



Dharma Connection 2008

Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji



Daily Schedule

Sunday, 9 a.m.-12: chanting service, zazen, teisho or dokusan

Monday, 7-7:45 a.m.: short service, zazen

Tuesday: 8:30-9:30 a.m., zazen, dokusan

Wednesday, 5:45-7:30 a.m.: chanting service, zazen

Thursday, 7-7:45 a.m.: zazen, dokusan

Thursday, 6-8 p.m.: short service, zazen

Three-day Winter Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18

Three-day Spring Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, April 16 to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 19

Five-day Summer Sesshin

7 p.m. Tuesday, July 28 to 5 p.m. Sunday, August 2

Three-day Fall Sesshin

7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18

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 2009

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

Shingeshitsu Roko Sherry Chayat, Abbot

Editors: Shinge Roshi and Meigetsu Rebecca Beers

Contributing editor: Myorin Catherine Landis

Designer: Tetsunin Pat Yingst

Hoen Calligraphy: Muishitsu Eido Shimano Roshi

Cover: Entrustment Ceremony, Panoramic View by Ryushin Michael Sobel

Photography: Ryushin, Togan Tim Kohlbrenner, Daishin Pawel Wojtasik

Letters	4	Table of Contents
Entrustment Ceremony		
Shitsugo.....	9	
Buddha Poem	10	
Eido Roshi's Talk	11	
Reflection by Nikyu	12	
Entrustment Ceremony Teisho	14	
Humility and Responsibility.....	20	
Appreciation Event - Raul Martin/Jane Hirchfield.....	21	

Practice

The Beginningless Endless Path	22
Sho Shin Sangha.....	24
Hakuin Zenji and the Heart of Zen.....	31
Reflections of Shobo-ji Sesshin	34
Mountains and Rivers/Zendo Floor.....	37
Shogatsu.....	39
Dharma Dance	42
A New Journey of Centering in Pottery/Self.....	45
Hoengi Sangha Memorial Grove.....	47

Sangha Activities

From the Abbot	51
Sangha Passages	52
New Members and Ordinations.....	54
2007 Year End Contributors.....	54
2008 Capital Campaign Contributors.....	55
Entrustment Ceremony Donors.....	56
Entrustment Ceremony Volunteers	57

Poetry

Dream.....	23
Three Haiku.....	36
Does a Dog Have Buddha Nature.....	38
First Sesshin Poem.....	43
Haiku.....	44
Shizen Ichimi.....	46
Dog.....	48
Right Hand.....	49

Letters

Editor's note: Some of these letters were received before Shingeshitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi's entrustment ceremony on Oct. 12, hence she is called both Shinge Roshi and Roko Osho.

Dear Roshi,

Your name, Shingeshitsu, translated by Eido Roshi as “room for your heart to bloom,” is such a reflection of your deep karmic connection with Soen Roshi – “all beings are flowers blooming in a flowering universe,” from his haiku – and MyoOn Maurine Stuart, whose final words to you in this lifetime were “heart-mind to heart-mind.”

Every roshi has his or her own Zen style. Your teacher has fully encapsulated your style of Zen. What an intimate honor.

Gassho,
Kanro Christine Dowling

Dear Sangha,

Once again I have had the wonderful opportunity to return to Hoen-ji. This time I came to participate in the Dharma Entrustment ceremony from Eido Roshi to Shinge Roshi, to attend the 12th-anniversary sesshin and witness the ordination of Gyoshin. Having been Osho's student for most of these 12 years, I have seen the blossoming of our wonderful Zen Center. Again I experienced the warmth and kindness that permeates Hoen-ji.

Located at West Seneca Turnpike and Onondaga Creek, the Zen Center sits at the crossroads of history and culture. It has become a spiritual meeting ground of East and West, and a friend to those residing in poverty nearby and others in need. It is heart-warming to see how much the Sangha has worked to make the Forman House, the Student Residence and the garden and grounds into a beautiful sanctuary honoring the native history of the area as well as the traditions of Rinzai Zen practice. The Zen Center is a wonderful tribute to Shinge Roshi's vision and the Sangha. What remains is a solid home for the Dharma, for practice and healing.

