma is the light, chanted in the dark before dawn. Do not rely on others, rely on the Dharma. Do not rely on anything other than the Dharma. Go off to work or school with this sound resonating in your heart; it is remarkable!

I hope you can join us Wednesday mornings. I have found it an amazing opportunity to train the mind, the mind that resists, that says, I can't get up at 4:30 in the morning, I'll be exhausted, I'm too tired now, I will become susceptible to contagion and become ill, etc. The mind will think of every excuse not to go – yet you go still. Your commitment, your vow, carries you. Such consistency of practice trains the mind. In the middle of the week, in the middle of your busy life, a little mini-morning sesshin session. We chant morning service, then the silence of zazen. Windows wide open to birdsong, burgeoning rush hour traffic on Seneca Turnpike, sirens and dogs, indiscriminate. Don't miss it!

Gassho,
Myorin Catherine Landis

The Gifts of Dear Roko Osho,
Sesshin

I just wanted to offer my gratitude for the gifts of sesshin. I have been reflecting on its effects over time, remembering how the first time I came I felt so humbled by how difficult it was for me to sit still. Ensuing sesshins got easier and, eventually, became a source of insight and peace. Still, I would return home and within a couple of days be right back where I had been in the old mental habits.

But the last few sesshins have been different. I am finding that I come back slightly different and retain at least some of that difference. What has come home with me this time is that paradoxical sentence pattern that I shared with you, "You think this is about (whatever I am doing right now); in reality, it's about (whatever I am doing right now)."

So these kinds of thoughts have gone through my mind with their corresponding changes in attitude:

While taking my students to the bus at the day's end: "You think this is about taking your students to the bus. In fact, it's about taking your students to the bus." Translation: "You think this is about getting your students to the bus as soon as possible, so you can be ready for your union meeting at 3 p.m. In fact, this is about mindfully closing out the last few moments of the day with your students." Effect: I stopped thinking about my upcoming meeting and turned to the student next to me, who is sad because he is moving soon, and spoke to him. Then I turned to the next student and offered a few words of encouragement and smiled as the rest filed out.

It felt like that "one tenth of an inch's difference and heaven and earth are set apart" kind of difference. If this had been on video, I doubt anyone would have noticed me and wondered, "Wow! What just happened in her mind?" I doubt that if you asked the two students whether anything significant had occurred, they would have been aware of it. Yet I could feel the shift from that "one tenth of an inch's difference" in how I was seeing the moment.

Amazingly, the union meeting occurred and went fine without my stressing over it at the bus. In fact, it probably went better due to the mindset I brought to it.

Again and again this has come to me this week: You think this is about eating your dinner (so you can rush out the door); in fact, it's about eating your dinner (with your husband, with gratitude for the gift of sustenance, with awareness of the sun and earth and rain and history and hands that brought this food.).

And so on. I am deeply grateful for the gifts of sesshin.

Gassho,
Ginger Storey-Welch

GREAT GIFT IDEA !

Receive a CD every month - a selected teisho (dharma discourse)
given by Roko Osho Sherry Chayat, Abbot and Dharma Teacher at the
Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji

Each one-year subscription (12 CDs) is priced at \$150

Send a check or money order and mailing information to
The Zen Center of Syracuse, 266 Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, NY 13207
Indicate "Teisho Series" on your check and, if appropriate, gift card information



Our group at Todai-ji, Nara

**On
Pilgrimage
Ancient
Buddhism
in Japan**

**by
Roko Sherry
Chayat**

It was evening when our NWA flight from Detroit landed in Osaka, Japan, on May 17. We met up with several people from other flights, including Naoko Sasaki, who helped us get on the last bus to Nara, and there, in a small family-run ryokan, we joined my co-leader, Kazuaki Tanahashi, and several others who had arrived earlier. The next day, all 23 of us — Hoen-ji Sangha members and practitioners from all over the country — met for breakfast in the tiny dining room, and our pilgrimage, “Ancient Buddhism in Japan,” formally got under way.

Nara, the former capital, is where Buddhism in Japan began; in the city and surrounding countryside are eight temple complexes designated World Heritage Sites by the United Nations. Our ryokan, Cotton 100%, was on a little side street off the lovely Nara pond, where turtles and egrets sunned on the rocks and fished, and just a few paces from the 52 steps leading to the pagoda of the World Heritage Site of Kofuku-ji.

Jet-lagged but excited, we traveled by local bus to Horyu-ji, founded in 607 by Empress Suiko and Crown Prince Shotoku and home of the world’s oldest surviving wooden structures, set amid emerald mountains. We walked down the long, broad esplanade and split into four

groups, each with a guide, who took us to see the many remarkable Great National Treasures, including the famous Kudara Kannon, which is not often displayed — that day, May 18, was the last before it went back into protective storage. In the Kondo (Main Hall) we viewed a gorgeous Shakyamuni flanked by two bodhisattvas and many other remarkable statues. With flashlights, our guides pointed out amazing clay figures portraying scenes from Buddha Shakyamuni's life.

After lunch at a neighborhood restaurant of cold umesoba (noodles with plum) and persimmon leaf-wrapped sushi, local specialties, we walked to nearby Chugu-ji temple (formerly Ikaruga Palace), built by Prince Shotoku for his mother, Empress Anahobe no Hashibito, and used ever since as an imperial convent. The most unforgettable Buddhist image of the day — indeed, of the entire trip — was the Bodhisattva there, considered a Kannon but also thought to represent Miroku (Maitreya). Her beautiful, graceful figure and enigmatic smile rival that of the Mona Lisa. Whereas Horyu-ji had been crowded with tourists and school groups, Chugu-ji was silent, with only a few Japanese women pilgrims seated on the tatami. We sat down in front of the Bodhisattva and entered into the deep stillness. We could feel the power of centuries of women disciples. It was difficult to leave. Before we did, we also appreciated the other National Treasure on view there, a Tenjukoku (Land of Heavenly Longevity) Mandala tapestry woven by court ladies 1,400 years ago as a memorial to Prince Shotoku, who died at 48 in 622.

Because our ryokan was so small, there was no space in which to do zazen. So that evening, Kaz, Catherine Jones (from Rochester Zen Center), and I went out for a walk to see where we might gather for morning sitting. We found the perfect spot: a ring of smooth stones, more or less like zafus, surrounding a stone marker, on Kofuku-ji's grounds, right in front of the pagoda. Kaz read the inscription on the marker: it commemorated a pine tree planted in the ninth century by Kukai, honorifically known as Kobo Daishi (who would be a kind of patron saint of our pilgrimage, although we didn't know it yet); the tree had died in 1939. Next morning, there we sat, in distinct discomfort among the rocks and pebbles, the cold breeze, the loud conversations of crows, the sound of passersby clicking cameras at the strange sight of a group of Westerners doing zazen on the rocks — wonderful pilgrims' zazen. After breakfast, we held our other daily ritual: each person speaking about what particularly moved him or her during the previous hours. I offered my haiku:

Rock circle zazen
Birds and humans start their day
Breathing Kukai's pine.

That day we took the local bus to nearby Todai-ji. At the enormous gate we stood in wonder at two Nio guardians, carved in the 13th century by the

sculptor Unkei, and considered among the finest wooden statues in all of Japan, if not the world. We climbed the steps up to the vast building housing the famous great Buddha, the largest bronze statue in the world, and were again awestruck, not only by that colossal statue, but by all the beautiful attendant figures and carvings. We walked further up the mountain, and a sudden thunderstorm with heavy rain caught us; we were able to take shelter in one of the buildings, and watched the sky clear as we drank hot tea. Our walk back down was fragrant with moist earth and Chinese chestnut trees in bloom.

On the 20th we went on a walking tour, to see more national treasures at Kofuku-ji's Treasure Hall and the Nara Museum (where there is a fantastic Monju (Manjusri) on a huge, fierce lion) and we encountered Kukai's 10th-century life statue in the mysteriously dark, esoteric atmosphere of nearby Gango-ji, the oldest Buddhist temple in Japan. Formerly named Hoko-ji when it was built in Asuka (near Nara) in 588, it was later moved to Nara and renamed. Upstairs, in an unprepossessing gallery, was the most beautiful Kannon I've ever seen, six-armed and caught, it seemed, in the midst of a graceful dance of compassion.

The next day was Mandala Day, and what an appropriate celebration: after zazen, breakfast and our sharing circle, we went by bus to two famous temples, Toshodai-ji and Yakushi-ji. I was particularly entranced by the former. Since the main hall was under construction, there were few tourists, and we could wander everywhere among the serenity of the gardens, see the great treasure hall, the beautiful Buddha in the lecture hall and discover Basho's monument, with his haiku:

New leaf twigs
May I wipe off the tears
From the Master's eyes.

Toshodai-ji's first abbot was a high priest in China, and was invited to Japan by Emperor Shomu to teach the Chinese Buddhist precepts. It took him 12 years — five unsuccessful attempts at crossing the ocean — and he was blind by the time he finally arrived in Nara in 754 C.E. and initiated emperors Shomu and Koken, as well as eminent Japanese priests, in the Buddhist precepts.

At Yakushi-ji, the buildings had recently been restored, and everything was gleaming in the Chinese Buddhist colors of the seventh century, vermillion, gold and green — quite stunning — except for the East Pagoda (the only structure there to have survived countless fires, wars and natural disasters), which retained its ancient feeling. All around were huge scaffolds and sheet metal walls with banks of lighting towers, in preparation for the temple's coming anniversary celebration. It was constructed during the 680s and early

690s, and the chief Buddha, a Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaisajaguru, or Medicine Buddha) was enshrined and dedicated in 697 — 1,310 years ago. It was at the East Pagoda that we gathered to hear an evocative talk by Kaz about the Chinese monk who vowed to restore Yakushi-ji during the years of World War II, and who began offering sutra copying not only to raise funds but to open people's hearts to the Buddha's teachings. The West Pagoda, which had burned in 1528, was rebuilt in 1980 as a result of this project. Inspired by this story, we walked to a lovely compound where, in a special room with rows of desks each with its own ink stone, brush, calligraphy and tracing paper, we joined others in silent copying of the Heart Sutra kanji. That evening, we held Mandala Day chanting in our little dining room, and Kaz and I read from the book we had done together, *Endless Vow: the Zen Path of Soen Nakagawa*.