Each time I visit the Zen Center I see something new. Yet the experience also reveals a sense of continuity and maturity. Each time I come, the familiar leads to new angles, colors and shapes. The first time I came to Hoen-ji we slept in the “Carriage House,” which still was one. This time it was the third

floor of the residence. Each vantage point brings a sense of the early history of Syracuse and another dimension to the spirit of Hoen-ji.

This October celebration was blessed by beautiful autumn skies swirling with color and transition. Walking toward the zendo a very loud blue jay zoomed down to a low bush, making its presence fully known. I had just finished reading a talk by Shunryu Suzuki mentioning the distraction of a noisy jay. The resonance was striking. "Oh, hello, Suzuki Roshi," I said.

Later I wandered along the creek and woodlands trail, bowing to the jizos and to the memory of lost loved ones. I passed the rough and rowdy stump-man with his unembarrassed protrusion, the lonely breast-tree leaning and no longer green; then came upon the twanger twig twins vibrating briskly in the crisp morning air just above the leafy ground.

Later blue skies turned to gray, bringing rain. Suddenly a gust of wind hurled earthward thousands of pink, red and golden leaves, like brilliant ninja stars slicing earthward. Then followed the bright autumn sun and deep blue sky, drying the leaves that they might be carried a little further on to new ground.

There is melancholy in the air as the world outside tumbles in chaos and pain and life starts closing in. Changing moment to moment, whether noticed or not, someone is not well, someone is worried, someone is lonely, someone is gone. Winter is not far behind. This is where our practice brings us together in the present, to listen. Don't move. Dance in the stillness. Breathe in the dark. Who is it?

In the company of so many dear and caring Sangha members, this has truly been a heart-warming and healing experience for me.

In gratitude,
Chogen Rene Berblinger
Portland, OR

Dear Shinge Roshi,

Congratulations on such a beautiful Entrustment Ceremony. Thank you so much for the hospitality afforded Saiun and myself. Thank you for the lovely tea cups. Hoen-ji was shining like a jewel – the Sangha must have worked so devotedly! Your Sangha is so full of life and love – it is a real joy to visit a place of such energy and compassion. Saiun and I are so happy for you and rejoice in your new title, so richly earned.

Nen, Nen!
Banko Randy Phillips

Dear Roko Osho,

Irja, our Swedish Sangha member here, thanked me for sharing my experience using co-meditation when my father was dying. She said she used it with her dog, who had been hit by a car. She found the dog lying in the woods, and when she brought her inside, the dog began having many seizures and her breathing was quite labored.

Irja remembered what I had said, and she got down and began breathing with the dog. At first, nothing seemed to change, she said. But then the dog's breathing changed and then the seizures stopped and the dog began vocalizing to her. She really believes the co-meditation made a difference in her dog's ultimate recovery.

So, again, gassho. Thank you for sharing the practice. It is beautiful (and an honor) to have these ancient healing practices continue to flow through us.

Ginger Storey-Welch
North Country Zendo, Canton, NY



Editor's note: The following are excerpts from e-mails written to the Sangha by Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson, who set off last January for a year's study of Mandarin at a university language center in Taichung, Taiwan. The first excerpt is from February 5, 2008.

Dear Sangha,

Greetings from the other side of the world! Just wanted to let people know how I am. I have officially been here in Taichung, Taiwan for a little over two months, yet it feels like much longer (in a good way). Happy New Year, as it is almost the Chinese New Year, which also means vacation.

The winter term is almost over, and I both survived and enjoyed my studies. Imagine actually liking to go to school. How novel! Every weekday is class from 8 to 10 a.m., and then another from 10 a.m. to noon. The afternoons and weekends are open for discovery (supposedly study, haha).

There is quite a variety of other students here: ages, countries, reasons of study. But the predominant population is from southeast and East Asian countries. Sometimes it gets confusing to try to learn Chinese, then walk into the hall and hear Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Spanish, French. My core class is about 12 people, all very sweet and incredibly friendly, so much more so than in the United States. What's wrong with us?

As far as living situations go: I found a small but nice room in an apartment building five minutes' walk from campus, yet far enough away from the students and night market (the very popular nighttime activity of strolling, eating, and shopping—it's a tough life!) to be a bit more quiet. The exception is the ever-present roar of motorbikes, the No. 1 mode of transportation. (They're also No. 1 dangerous. I decided to take my lead from the old people and bought a bicycle. Even that feels daring, as the motorcyclists are not afraid to take out anything in their way!)

This excerpt is from June 17, 2008:

As with last time, I apologize for writing a generic letter that is a bit impersonal. I'll use the excuse that I'm forgetting English and it's too hard to write. Haha. Alas, no. I think I'm making slow progress in my Chinese studies. A new term just began, and I'm now Level Four (whoop hoo), and, as I had been warned, the higher you go, the harder it gets! A lovely piece of news: I



Sangha member at-large Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson stands in front of one of the many temples in Taichung, Taiwan

managed to grab one of the scholarships that are offered by the university; it gives a six-month stipend of a comfy sum per month. I never knew so many people wanted to be my friend. >:)

Taiwan continues to be interesting and friendly. With the recent elections, there is an air of possibility for better relations with Mainland. I went with a friend to the eastern coast, and it was hard to believe that we could be merrily frolicking in such a disputed strait. I am thankful that I am not involved in politics.

Other than a few day trips here and there, I've mostly been sticking around the campus, being a nerd in the library, or enjoying the wild strangler fig trees and feral squirrels who steal cup lids when your back is turned. To my artsy friends: I miss the creative atmosphere of an art community, as mostly everyone here is business- or technology-minded. I continue to paint on my own, though I don't have time for a lot. I have joined the Chinese Painting Club, although half the time I have no idea what's going on. I did, however, broaden some horizons in one of my classes by doing my final presentation on the historic and little known occupation of The Figure Model, complete with clothed demonstration. I don't think some people knew what to make of it! :)

Thank you for continual love and support and good wishes. When I am seized with bouts of homesickness and the longing for comprehensible communication, it is such a comfort to read and re-read your letters and e-mails with news of your thoughts and events.

For those who have said they would come visit me *and haven't* (you know who you are), there might be opportunity yet. I found out I was misinformed about the maximum duration of stay. It turns out it isn't a year, it's for as long as you pay. I'm toying with the idea of finishing the program, which would be for another year after this one, and would really allow me to become confidently proficient, I hope, instead of merely so-so.

Hope all are in good health and spirits, and are enjoying life and being treated well by it. I look forward to hearing from you. Take good care.

Peace and love,
Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson
Taichung, Taiwan



Zen on the Rocks cartoon, by
Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson

Shitsugo

October 12, 2008

More than 140 Sangha members and friends of Hoen-ji gathered together on October 12, 2008 for the joyous occasion of our teacher's Entrustment Ceremony.

The Ven. Muishitsu Eido Shimano Roshi gave Roko Sherry Chayat a beautiful new name, Shingeshitsu (Heart/Mind Flower-room), and told us that the time had come to call our teacher Roshi.

Kanro Christine Dowling was moved to write the following poem:

thank you for room for all our hearts
to bloom,
no matter who we are
no matter what,
there is space for everyone to have a practice
blooming season after season
truly the heart of your Zen.



Three teachers (from left) Genjo Joseph Marinello Osho, Roko Shinge Sherry Chayat Roshi and the Ven. Muishitsu Eido Shimano Roshi during the Shitsugo ceremony.

In the Rinzai School, the title “roshi” is not automatically given upon inka shomei (Dharma transmission) or the prior ceremony of abbot installation. There is a period of advanced practice known as “gogo no shugyo” (“period of polishing practice after awakening”) that takes place before the “shitsugo” (“room-name”) is given.... Such a room-name is conferred by one’s teacher after the period of polishing that follows inka. This period of advanced practice is unlike anything that has come before, and is not to be hurried or circumvented in any way. Speaking from my own experience, it is indeed precious.... When the teacher feels that the maturity of the student’s insight has ripened, the teacher writes the “shitsugo” calligraphy and presents it with congratulations. A public announcement is made that from that point on, the title “roshi” should be used.