On the 22nd, we took two trains and then a cable car straight up Mt. Koya, the gorgeous mountain headquarters of the esoteric Shingon school of Buddhism, founded by Kukai (Kobo Daishi) in 816. A bus deposited us on a village street lined with hundreds of temples. Which was ours? Hot and tired, laden with our various packs and suitcases, we finally found the wonderful ancient Hojo-in ("Treasure Castle") with a modern wing serving as a very comfortable ryokan. The monks welcomed us and brought us tea, and after sharing a hot tub, we were treated to a great shojin ryori (Buddhist vegetarian) feast in a private dining room. The director-monk of the temple told us about the various art treasures in the room, which included beautiful screens and sculptures, and about the architecture, with its knot-free wooden beams.

The next morning, and the morning following, we were invited to participate in the Shingon service, which for me was one of the high points of the pilgrimage. Kushu and I were asked to enter the inner sanctum, where we were seated beside the officiating monks on red zabutons in front of a low table. Like all Shingon altars, everything was mysterious, hidden behind layers upon layers; a golden light was emitted by filigreed lanterns and candles. The chanting was mesmerizing, and included the long Heart of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita) sutra and several dharani, some of which were familiar to me. Because



East pagoda at Yakushi-ji

they knew we chant the Hannya Shingyo (Heart Sutra), they did that at the end, and we joined in. I was thoroughly transported by the rapid hand mudras, the chanting at several pitches simultaneously, the visual and aural complexity, and the palpable presence of Kukai.

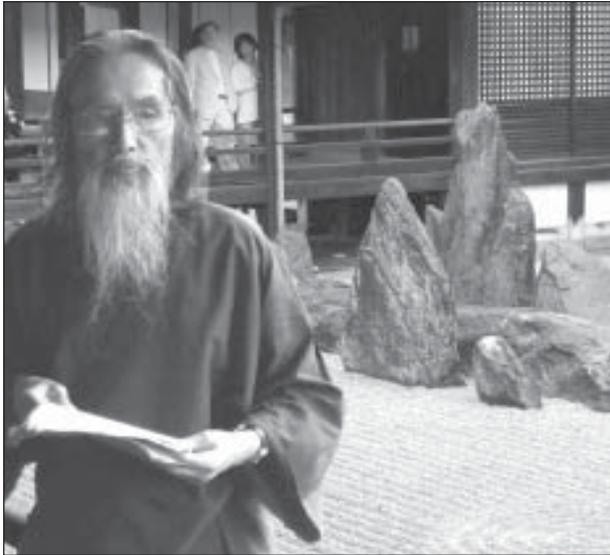
After a substantial shojin ryori breakfast we went on a walking tour. Again, just up from our lodgings was a pagoda, this one brilliantly restored, glowing orange, gold and white. Then we went to the Kondo, built by Kukai in 819 and restored in 1932, and to many other historic structures, including Kongobu-ji, a vast complex of buildings, the administrators of which oversee all the 3,600 Shingon branch temples in Japan. Everywhere, we noticed how vigorous the practice is at Koya-san, how dedicated the pilgrims are; the temples are not sightseeing destinations but places of worship, and there is an on-going mystical connection with Kukai, who is not viewed as ever having passed away (one of the morning rituals is that of the monks bringing O-daishi, as he is honorifically addressed, his breakfast).

We spent the afternoon on our own, and while walking through the village, I was somehow drawn to investigate one small temple in particular. As soon as I entered the gate, a nun, dressed as I was in almost identical tan samu-gi, came running out and spoke excitedly to me in Japanese. She took me by the hand and drew me down a corridor to the Buddha Hall, gave me three sticks of incense to offer, and we proceeded to do prostrations and chant the Heart Sutra and several dharani together. Then, her eyes wet with tears, she addressed me rapidly in Japanese; I answered her in English, my words equally impenetrable to her. Not knowing each other's language, somehow we each knew what the other was saying. Our hands on our hearts, tears on our faces, we bowed to each other, and smiled. Before I left, she drew out her cellphone, opened it, and showed me the words Namgyal Monastery. "Dalai Lama!" she said.

That night, Kushi and I spent time with the director-monk, who was delighted by our interest in the practice of Shingon Buddhism, and had his assistant bring in many books. He got out his own sutra book, pointing out the musical notations and symbols, and telling about the training monks go through in intonation, modulation and rhythm, and then the hand mudras that match the intonations.

At dawn the next morning, I walked up the road in the fragrant mountain mist, drawn by the sound of monks' chanting that sounded remarkably like that of Tibetan polyphonal chanting; it was quite amazing to stand at the gate of the nearby training monastery and hear their service, punctuated by bells, gongs and birdsong. After our own service at Hojo-in and breakfast, we began the long trip to Kyoto; I think everyone felt sad to leave. One can't be a bystander in Koya-san; it's not about history, even though it's so historic — it's a living practice, a living mystery.

Taking the bus, cable car, and then a dizzying number of trains and



Kazuaki Tanahashi Sensei at Tofuku-ji garden

subways, we emerged four hours later on a sidewalk of the bustling city and walked along Karasuma Street to the PalaceSide Hotel, which turned out to be comfortable and convenient, with an English-speaking desk staff, computers, telephones, and Laundromat — all very much appreciated at this point in our travels. On our very first, and very rainy, full day in Kyoto, we

were privileged to be Keido Fukushima Roshi's guests for lunch at Tofuku-ji. I had met Roshi several times before, and had brought the group there on our Hakuin pilgrimage in 2003, but until the last moment it was uncertain whether or not he would be well enough to be our host on this visit, since he now has Parkinson's disease. Although he needed to be supported in his chair and his speech was difficult, he was as vital, powerful and gracious as ever, and gave us a wonderful talk. "Parkinson's," he told us, "is my last koan." He had his assistant bring out examples of his calligraphy, for which he is renowned (including an enso with the English words "Watch touch and bite"), and gave us copies of his new book (in Japanese) and packets of cards featuring the stunning vistas and buildings of this most beautiful temple complex (and one of the most important in the Rinzai school). Fukushima Roshi has taught frequently in the United States over the years, and he spoke of the important contribution of Zen in our country, particularly the way women are able to practice on a par with men..

Another special visit that I had set up ahead of time was with American monk Yuho Tom Kirchner, who is caretaker of Rinsen-in, a sub-temple of the beautiful Tenryu-ji, where the gardens and pond were designed by Muso Soseki (whose burial site and life-size sculpture are at Rinsen-in). A disciple of Shodo Harada Roshi, Yuho-san has lived in Japan since 1969; he was a student of the late Tsukada Koun Roshi at Shoan-ji, Nagano Prefecture, then entered Shofuku-ji monastery in Kobe under the late Yamada Mumon Roshi, was ordained there in 1974, and then became a training monk under Minato Sodo at Kencho-ji in Kamakura. The translator of *Entangling Vines: Zen Koans*



At Rinsen-ji with
Tom Kirchner

of the Shumon Kattoshu, Yuhō-san teaches at Hanazono University. He gave us a wonderful tour of the Tenryū-ji gardens and spent quite a bit of time with us at Rinsen-in.

We visited many other important Rinzai Zen temples, including the exquisite Nanzen-ji, with its famous paintings, stunning gardens and hidden ponds and waterfalls; Ginkaku-ji,

the “Silver Pavilion”; Kinkaku-ji, the “Golden Pavilion”; Ryoan-ji, with its renowned stone garden and restaurant on the banks of a flower-encircled pond (where we had a shōjin ryōri lunch); and Daitoku-ji, famous for the Zen arts, particularly associated with great tea ceremony master Sen-no-Rikyū. We also met with another American Zen practitioner who has lived in Japan for many years, Jeff Shore (who visited Hōen-ji last fall), a disciple of Keido Fukushima Roshi. He invited us to join the morning zazen at Hanazono University, where he teaches. The Hanazono zendo is vast — 250 cushions — but there were barely two dozen of us sitting there that morning.

On May 30, some of our group returned to the States, while 12 of us

traveled to what would be the culmination of our pilgrimage, Kogaku-ji — the temple founded by the great 14th-century Zen master Bassui Tokujō Zenji, and where Soen Nakagawa Roshi was



Kinkaku-ji

ordained — and Mount Dai Bosatsu, where Soen Roshi did so many solitary retreats. We arrived at the village of Enzan (Salt Mountain) in Yamanashi prefecture, and were met at the station by Eido Roshi's friends, Mr. and Mrs. Iwata, who presented us with gift boxes of sweets and proceeded to take us under their warm and welcoming wings for the next 24 hours. It just so happened that we had been on a later train than we had originally planned to take because of a scheduling change; it just so happened that Mr. Iwata, too, was on a later train than the one he usually takes from Tokyo that day — so Mrs. Iwata was there to meet his train, and thus ours as well.

They helped us get to our ryokan, driving along a breathtakingly twisting, narrow, steep road. Unposo Ryokan turned out to be a magical place clinging to the side of one of the numerous tall mountains in that area (including Mt. Fuji). It had started to rain, and after settling in, we went to the outdoor hot bath, a stone grotto with two interconnected bathing areas formed of smooth ledges, and an overhanging roof and patio that the owner of the ryokan had made using huge slabs of mountain rock. Lying there in the intensely hot water, with cool raindrops falling on our faces and shoulders, was bliss. The owner also had carved almost all the furniture inside the ryokan from massive trees, and after a huge dinner of local wild mountain vegetables, grains and fish, we gathered around a brazier of hot coals. He told us that when he was a young boy, he and other villagers watched — hands in *gassho* — as Monk Soen Nakagawa would set out, barefoot, on the 12-mile hike up Dai Bosatsu Mountain, where he would do solitary retreats in his hut and subsist on nuts and berries for three months at a time.

The next morning, the sky had cleared. The Iwatas called for us and brought us to Kogaku-ji, and the monks led us into the beautiful Buddha Hall; then we walked to the back half of the same building, to the Founder's Hall, where we chanted to Bassui, led by Taizan Kozumi Roshi. After that, we had ceremonial tea with the Kancho, Miyamoto Taiho Roshi, who told us about the temple and about Soen Roshi's early years there as a monk when the temple was so poor there was no money for food or clothing. We were shown the zendo, newly constructed, with its views of a gorgeous dry rock and moss garden suggesting a waterfall against the mountainside, and an exquisite National Treasure scroll painting of Bodhidharma, the oldest such scroll in Japan, we were told.

More rain was forecast, so with a last bow to Miyamoto Roshi as he stood in the doorway, we hastened off to another hair-raising ride up a switch-backing road to Dai Bosatsu Pass, and kept going, the road becoming ever narrower, ever more perilous. When we could drive no further, we got out at a small parking area, near two buildings: one, named Shoenso, where Soen Roshi's novelist friend Kaizan Nakazato had written his long novel *Dai Bosatsu Toge*, and a smaller one higher up on the precipice, Sangai-an (Three Treasures Hut), the very place where Soen Roshi had spent so many months

in retreat, writing haiku and doing profound solitary zazen. I lit incense and stood at the edge of the precipice, as all of us chanted Namu Dai Bosa. The clouds parted, and although we couldn't exactly see Fuji-san emerge through the mist, we could feel her presence. Soen Roshi seemed to be luring us on — we decided to climb up to the top of Dai Bosatsu Mountain, since the weather had grown more favorable. As we got higher, the clouds enveloped us again, and rain started



Miyamoto Taiho Roshi bids us farewell at Kogaku-ji

anew, and then stopped; teasingly, the breathtaking views would emerge and then disappear, over and over. Approaching the steepest point, we gratefully came upon a little lodge maintained for hiking pilgrims at a huge outcropping of rocks, and had a very welcome cup of hot tea. As I stood at the edge, clouds rolled in again, and then Soen Roshi's voice was heard: thunder! It



Soen Roshi's hut on Dai Bosatsu Mountain

was time to start down. The danger of lightning and rain would make the trail and the road hazardous. We began our descent, which was slippery indeed, and then more thunder, and cloud formations moving around us, and suddenly Soen Roshi sent us hail! Large white marbles pelted us; we were wet, cold and sliding in the treacherous mud. The difficulty seemed Soen

Roshi's parting advice: no matter how challenging the path, persevere! With great dedication, march on!

Everyone made it safely to the cars, and our magnanimous hosts, the Iwatas, drove us to their warm country house filled with local artists' work, an atmosphere of refined taste in a rustic setting, and served us a refreshing lunch. Afterward they took us to a little museum about the life of Kaizan

Nakazato, where we also saw a carved statue of Soen Roshi as a bodhisattva. Back for a restorative soak in the hot baths at Unposo, and a festive dinner, and then next morning to the train station, bound for Narita Airport and home. On the train platform – again, it just so happened – we met Miyamoto Roshi, who was on his way to Tokyo. Thus ended our pilgrimage. □



Stillness lifts heart, mind, soul
It fully opens the present

Time to be quiet
Time to accept the quiet
Time to absorb the quiet
Time to love the quiet
Time to crave the quiet
Time for the void
The beautiful void

The quiet engulfs
The quiet threatens
The quiet reveals

Time to stop thinking
Time to accept
Time to be grateful
Time for joy

Courage to let go
Courage for what comes
Courage to meet the universe

Overcome with joy
Overcome with tears
Tears wash the soul
Tears support the emotions

Floating through time

The Joy of Zen

*by Jeanette
Powell*

T

**In the
Community**

**Inner
Peace
Equals
A Peaceful
Community**

by
**Kanro Christine
Dowling**

In recent years, there has been burgeoning interest in meditation as a component of wellness, both for individuals and communities. During this past year, Jika Lauren Melnikow began speaking with administrators at educational institutions, medical centers and corporations about the Zen Center offering meditation workshops and classes. The response has been so positive that it has made possible a part-time position at the Zen Center, funded through an area business. I am grateful for the opportunity to become the director of the Community Meditation Programs. It is such a beautiful gift to see the tireless work over many years of so many Sangha members expanding, and radiating what each of us has found to be true: meditation is healing for everyone.

Through the vision and generosity of a Syracuse University trustee who has had great concern about the health of the university community, the Zen Center received funding for a Buddhist Chaplaincy. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz was named to the position, and she is working with many departments at the university to enhance wellness awareness and offerings among students, faculty and staff.

In the business community, Roko Osho and Ishin Bill Cross conducted a successful day-long mindfulness workshop for employees of National Grid, and Jika has been warmly received at Carrier, Manlius Pebble Hill School, Hospice, Vera House and by the nursing staff of the Syracuse City School District, among others. It has become clear that there is great potential for expanding the Zen Center's meditation programs in the community.

With training from Roko Osho and senior meditation instructors Nikyu Robert Strickland, Ishin, Jikyo and Jika, a core group of Community Meditation Programs instructors will be offering meditation for staff development and wellness at area businesses, to athletic training programs, to medical staff, to patients for home and hospital wellness regimens, and to educational institutions. The possibilities are indeed endless.

The Zen Center of Syracuse has been offering meditation programs in the community since 1992. These programs have gained the respect of the wider community. The Zen Center received an award from the

An Unsuspected Journey

by Eddie Holmes

I have been attending Zen meditation through the agency where I work serving persons with disabilities. The agency has included the Zen program in the services provided for our consumers. It provides a new experience for them.

During a weekend staff retreat at White Eagle Lodge in Madison County, I happened upon an opportunity to experience what I had learned. I awoke one morning around 6 a.m. The previous day had been long and exhausting. I decided to take a quiet walk to the lake. As I stood on the deck facing the lake I became overwhelmed by what nature was revealing to my eyes and my ears. The light gray misty fog was drifting across the lake hiding what was on the distant shore. Only the soft sounds of the lake let me know that what I was seeing and hearing was real.

I closed my eyes and began the Zen technique, the breathing and counting, and what happened after that is quite hard to explain. Was it as if I became part of the mist, or something? I really don't know. What I do know is that I was in a state of consciousness unfamiliar to me, but I was aware of the settling peace. I don't know what the deciding factor was to come out of this state, maybe thinking, Was I gone too long? I have to get back. Or was it fear from being away from my familiar self and circumstances?

Returning to my cabin I felt different and more aware of the surroundings. Everything looked different. It didn't seem like the same trail I had walked down a short while earlier. I felt at peace with everything around me. I wanted to wake everyone up to tell them what they were missing, but I held that thought. The experience I had on my unsuspected journey will be with me for a long time.

Eddie Holmes is learning meditation through a Community Meditation Program led by Jika Lauren Melnikow at HOME, Inc., where he is a rehabilitation consultant/academic instructor.



InterReligious Council (now InterFaith Works) for its work with at-risk youth, and has received grants from the Gifford Foundation and the Central New York Community Foundation to continue teaching meditation as a skill young

people can learn to help them resolve conflicts and find peaceful alternatives to violence.

Roko Osho pioneered these youth and wellness programs with the help of many Sangha facilitators. In addition to its youth programs, the Zen Center holds sittings three times a week on the Syracuse University campus, led by Jikyo, Mokuon Karen Nezelek, and Myorin Catherine Landis, and once a week at Hamilton College, led by Roko Osho, Entsu Scott Rosecrans, Doshin David Schubert, Daishin Paul Cook, and this coming year, by Tim Kohlbrenner. Other

The Dana of Teaching Meditation

by Kanro Christine Dowling

Pure motivation creates the space for each of us to practice meditation, and it is the same with teaching others to meditate through the Community Meditation Programs. In August, Roko Osho Sherry Chayat, Jika Lauren Melnikow, Ishin Bill Cross, Nikyu Robert Strickland, Jisho Judy Fancher, Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz and a dozen or so others met to discuss the prospects of volunteering to be leaders in the Zen Center's growing programs.

Osho opened the meeting by stating that a deep and committed practice is the essential prerequisite. Meditation is currently trendy, Osho said, but our programs have an ancient foundation in the Zen tradition. The reason they have been so helpful to those at Faith Hope, the Justice Center, HOME, Inc., Hillbrook, Elmcrest and other venues is their purity. There is no false note.

Jisho has been welcomed at Faith and Hope for many years because she has no pretense. She is honest. When she is there, she just is. No attachment to good or bad outcomes, failure or success. No agenda, no "should," no self-righteous "helping" mentality. This simple openness springs from her deeply committed personal practice at Hoen-ji, regular sittings, dokusan and Sangha samu.

"You cannot give what you do not possess," as Nikyu put it during the meeting.

Our programs also must be "right practice" and not affected by commercialism. Yes, they will produce income for the Zen Center of Syracuse. But the pure motivation is to share our personal experience and commitment to zazen. Fees will be on a sliding scale, so all have access. Further, what is taught is not just techniques, it is dana, the giving of one's personal experience to others. "You are bringing your presence, from Pure Mind, and those ripples penetrate beyond 'techniques' and 'training'," Osho said.

community endeavors in the past have included sittings at Tully Hill Rehabilitation Center, led by Saigyo Terry Keenan, and countless presentations, courses, and workshops at agencies, educational institutions and medical facilities throughout the upstate region.

Osho continues to teach meditation to teenage girls at Elmcrest Children's Center, and teaches the course "Deep Presence, an Introduction to Zen Meditation," two or three times a year at Hoen-ji; Jisho Judy Fancher will begin her seventh year leading meditation at the Faith Hope Community Center in the inner city; Joraku JoAnn Cooke leads Meditation for Teen Mothers at Betts Library and also Zen for Teens and other educational programs at Hoen-ji. A partnership between InterFaith Works and Onondaga County has made it possible for Jikyo to lead meditation at Hillbrook Detention Center with Myoen Deborah Bateman, Jisho, Reijitsu Paul Batkin, Jushin Barb Rauscher, and Elana Levy, and also at the Justice Center with Myoen; Ishin continues to offer Conscious Stress Reduction at the Zen Center, with Myoen's assistance; Jika has led numerous introductory meditation workshops at a variety of organizations and schools, and currently leads an ongoing program at HOME, Inc. Hoen-ji also receives many requests from various local religious groups and community organizations who wish to visit the Zen Center. Jika continues to organize and host these visits here at the zendo.

The Community Meditation Programs' telephone number is 315-663-7339; e-mail: sit@hoenji.org. I invite all of you to contribute ideas for this program's expansion and also to suggest organizations or contacts you have who may be interested in learning more about bringing the benefits of meditation into their workplaces. More information about the new meditation programs the Zen Center is offering throughout the community will be available soon on the Hoen-ji website: www.zencenterofsyracuse.org. □

Tell me, if you can, why mere desire
Vanishes when circumstances alter,
As though it were a portion left uneaten
And later fed to dogs or washed away.
The plate is clean again, the table empty.

Tell me why deceptions come and go
As quickly as the vapor on a mirror,
Revealing what was present all along.
How vacant, now, that unassuming glass
In which you see your features as they are.

The Empty Mirror

by Ben Howard

**Baby
Dharma**
or
**The Practice
of Parenting**

**by Hoetsu Amy
Vondrak**

I've been meaning to write about the practice of parenting for more than two years, which itself says something about the exigencies of family life. But it hasn't just been the press of family, work and life in general — I haven't been able to write because I haven't known what it is I've been learning. I've been waiting for an epiphany, what Virginia Woolf might have called a golden nugget of truth I could neatly wrap up in a tidy essay. I'm still waiting, with more questions than answers. Meanwhile, motherhood has been wonderful practice.

It starts even before you get pregnant. It's funny how easily pregnancy happens when it's not intended, but try to have a baby and suddenly it gets tricky. Every month you wait and ask did it happen? Am I pregnant? You soon start to feel that the sense of control you had over your body was an illusion.

Then you get pregnant, and you know for sure that any notion of bodily autonomy you once entertained was entirely delusional. For more than 40 weeks you hang on as best you can while your body does a host of miraculous, nauseating, and bizarre things you have absolutely no control over. At this point, the medical establishment colludes with nature as nearly any pregnancy symptom, from the common nausea to the individual quirks of every body — maybe searing

...during pregnancy, are you one person or two?

headaches, maybe joint pain, skin tags — I found the bottoms of my feet got numb — is dismissed by your doctor or midwife as “normal.”

During pregnancy, zazen takes on a new necessity and vitality. With both pregnancies I struggled with nausea. With Rory I was constantly nauseated for the first three months, eventually distinguishing seven distinct types of nausea. With Ger I was intermittently nauseated for the whole pregnancy. With both children, breathing through and not fighting the nausea — sitting through it — was the only thing that made it possible for me to function during the day and sleep at night.

Zazen also opens up the miracle of pregnancy in ways that are hard to verbalize. The teacher Mugai and I sit with here in Jersey, Ray Ruzan Cicetti Sensei, offered a koan in one of his teisho: during pregnancy, are you one person or two? It is strange to sit, breathing through your hara, and feeling someone grow and move entirely with you, a part of you, sharing breath, body, and blood, and yet wholly individual. It is strange to be sitting still and suddenly get kicked. Ger was such a squirmer that my whole belly visibly lurched around, and I wondered if other people in the zendo noticed that while the rest of me was still, my belly had a life of its own.

Then you get to week 36. You're huge. You can't get comfortable. You can't move easily. You can't sleep. You're done with this miracle. Then the waiting really starts. It is like waiting for the dokusan bell, only it's weeks before the clang comes. Due dates are merely tricks that create a false sense of schedule, as if the bell would ring at an appointed time. When it finally rings you enter into the longest, hardest dokusan ever. They don't call it "labor" for nothing. During labor, modesty goes, dignity goes, self melts away into pain; time is irrelevant; breath is everything. Then the miracle: twenty hours of drug-free labor left me limp until I heard Ger's first cry. The previous day passed away as the present need to nurse overwhelmed us both.

Being in the moment is a familiar practice for parents. It happens in many different ways as children grow, from gazing into the infinity of your baby's eyes, to gathering acorns with your two-year old, and beyond, children ask



Two-year-old Rory McCord, with her new baby brother, Gerard Basil William McCord. More details in Sangha Passages, Page 43

their parents to be with them in the present moment, not far away in need-to-do or want-to-do lists. But children also teach us how quickly the present slips by. It is both relief and a sadness that children grow and change so quickly. Difficult phases pass away, as do really cute ones. Early baby days are like sesshin, as baby keeps monk's hours, sleep is scattered, and the jolt out of routine life empties your mind. There is little or no time for formal practice. Roko Osho offered a wonderful teaching when Rory was a baby. "What are you doing when you nurse?" she asked. I realized I was almost always planning what I would get done while baby slept. "Do zazen while you nurse," Osho told me. "Be there." My practice was salvaged, and I became a better parent.

...children ask their parents to be with them in the present moment, not far away in need-to-do or want-to-do lists.

As baby grows, golden days slip by. This past summer was wonderful for us. On Saturday nights we listen to NJ 101.5's hits from the '70s and '80s, and dinner often turns into a kitchen dance party. This is the memory that captures this summer: the sun setting over the creek behind the house while the three of us (four if you count Ger in my belly) hold hands and dance to Stevie Wonder. I'd be sad at the end of the day that another one had slipped by. How often I've wanted to hold onto these moments. I take pictures, shoot video and keep a "Raising Rory" (now Rory and Ger) journal, and get sad, and often see the whole of life passing by, and think the inevitable end of this succession of days is death, and I don't want to die. My children have taken over my life. They have filled it with vast love and joy. I want to stay here with them, I don't want to grow old, I don't want to die.

This is why I haven't known what to write about the practice of parenting. I've gotten some of the lessons of losing control, letting go of self, of being in the present moment, but this I can't stop fighting. I want to stay with my children forever. As I cradle and nurse my two-week old baby, how do I learn to die?

It's a few years now since I witnessed Ryosei's grief at the loss of her first baby, Morgan. Mugai and I had not planned to have children, but Ryosei's grief gave me a compelling glimpse of a parent's love that Mugai went along with, and we had Rory. Even as I fight mortality, here is this Dai Bosatsu Mandala, shimmering diamonds of interconnections that blur the line between life and death. If from the terrible loss of Morgan came the joy of Rory – and now we look forward to the birth of Ryosei's twins – if entwined with death is birth, what is death really? I just don't know. □

"...our transient fictions of name and form"
– Chris Arthur

Those leaves outside my window
lift lightly in the wind.
That newly planted cypress

takes on a deeper greenness.
This summer heat will pass,
but here in late July

sunlight warms the foxgloves;
the asphalt, rinsed by rain,
looks blacker than before.

How pleasing are those names—
buddleia, artemisia—
which in our innocence

we lend to changing things.
Fictions, yes, and dreams,
but wholly necessary.

And think how desolate
this insubstantial world
would be without its names:

cypress, rain, July,
magnolia, rose, lobelia,
leaf, sunlight, asphalt.

Leaf, Sunlight, Asphalt

by Ben Howard

Homeless wanderer,
Shining morning mistiness!
Emptying zazen.

Eric Gustafson

The Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program

by Jikyo Bonnie Shultz

Asking others for help is very helpful training.

Last year, the Zen Center of Syracuse received a grant from the Alex G. Nason Foundation that has supported me as the Buddhist chaplain at Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel. The Zen Center's Board of Trustees agreed to use some of this funding for training in a new Buddhist Chaplaincy Training program offered by the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care. I went to the first of 11 weekend training sessions on Sept. 8 in New York City.

Two and a half weeks earlier, I had had surgery to insert screws into a fractured ankle bone. I was in a cast and on crutches. The weekend entailed many challenges, and I was a constant recipient of other people's care. I got there thanks to the kindness of friends. I stayed with a friend who made sure I was fed and gave up her bed for me. I accepted help from other students and teachers during the training, and from Greyhound staff and passengers as I traveled home by bus. We had been asked to bring lunch, and I also had to bring cushions to elevate my leg. This meant asking others to carry things

For more information about the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program, visit <http://www.zencare.org/chaplaincy/index.html>

for me. What a perfect way to learn about chaplaincy work – as a recipient of others' care!

Thirty-five students and four teachers filled the Village Zendo. Until this year, the training had only been available on the West Coast. The faculty of this first East Coast training were all ordained and all chaplains, in settings from Manhattan to Chichester, N.Y., and Northampton, Mass. The students came from many places, including Washington, D.C., Vermont and New Hampshire. The first day was a time for getting to know each other and beginning to explore the Buddhist context for spiritual care. The theme was "Compassion and the Paramis (Paramitas)."

A different Paramita will be the theme in each of the next ten months. Participants will read a book, submit written assignments and complete 16 to 20 volunteer chaplaincy hours in a hospital, prison or hospice each month. Other requirements include periodic



Jikyo with broken ankle

supervisions, field trip days and experiential reflections. The program's structure is modeled after Clinical Pastoral Education, which certifies chaplains. We will not receive certification, but will be introduced to spiritual care skills from a Buddhist perspective. We will study Buddhist principles and practices relevant to spiritual care giving, as well as introductory psychological, social and ethical issues related to chaplaincy. Most importantly, we will learn to accept "don't know mind" and to see ourselves and others as one.

During that first day, I wrote the following in my journal: "What is really needed is to look deep within, including looking at all of the influences of the past and what effects they've had, in order to increase my awareness and

intimacy with those I meet in hospital, prison or hospice settings. This includes looking at my assumptions about myself and becoming aware that they are assumptions only, and not reality. For example, I might assume that I can show compassion in most circumstances, or that I cannot. Neither assumption reflects reality and must be released, but I need first to know that it is there."

I'm grateful to the Zen Center's Board of Trustees and to the Alex G. Nason Foundation grant that is paying for my participation in this program. I know this will be a rich experience. Curiously, I also realized that I'm grateful for the experiences I've had since I fractured my ankle: for the enforced slow-down, for the need to accept care and help from others, for the feelings of vulnerability and weakness, and for the ways in which the injury experience has helped to prepare me for this training. □

**On Fleeing
the
Practice
and
Returning**

*by Ryobo Gary
Weinstein*

To courageously investigate my life,
to change the things I can,
I practice relinquishing my self;

the self of accumulated fears, and
the fears of an accumulated self.

Exhale it, sit deeply,
then, to spring from it.
Noticing it, to step out of it.

The evil karma I've done, is done,
and must be faced.
With my awake face.

I try leaving my self
to enter the Six Subtle Gates:
To stop, to see,
To return and to purify,
To follow Mu.

To atone without attachment.
for my anger,
folly and greed;
for my betrayal, cowardice and secrecy
I bow and must bow again.

Inhaling grief,
exhaling rage
amidst imperturbable Samadhi.

I attended Spring Kessei 2007 at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and am still becoming aware of the changes in my being because of that experience. Kessei is a three-month training period of structured daily zazen, chanting services, work practice (samu) and formal meals, with the support and guidance of Abbot Eido Shimano Roshi and the monastery Sangha.

For as long as I can remember, I have had an abiding desire to be “united with God” or “to know Reality” or to “meld with that which underlies that which appears” or just to “go with the Tao.” This aspiration is at odds with my data-based training: Which god? What version of Reality? What underlying? In times of doubt, I wondered: Am I really just a 19th-century Romantic?

Halfway through my first sesshin (Summer, 2005) at Hoen-ji, I remarked to Osho that I sometimes wished it had been enough for me to read Buddhist teachings and to live according to the Six Paramitas and the Eight-Fold Path. Would that be enough, she asked. At that point, I realized that living the practice would be the only satisfying way for me.

It is against that background that I chose to attend Spring Kessei. I needed to become more mindful, to deepen my practice for all beings. Three months away from home, family and work distractions would let me know just how real my aspirations were.

Since I thought that kessei would be three months of sesshin (and Holy Days Sesshin started two days after I got to Dai

Bosatsu Zendo), I did wonder if I would be able physically to sustain the schedule. The Sunday that that first sesshin ended, I slept 16 hours into Rest Day! But the usual regime is not that severe. Getting up at 4:30 a.m. is not so bad if you go to bed at 8:30 p.m. I had an added gift: My brother and sister-in-law are dairy farmers and get up every day at 4:30 a.m. I felt united with them as I rushed to the zendo before dawn each morning.

So What is Kessai Like?

*by Gyoshin
Virginia
Lawson*



*Buddha Hall at
Dai Bosatsu*

I was so worried about my habitual lateness that I washed the night before and slept in the clothes I would wear the next day, keeping my extra sweaters beside the bed. I would come to with the clanging of shinrei. (Emily began each day with the bell just outside my door). My aim was to get to the zendo before the fifth strike of the bonsho. Then I would not be late.

That “support and guidance of the Sangha,” quoted from the Dai Bosatsu kessei description, means “direction” from those who are your Dharma elders. Just about everyone there is either your Dharma elder or thinks she/he is. Since I had been told before I went that the only two useful responses would be a bow or the word “hai,” I rather expected that.

I was often reminded of our Jukai class’s “Eleventh Precept”: Practice Good Shut-up. I had already been working on letting go of my desire to explain whenever challenged (in my Clinical Pastoral Education training at Upstate Medical Center) so I was aware of my desire never to be wrong and thus to defend my ego-self.

I realized that the degree to which I wanted to explain was exactly the degree to which my ego-self was in control. So I practiced letting go of that need till it became a wish till, for the most part, it became a relief not to bother going back for explanation. The lesson: Pay attention and stay in the present.

Actually, you’re usually not told the why of any correction. Just keep quiet, either change immediately or at the next opportunity and figure out for yourself, if it’s not obvious, why the change is needed. The way of Zen: You are responsible.

The person correcting me had in mind the whole picture of the tone of the zendo as well as my growth in practice. This is where the trust within and between Sangha members held sway. It became just too boring and tiresome to defend even in my thoughts, let alone out loud. It became much easier to think: what am I to learn. I will admit that I wasn’t always silent about this and on one memorable (to me at least) occasion, I didn’t even recognize that I was being given direction, until I had publicly dug myself into a hole. Well, that reinforced my original purpose in going to kessei: To become more mindful.

About two months into kessei, during my second sesshin there, I stopped worrying so much about making mistakes. I relaxed into being there because I had come to trust the process of the Zen monastery training. Because of my trust in Osho, I was open to trusting Eido Roshi even before I met him. I soon learned to trust him for his own being. Roshi’s dokusans and teishos were constantly stripping away concepts and leading me to recognize truths.

It is a marvelous reality that fellow Hoen-ji Sangha members and I have discussed that Osho always seems to direct her talks to each of us where we are that day. “How did she know that I was wrestling with that point?” The same feeling of being personally addressed was in operation at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The Dharma truly is incredible and mysterious in its workings.

I came away from Spring Kessei with a stronger desire to deepen my practice. I have requested ordination as a Rinzai Zen nun. Like much of what happens in our practice, this feeling can't be put into words. I know that a renunciate has no more value in the scheme of things than a practicing layperson; I know that I don't need it to pursue my aspiration to become an interfaith chaplain. But there it is. To that end, I moved into the Residence Hall at Hoen-ji on Sept. 3 to begin study toward ordination.

So I close, with awareness of my great debt and with joyous gratitude to Eido Roshi, Roko Osho, to the members of Hoen-ji, to the Dai Bosatsu Zendo Sangha, to the ancestors who persevered and to the karma that brought me to be born at this time and in this place. □

I was young when Paul said
"Let's print Buddhas —
a *million* Buddhas."
Amid the ink stink and funk
of crumbling basement mortar,
the keen reek of new paper,
we watched each
spring green sheet fall.
"So many!" I exclaimed.

But now I grow old
and winter is cruel
upon the garden,
and war, as ever, goes badly.
Finding again this proof
at the very bottom
of my box of memory,
I hold the now brittle bond
and think "So few!"

Million Buddhas

*by Jorin Dale
Hobson*

Moving to Zen

by Jeanette Powell



Pathway at Hoenji

Two years ago I retired. I left my job and career after close to 40 years as a mental health program administrator and health care educator. As I looked back and listened to the many persons I had worked with and helped throughout the years, I knew I had done a good job. I had made a difference. They were mostly rewarding and positive years. Almost every day, I heard from someone I had helped even many years ago. I was ready and eager to shed the anger and frustration

surrounding the last years of my career. I knew from the many positive years in other workplaces, and from family and friends, that I was a positive person. I knew the direction I needed to move in. My task now was to fully recapture that positive core. I needed a soul cleaning.

Here was a new start at age 67. My life was ahead of me. Support was coming from everywhere. I was overflowing with positive feelings. I was heading for the Zen Center. Meditation had become secondary while working because of scheduling issues, but now it was full steam ahead for me. I was one of those people whose mind was going every second. (I still am one of those people.) Could I really meditate? Previous attempts had been frustrating. I

was not able to quiet my mind. I would find myself mentally jumping all over the place. Thoughts were intruding and bombarding my being, both good ones and not so good ones. I felt, however, that I could succeed at the Zen Center under the careful guidance of my good friend, Roko Osho Sherry Chayat.

I told Roko Osho my concerns, and she said, "To start with, just sit." Oh!!! Just sit? OK, so I "just sat." I sat and sat. I sat at the zendo, and I sat at home. I sat on my porch and in the park and by the lake and many other places, and all of a sudden I knew what was happening. I was starting to "get it." Oddly, I was moving and cleaning out my house at the same time. The mental and physical "junk" was disappearing. The mindless worries, the insignificant details, the *clutter* was disintegrating. The thoughts, worries, intrusions, information, comments,

*“The thoughts, worries, intrusions,
information, comments, rules, shoulds,
coulds and woulds were falling away.”*

rules, shoulds, coulds and woulds were falling away. Even better, they were staying away. It was like a silent, thorough, vacuum cleaning of the mind!

I saw how much my mind and my house were filled with useless stuff. Without that cloudy, foggy window that I had been trying to see through, all the crazy-makers in my life came into focus. I did not realize the immense negativity I had been tolerating from friends, coworkers, acquaintances and some family under the guise of friendship, helping another, or the virtue of “helping to repair the world.” I was able to see which people I wanted to be with, which ones I was allowing to steal my energy and which ones meshed with me in a mutually constructive and supportive way.

Besides the crazy-makers, I was filled with worn-out ideas and beliefs that had outlived their usefulness and were crushing my new and creative ideas. They were causing me to fill my days with more activity that only served to gather more mental dust and debris. As soon as I got rid of one activity, something else quickly took its place. I had to get control of that busy mind that was racing every second! I had to be useful! I was beginning to be able to reassess my value of “helping to repair the world” and to see it in a more realistic way.

So, where am I now, two years later with lots of sitting behind me and lots of sitting to come? For the first time in a long time I can again see that I have been created for a special reason and it is up to me to discover that reason. Listening to the voices of the world does not do it. I cannot be any good to anyone else until I find out why I exist. I need to find out what I am here for and what I am good at.

To do that I need to remove all the obstacles I can – both mental and physical. The only way that is possible is through meditation. Using meditation, I vacuum out the mental dust that accumulates daily.

I do not need to get control over my busy mind. I need to give up control and learn to let go! The voices of the world bombard us more than ever with media and communications. Like a computer, my brain shuts down from overload. It needs to be rebooted for a clean start. I need to let go of everything.

As mental and physical “stuff” clears away, I am beginning to hear and to listen. Hearing and listening are two different actions. Some simple definitions say that we use our ears to hear and our brains to listen. Hearing, according to one definition, is simply the act of perceiving sound by the ear. If you are not hearing-impaired, hearing simply happens. Listening, however, is something you consciously choose. Listening requires concentration so that

your brain processes meaning from words and sentences. Listening leads to reflection and learning. This is only the first step.

That complete opening of the mind to the universe during meditation begins to allow an even higher level of listening or reception than that required in human discourse. In letting go, one enters a process of discovery. One faces the universe, one's existence, alone. What needs to be shed? What is left when we let everything go? What does one move on to? What kind of choices will one have to make? It can be frightening or exciting. We can choose how we see it. The universe is change. The universe is in a constant state of creation. We are part of that. To be fully creative we have to be open to all that we can be and surrender to that process. We have to learn to be comfortable with the unknown.

What happened to my value called "helping to changing the world"? I cannot change others, and I have known that for many years. I can only change me, and offer kindness, compassion and understanding to others. I need to believe that the possibility of change is in everyone. It is a person's personal choice. I cannot make that choice for others.

I am finding this new experience delicious. I find the peace wonderfully overwhelming. I find being open to the universe challenging. It brings tears to my eyes, tears of great joy and energy. They wash away the debris. It is a new process. I feel connected, yet not bound. Now when my mind is racing I have learned to let go. It means I need to give up and get to that higher plane of openness and receiving. Then, I find the kind of inspiration and guidance that I need to keep discovering who I am and what I need to be doing.

I am not "there" yet. I don't know what "there" is. I have trouble staying on that plane of openness. I have trouble holding that mental pose that refreshes my soul, but it is getting better. What is around the corner? What will I find? What will surprise me? I am soaring into the unknown. I am sailing through the air but I am buoyant and supported. I am giving in to the universe and letting it carry me. I am on my way. The journey is a good one. The journey is life. It is what is. What a gift! □

september locust
past summer still holding out
opening this night

Zanssan Paul Worden

The first week in September, Shodo Harada Roshi, Abbot of Shogen-ji Temple in Okayama, Japan, gave a demonstration of Zen calligraphy in the Japanese garden of the Washington Arboretum. He is a renowned Rinzai master, who had come to Seattle to lead a sesshin at Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery on Whidbey Island. The day was perfect for a stroll in this mature garden – cloudy, damp, but not raining. Two side walls of the six-mat tea room had been opened, to give visitors a close-up view as we stood and sat around the edges of the tea room.

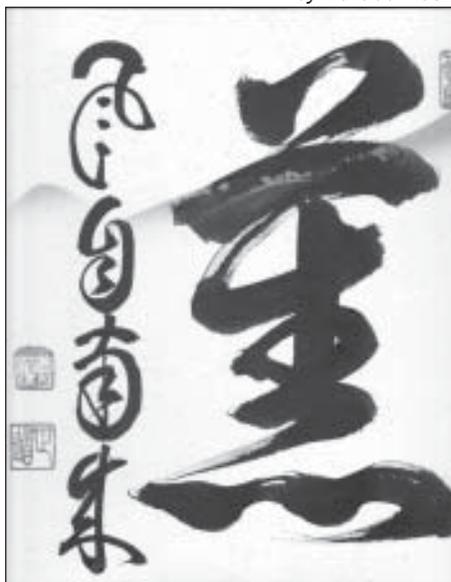
A coterie of students and helpers had laid out the working area and traditional tools: suzuri ink stone, Roshi's own brushes dark with patina, and some plastic bottles of ink. He oriented his work area along the long axis of the tea room, with Priscilla Daichi Storandt (Chisan), his disciple and longtime translator, seated just behind him and to the side. Sitting seiza on a small pillow, he stretched a long sheet of white paper over old newspapers, and anchored top and bottom with smooth rocks. He dipped his brush, collected ink, watched for the last drop to fall onto the ink stone, and then, with his brush hovering over the paper, he paused briefly. After that decisive moment, he was pure action.

Leaning forward, balanced on his knees and his left hand, he reached high up to the top of the paper, and began the first character. At times, the motion seemed to stop, with the brush pushing into the paper as a blob of black ink grew. But after watching for awhile, it was clear that this was motion too – subtle up and down, and twisting, rather than a beginning or an end. For each successive character he would work down the paper, finally sitting back on his haunches for the final strokes. At times he would pause for a moment between characters, as if to enter into no-Mind, or plan the spacing of the characters after a quick look around the paper. His

Shodo Harada Roshi's Buddha Mind

*by Ryushin
Michael Sobel
Seattle,
Washington*

*Calligraphy
by Harada Roshi*



“One person asked Harada Roshi if he prepared himself mentally or meditated prior to doing calligraphy. His answer: ‘Well, as a matter of fact, I just came from the airport’.”

left hand was often attentive to pulling the paper flat, while his right hand painted. His white cotton kimono sleeves were long, but never touched the ink. When he rested his brush on the stone, he would murmur in a deep voice the characters of the drawing, and Chi-san would repeat them, and translate them. Often, he'd follow with a brief commentary to explain to the audience the Zen lesson in the brushwork. Assistants carefully whisked away the paper to dry, discarded the often ink-wet newspaper underneath, and helped him set up for the next calligraphy with fresh white paper.

It is much harder to convey the heart of this experience than it is to describe the events. Each of the calligraphies was related to a wonderful and sometimes familiar Zen story or koan. There were over 20 of them, all drawn in less than an hour. Many stories and sayings were from the Chinese patriarchs of Zen: Bodhidharma's response to Emperor Wu (“What is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism?” “Vast emptiness, nothing sacred.”); Rinzai's “noble person of the Way.” What is Buddha? Mind. His brief commentaries were also eye-opening. One drawing illustrated “Even though the moon rises and sets, it never falls from the sky,” and the roshi explained tersely that this was about going beyond birth and death.

And then there were questions from the audience. Many in the audience had no knowledge of Zen or its arts, so the questions at first seemed mundane and naive. But Roshi eagerly welcomed them, and I quickly saw why – such questions went right to the heart of This Matter, and his answers pointed the way. I can only roughly paraphrase these little exchanges. One person asked Harada Roshi if he prepared himself mentally or meditated prior to doing calligraphy. His answer: “Well, as a matter of fact, I just came from the airport!” He described how the ink for sumi painting is traditionally prepared from the soot of burning pine resin, mixed with substances from the marrow of horse bones. This makes the ink coherent, and unlike synthetic inks, it does not bleed into the paper. Depending on the type of pine resin, the ink may be black or blue-black.

A final questioner asked if the roshi invented his own phrases for calligraphy, and the answer was telling. He said that his teacher was a calligrapher, not a monk, and that professional calligraphers create many different compositions of their own. But as a Zen monk, Harada Roshi has focused on subjects that convey the Buddha-Mind. They are completely familiar to him; he has created them over and over. As he draws them, that's all there is in his mind. And when we look at his calligraphy, what we feel expressed by the characters is the direct Buddha-Mind. □

I just came back from a rich new experience – two weeks of Zen in New York State, including two five-day sesshins. I know sesshins. I've been to lots of them. They are wonderful, difficult, painful, extreme, inducing such peacefulness that that most subtle of brain activity can be watched. I also know what it's like a few hours before a sesshin is over; the planning, the anxiety, the restlessness that starts to close in on the open landscape of the sesshin mind. I beat it this time. I came to Hoen-ji for the five-day summer sesshin, stayed four days and five nights with monks Jikyo and Entsu, then drove with Jikyo to the five-day samu sesshin at Dai Bosatsu.

After the Hoen-ji summer sesshin, I set up a retreat schedule that included sitting, studying, exercise and work. I stuck to this schedule three of the four days of my retreat. It helped to be in a new town surrounded by Hoen-ji Sangha members who were kind and supportive and whom I was only starting to get to know. Somehow I was able to hang onto a shadow of my sesshin mind during my "interim" days.

During my sesshin interim I did not feel restless. I was happy to be me and content with whatever I was doing. Though I was in a new town, I didn't feel my usual need to get out and conquer it. I had a chance to see the Syracuse University campus and that was nice, but I saw that it was not necessary. I had a wonderful job typing Nyogen Senzaki pieces for Roko Osho, but I would have been content cleaning or weeding as well.

You need to know about me and restlessness. If I'm home, I want to be out somewhere – convinced that everyone is living a rich fulfilled life but me. I'm missing something and I need to find it. Whatever it is, it isn't *here*. If I'm reading a book, it's probably not the best one that I should be reading. Having five books going at the same time should solve that problem. If I want to cook dinner, it's important that the dinner be more than just sustenance. It must be a means to learn a new recipe or a statement of my special skills.

By the time the wonderful Dai Bosatsu sesshin ended, I had been living the monastic life for 15 days and I was ready to take on the world again. As the going-home thoughts started to flood in on the last day, I felt more excitement than the usual sadness.

Hold Everything!

by *Tetsunin Pat Yingt*

Austin, Texas



Taking on the world meant dealing with some helplessness and anger on my flight home. I was stranded overnight in Newark, N.J., by Continental Airlines. I did not handle things particularly well; my anger probably exacerbated the situation. But I was amazed that I did not beat myself up with thoughts like: "How could I work so hard at the monastery and then degenerate into *this*?" *This* was just this. The way things are – the way I am, the way airlines are these days. And I did see things to do differently next time.

Now I'm four days home and some of the old restlessness is back. Nevertheless, today I'm content to stay home with my partner, Tony, my computer and a single book. I really tasted lunch. I'm fully hearing the blues playing on the CD player. This is remarkable.

When the sesshin mind started to fade, I could clearly see the stuff that normally makes a home in my head. The first morning, I sat at the breakfast table before returning to my day job feeling the weight of the mental formations that I build all the time. Usually, I am as unaware of these as a fish is of the water surrounding it. As I write this, I am aware of a thought: "Why are you only talking about yourself? Shouldn't you be writing about outreach or something more ..." Blah blah blah! There I go, beating myself up again.

I want to do this sesshin/retreat combo again. I know it won't happen just this way next time but that's OK, too. *It* will happen some other way. □

Gaia

by Bill Reddy

walking silently, slowly
a measured, calm pace
alone with others
on the same path

the air is fresh, it drifts past
sunlight dances on the stream
the way is uneven
looking down to keep my footing

then a gentle caress
from a pine bough
above my head

i feel a connection to gaia
Who's been waiting so long

Being green, like being mindful, is a process of discovery. Actually, instead of saying “being green,” I should use the phrase “becoming green,” because there’s never a finite point at which you achieve complete energy efficiency. Good things take time. So like many Americans, we first took baby steps to reduce our family’s energy usage before we opted for the bigger, high-ticket investments I’ll describe later on.

Starting green: Smaller, inexpensive changes

We were early adopters of the following green practices, all easy enough for anyone to try out:

Compact fluorescent lighting (CFL): Today’s compact fluorescent bulbs – in their swirl or ice-cream cone shapes – are virtually the same size as standard incandescent bulbs, but they’re 75 percent more energy-efficient. So a 15-watt CFL is as bright as a 60-watt standard bulb. The \$3 CFL bulb pays for itself with lower electricity costs in about 5 months – and lasts for five to ten years, even with heavy use.

Recycled paper products, especially those utilizing post-consumer waste: Recycled paper in the form of toilet paper, paper towels, napkins and computer paper can be purchased at a number of places in Central New York. If you can, choose post-consumer waste products. Pre-consumer waste is often leftovers from paper mills and printing shops, but post-consumer waste is actual paper reclaimed from the waste stream by recycling efforts in our homes and offices.

Rechargeable batteries: Instead of buying and discarding new batteries, consider batteries that you can recharge at home with a battery charger. Our family uses a Radio Shack model with rechargeable batteries made specifically for the unit. Charging time takes as little as ten minutes, and the unit is small and portable.

Kill-A-Watt: Ever wonder how much power is consumed by your computer, small kitchen appliances, refrigerator or television? For about \$40, the Kill-A-Watt Electric Usage Monitor provides info which you can use to calculate monthly and yearly energy expenditures. Just plug the Kill-A-Watt into a socket, and then plug the appliance into the Kill-A-Watt. An LCD screen will give

Going Green, One Family’s Journey

by
**Linda Lowen
and
Jim D’Aloisio**

If every one of 110 million American households bought just one compact fluorescent swirl bulb and screwed it in in place of an ordinary 60-watt bulb, the energy saved would be enough to power a city of 1.5 million people.

Source: http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/108/open_lightbulbs.html

you details on watts, amps, volts and more, and enable you to determine energy costs.

LED string lights: Whether you use string lights as a decorative feature during the summer or for winter holidays, the tiny bulbs commonly used are incandescent. Last year, local stores began introducing LED string lights for the Christmas holidays in both small bulbs and larger bulbs. These are highly efficient – even more so than CFLs. (LED bulbs are also available for use in conventional lamps and lighting, though the cold color is not to everyone’s liking.)

Freecycle or ReUselt: Instead of throwing away your unwanted items, consider an online alternative. National organizations such as Freecycle and ReUselt have Onondaga County groups that you can join. As a member, you can post requests for items you’d like, or offer items that you no longer use or that need minor repairs to work as good as new. Everything is free and you can be sure your items are going to someone who needs them.

Driving green: A bigger commitment

It may be trendy and embraced by Hollywood types, but one of the biggest changes you can make on a daily basis is driving green.

Fuel efficient cars: Only after skyrocketing gas prices have become a factor in our daily lives is the average person talking about fuel efficiency. Yet we are now on our second hybrid – both have been the Toyota Prius. We average more than 50 miles per gallon, and we drive conservatively, keeping an eye on the computer screen readout to assess mileage. Since braking generates electricity and slow bumper-to-bumper driving does not require the gas motor to engage, hybrid cars are ideal for those who do a good deal of city “start and stop” driving.

Living green: In the home

As green practitioners for more than a decade, we’ve done everything we could to reduce energy consumption *in* our home. But the biggest consumer of energy up to this point has *been* our home, a typical 1957 two-story colonial. The single-pane windows were original to the house, the furnace was circa 1970s and the hot water heater from the 1980s. The exterior walls were uninsulated and we could feel cold air coming in through the sockets.

We knew making energy improvements would be costly, but it was a priority for us. So we took the leap this summer and had an energy audit and assessment of our house done by a local contractor who specializes in energy improvements. Based on his recommendations and our budget, we chose:

1. Blown-in cellulose insulation throughout our entire house. The workman removed portions of our siding, drilled holes into the house, blew cellulose

you give you into the empty space between the wood framing, sealed up the holes and replaced the siding. They added more insulation in our attic to reduce heat loss through the roof.

2. A 95 percent energy-efficient furnace. Our 1970s-era furnace exhausted air hot enough to rise up through our chimney – typical of older, less efficient furnaces. Our new furnace exhausts air too cool to rise, so it now vents out the side of our home through a new exhaust system.

3. An on-demand hot water heater. Gone is our costly 1980s-style hot water tank, which never provided more than a shower's worth of hot water. Now we have an on-demand tankless water heater with an output of 199 gallons of hot water per hour. It takes a minute or two to come through the pipes, but the water is heated instantly as it passes through the heater and shuts off when not in use.

4. New energy-efficient windows. Our old windows were drafty, with storm windows that were laborious to use. Our new windows are easy to operate, lock and tilt out for cleaning. To retain the character of our house, we opted for crossbars embedded inside the window's multiple-pane insulating system, again increasing the window's efficiency over our old multiple-paned and caulked windows.

After all the work is completed, the contractor will return with a thermal imaging camera that will show where the heat loss (if any) is occurring in our home. Though the process is not cheap, we expect to reap the benefits over time with greatly reduced gas and electricity costs. And we know that future owners of our home also will benefit from our investment.

Growing green: A habitat, not a lawn

Finally, after 12 years living with a front lawn of grass, we tore up the turf and hired a landscaper who specializes in native plants to replant our yard. She turned the front of our house into a haven for insects, birds and small animals with species that are native to Central New York, drought tolerant and will flourish with minimal intervention. The plantings are sparse now but will fill in over time. Already I see the bees buzzing around the various blooms in the plants, which include a native variety of hibiscus.

These recent, large-scale efforts to go green with the help of contractors and landscapers haven't gone unnoticed. Several neighbors have stopped by to learn more, and two will be scheduling energy audits of their own homes. Others are curious about the native species and want to see how they do next spring and summer when they are established.

We're pleased that one big change in one small home seems to be having a domino effect, and that we're spreading the gospel of green living by example. Like a meditation practice, all it takes is that first mindful step □

From the Abbot

Roko Sherry
Chayat

This has been an exciting and very busy year, and the level of Dharma activity at Hoen-ji and beyond continues at a vibrant pace. Much of my time during the spring and summer was taken up with editing a manuscript of previously unpublished essays, transcribed talks, poems and letters by Nyogen Senzaki. Wisdom Publications will be bringing out the book, titled *Eloquent Silence*, in 2008, which is the 50th anniversary of Nyogen Senzaki's passing. It will be available in time for New York Zendo Shobo-ji's 40th anniversary weekend sesshin,



Nyogen Senzaki
(center) with Soen
Nakagawa Roshi
and Ruth Strout
McCandless

Sept. 12-14, 2008. A special Nyogen Senzaki sesshin will be held May 3-10 at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

The book has a preface by Eido Shimano Roshi, in which he writes, "Soyen Shaku was a pioneer in spirit, but the two vessels he used to transmit his Zen were D. T. Suzuki and Nyogen Senzaki.

... D. T. Suzuki presented a mixture of both the logical and enigmatic aspects of Zen Buddhism, which was the perfect combination to attract and fascinate Westerners. Nyogen Senzaki's way, on the other hand, was to come down to the streets and teach whomever he met."

The first half of the book is devoted to Ven. Senzaki's translation of and commentaries on the *Gateless Gate*. In his commentary to "Amban's Addition," he said, "Those who digest Zen well should do their work in the world without displaying any trace of Zen. ... Zen belongs to the world. Laymen and laywomen adherents should study Zen — even children in kindergarten should be trained in the Zen way. The shrubs and grasses around this humble house also study Zen. They show the color of Zen through their own natural green. ... Zen monks are like street cleaners. They do their work so that others can go their different ways. ... True monks who guard the lamp of Dharma are becoming fewer and fewer."

At the end of my introduction, I wrote, “The world — not just the Zen world, not just the Buddhist world — needs the cool-headed, compassionate and incisive teachings of this true monk more today than ever. With palms together, in commemoration of his life of integrity, simplicity, wisdom and unstinting loving-kindness, this book is offered to men, women, children, shrubs, grasses and street cleaners!”

The other major endeavor that occupied me this spring was leading, with Kazuaki Tanahashi Sensei, the pilgrimage titled “Ancient Buddhism in Japan,” of which I have written for this issue. Other travels included going to Paris with our son, Jesse Hassinger, whose short film was screened at a festival of experimental cinema there; being a guest teacher at a sesshin at Austin Zen Center, Texas; attending the American Zen Teachers’ Association annual conference in San Francisco, where two other teachers and I were asked to present Dharma talks; and participating in the 30th Anniversary Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo last summer (serving as emcee for the day of ceremonies and celebration at the end); attending last year’s and this coming Rohatsu sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and this fall’s Golden Wind Sesshin, which was spectacularly beautiful, and ended with Eido Roshi’s 75th birthday festivities, including tea ceremonies led by practitioners from Urasenke Tea School in Japan and an exquisite concert by La Mela di Newton Ensemble: Chi-in Lionel Party on harpsichord, Jonathan Keren on violin, and Ira Givol on viola da gamba. □

Golden Wind Sesshin *by Roko Sherry Chayat*

Delicate footsteps
barely rustling autumn leaves
deer apparition

My heart wide open
to whatever comes my way
sesshin gratitude



Sangha Passages

Dave Fisher weds Deb Badera

After years of commuting between Syracuse and North Carolina, Dave and Deb were married by Roko Osho on June 23 in the luminous zendo, with their children from former marriages participating in the ceremony. A reception was held later at Pratts Falls.



Dave and Deb shortly after their wedding

Bryna Keenan Subherwal and Maneesh Subherwal

A simple state-side wedding was performed by Roko Osho Aug. 25 at the beautiful home of Saigyo Terry and Jikai Jane Keenan in the hills of Monkton, Md., following a more elaborate three-day ceremony in India. Bryna and Maneesh live in Alexandria, Va. Bryna, who sat at Hoen-ji from her high school days on, works for Amnesty International, and her husband does IT consulting in New York City.

Noah Block and Olivia Tono

Dharma friend Barbara Block's son Noah and his fiancée Olivia were married by Roko Osho and Father Ed Golden Sept. 2 at Casa Larga Vineyards, Rochester, surrounded by family and friends from Bolivia, Japan, Germany and all over the United States.

Jikishi Celia Oyler and Florence Sullivan

Roko Osho officiated at the wedding of Jikishi and Florence at the Unitarian Society of Northampton, in the enlightened state of Massachusetts on Sept.15 with a delightful reception following at the Apollo Grill in a restored factory building.



Roko Osho performs wedding of Jikishi and Florence

A Fuller family

Nyozan Steven and Stacy Fuller, who were married last December at Hoenji by Roko Osho, are the happy parents of Zudi Maya Fuller. She was born at 5:25 a.m. on Bastille Day, July 14, and weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces. She's named after Stacy's French/Indian great-grandmother Zudina, and Nyozan's great-grandmother Maya. The Fullers live in Weare, N.H.

Rory McCord's new brother

Gerard Basil William McCord was born to Hoetsu Amy Vondrak and Mugai Brian McCord, Bordertown, N.J., at 2:50 a.m. Sept. 12. He weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces and was 20½ inches long. He joins his 2-year-old sister, Rory.

Hoetsu and Mugai were married by Roko Osho several years ago. They were active members of the Zen Center when they lived in Syracuse, and return periodically for events and sesshins. *See article on page 20.*

Doshin's baby daughter

Madeline Grace Schubert was born to Cara and Rev. Doshin David Schubert at 3:45 a.m. Sept. 13. She weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 inches long. Doshin, Cara, Madeline and their dogs and cats live on Everingham Road in Syracuse.

Artist in residence in Japan

Horen Vaughn Bell, of Seattle, went to Japan as an artist in residence in the town of Kamiyama for three months this fall. Check out what our creative Dharma sister's been up to at www.vaughnbell.net.

In July, the Backspace at SOIL, in Seattle, presented a solo video installation of Horen's work, titled "From Sea to Shining Sea." The installation used video images shot at matching latitudes on the East and West coasts. The piece makes physical the imagined connection between different and distant landscapes.

Horen also did performances over the summer throughout King County, as part of the 4 Culture's King County Site Specific Performance Network's CUV

(Cultivation Utility Vehicle). For a peek, go to www.adoptalandscape.com. Last spring, she gave an excellent presentation at SU's Warehouse Gallery on the intersection of art and nature.

Bound for Ottawa

Rev. Entsu Scott Rosecrans, who has served as head monk at Hoen-ji since his return from many years of training at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and at Shogen-ji and Kokoku-ji in Japan, emigrated to Canada at the end of October. He has taken a position at the Ottawa branch of Good Life, where he will use his biology background to do medical assessments, measuring clients' strength, flexibility and cardiovascular health and then referring them to the appropriate clinical or physical therapy sites, staying with them through the entire process. Although we will all miss Entsu terribly, we are happy for him as he embarks upon a new life, and trust that he will visit as often as possible.

New book

Rev. Saigyo Terry Keenan is the author of the fascinating *If Our Lives Be Spared*, a biography of the Armstrong-Collin-Knapp family, who settled the area of Fayetteville near Green Lakes and Alverna Heights, where Hoen-ji used to go for spring and summer sesshins.

The book was published earlier this year by Syracuse University Press, and Saigyo came up from Monkton, Md., in September to do readings on Sept. 22 and 23 at the Fayetteville and Manlius libraries. It has a five-star rating on Amazon. Saigyo also has paintings accepted in the Towson (Md.) Art Collective juried show, and is working on another book, this one fiction. He has been offering pastoral care and meditation at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a local rehabilitation center.

Feel like a peaceful get-away?



You can create your own retreat at Hoen-ji.
Stay a weekend, a week, or a month.

Do zazen with the sangha during regular sittings.
Do zazen on your own schedule.
Sleep in a guest room in the
Zen Center of Syracuse Residence Hall.
Schedule dokusan with Roko Osho.

Make your own restful retreat.
For costs and other details, call Jikyo Bonnie
Shoultz, 315.469.6029.

Leaving for China

Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson will end her 16-month, self-proclaimed “artistic residency” at Hoen-ji in December, when she jets off to China for a year’s study of Mandarin at a university language center.

“It is with a tumult of emotion that I look forward to this adventure, as it is also with a tumult that I leave the Zen Center, my home for the past year,” she wrote in a recent e-mail. “I am so thankful for all that I have learned by living here, much of which is giving me the courage to leave the warm support and love of Sangha friends here and leap out into the Larger World.”

In Sorrow

We offer our heartfelt sympathy to the following Sangha members: Doshin David Schubert, whose mother, Vera Schubert, passed away; Ginger Storey-Welch, who lost her father, Albert Earl Storey Jr.; to Fumiyo Hirano, whose brother, Masao Hirano, passed away; to Tim Kohlbrenner, who lost his father, Robert W. Kohlbrenner; to Meigetsu Rebecca Beers, who lost her uncle, Jack Stephens; to Ryobo Gary Weinstein, whose Aunt Selma passed away, and to Walt Patulski, whose mother, Annette Patulski, passed away. □

Picking up the phone to call my son,
I entertain the thought that every act,
No matter how familiar or banal,
Might be construed as unrepeatable
And all of life as ceremonial.
What could be less formal than the feel
Of yet another handset in the hand
Or, beneath my fingertips, the cool
Resistance to the punching-in of numbers?
And what could be more normal than *hello*,
Spoken by a voice I couldn't fail
To recognize, despite the poor connection,
The fading in and out across the miles?
And yet to entertain that counter-thought,
To see each action and its consequence
As marvelous and not to be repeated,
Suffices to enlarge this conversation
Beyond the casual or superficial,
The morning's headlines and the evening's news,
As though for once the truth of things had spoken.

One Time, One Meeting

by
Ben Howard

Calendar *Winter/Spring Programs 2007-2008*

COURSES

Conscious Stress Reduction

Taught by Bill Cross, Ph.D., 6-8 pm on eight Wednesdays, Jan. 23-March 12, at the Carriage House Zendo. The course includes meditation/mindfulness training, yoga and stretching, body awareness and visualization and learning methods to integrate change into one's daily life. This training has helped many people make adjustments in their lives in response to daily stress, high blood pressure, chronic pain and major life-changing situations. Fee (includes four CDs and a workbook): \$200; optional individual sessions on a sliding scale. Booster classes offered Wednesdays when regular classes are not in session. Anyone is welcome to attend the boosters. Sliding scale, \$15. For information or to register, call Dr. Cross, 474-3762.

Deep Presence: An Introduction to Zen Meditation

Taught by Roko Osho Sherry Chayat, abbot of the Zen Center of Syracuse, 6-7:30 pm, on six Tuesdays, March 4-April 8, at the Carriage House Zendo and Joshua Forman House. Instruction in sitting and walking meditation, through awareness of breath and posture. Group discussion focuses on how to break free of old patterns and cultivate wisdom and compassion, no matter how difficult the circumstances of our lives. Fee: \$125, or \$85 for students and seniors. Fee waived for Sangha members who help with the class. To register, call 492-9773, or send a check to the Zen Center; indicate the name of the course.

Yoga

Led by Dick Molitor. 5:30-7 p.m. Fridays and 1-2 pm Sundays, in the third-floor art gallery, Joshua Forman House. Small classes. Individualized instruction. All levels welcome. Free to members, \$5 donation for non-members. For information, call 475-7610.

EVENTS

"Breathe," Art Exhibition, Nov. 17-Jan. 6

Paper sculpture by Keiko Soga, opening reception Saturday, Nov. 17, 4-7 pm, third-floor art gallery, Joshua Forman House.

PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES

Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day Chanting, 21st of each month, 7:30 pm Free.

Dharma Study, Second Sunday of each month 7-9 pm
Unless otherwise noted on the website. Free.

Rohatsu Sesshin, Dec. 1-8.

Early morning and evening sittings on weekdays and all day on weekend, led by senior students, to commemorate the Buddha's enlightenment. See bulletin board for the sitting schedule.

New Year's Eve Ceremony, Dec. 31 9 pm

A Personal Purification Ceremony at Forman House fireplace, followed by zazen in the Carriage House Zendo. Teisho at 10 p.m., then at 11:30 p.m. Kanzeon chanting 108 times, with each participant taking turns striking the large gong. Afterward, refreshments, conversation, dancing in the Forman House.

One-day Meditation, 10:30 a.m.- 4:30 pm Saturday, Jan. 19.

Cost is \$75. Open to beginners and current practitioners. Includes lunch.



For more information on programs and events,
or to register, visit or call the Zen Center at
(315) 492-9773.



The Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji
266 West Seneca Turnpike
Syracuse, New York 13207

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Syracuse, NY
Permit #44529