Editor’s Note: Early on the morning of October 12, a new Buddha for Hoen-ji’s main altar arrived with sculptor Tom Matsuda, who had carved it at the request of Shinge Roshi. The seated Shakyamuni, made from a section of Japanese kiri that Matsuda had come upon in a Pennsylvania forest, was in place for the day’s zazen and ceremonies. First, Eido Roshi conducted an Eye-Opening Ceremony for the new Buddha; then we chanted Bu Chin Son Shin Dharani in a Temple Protecting Ceremony; and then we had the Entrustment Ceremony, during which Eido Roshi presented and explained Shinge Roshi’s new name.



how wonderful to have a new Buddha
a warm welcome to enter his embrace
the expanding aura of compassion
just look at the openness of his face
the total acceptance
the subtle smile
calm and peaceful
sitting
upon the lotus shades of pink
this is his first home
he is here for us

– Andy Hassinger

Good afternoon. The other day, we at Dai Bosatsu Zendo had Golden Wind Sesshin, and Nikyu came from Syracuse to attend. During our conversation, he said, “We have a temple. We have a teacher. We have a lineage.” This statement condenses everything for today’s event. You have Hoen-ji temple. You have a teacher, Roko ni-Osho, and you have a lineage, which is known as the Takuju School of Rinzai Zen Buddhism. Thus, we go back from my teacher, Soen Roshi, and his teacher, Gempo Roshi, and his teacher, Sohan Roshi, to Hakuin Zenji, Rinzai Gigen Zenji, Bodhidharma, and Shakyamuni Buddha.

So today, it is ten years since we had the Dharma Transmission ceremony, outside that front courtyard in a tent. You may wonder, why ten more years, ten extra years? It is not extra at all. It was needed for Roko Osho to grow, for you to grow, and for you to create this wonderful Sangha. I now feel that the time has come for Roko Osho to be called Roshi.

She knew Soen Roshi quite well, and I assume that when she compares herself with him, she may be a bit embarrassed to be called Roshi. Or, she may have heard many stories about Gempo Roshi. He too, was a great, outstanding Roshi. So when she is called Roshi, she may question whether she is worthy or not. Maybe as of today she is not as great as Gempo Roshi, not as great as Soen Roshi, but, as you all know, she will be.

As for Shitsugo, this may be a quite unfamiliar term for you. When his teacher or her teacher acknowledges him or her, indicating that he or she can carry the Dharma with confidence, then the teacher chooses a Roshi name. This may be the easiest way for you to understand.

Shitsu means room, like dokusan room. In my case, Soen Roshi gave me the name Muishitsu, True Man

Shitsugo Explanation

**A Talk by the
Ven.
Muishitsu
Eido
Shimano
Roshi**



*Eido Roshi explains
Shinge Roshi's new
name.*

Without Rank. Soen Roshi was called Mittakutsu, not shitsu; *kutsu* means cave. Gempo Roshi was also Hannyakutsu, cave. There is no difference between *kutsu* and *shitsu*, just sound-wise, Mittashitsu is not as good as Mittakutsu. Gempo Roshi, Hannyakutsu, means Cave of Wisdom. Mittakutsu Soen Roshi means Cave of Paramita, to reach the other shore. For the past couple of years, I have been thinking of her name, this and that. Soon you will see what I wrote for her Roshi name. This is the time for you to unveil [the calligraphy with the Shitsugo].

It reads, Shingeshitsu. *Shin* means Heart/Mind. *Ge* means Flower. And *Shitsu*, room. Thus, room for your heart to bloom.



Shin Ge Shitsu
Heart/Mind Flower-Room

After I decided upon and wrote this calligraphy and sent it back to Japan for it to be mounted, I thought, there is one problem. Roko already starts with "Ro," so it would be Roko Roshi. (Laughs) It works, and is certainly not incorrect. But putting that aside, one possibility is for you to call her just Roshi or Shinge Roshi. This is not my position to force you to choose.

But starting today, please address her as Roshi. For awhile it may be a bit awkward, but soon, the more she is called Roshi, the more she feels as Roshi, so it is partially your Nen that makes her grow into it. She has the authority and responsibility, and perhaps responsibility is more important than authority, to transmit this Rinzai, Hakuin, Torei, Gempo, Soen lineage to the next generation. But as long as I am alive, and in case she finds some Dharma heir, I would like to see him or her, and that is the only condition.

So, with complete trust, I happily transmit this wonderful lineage, with the name Shingeshitsu Roshi, to Roko Osho. □

Reflections

*By Nikyu
Robert G.
Strickland*

While the entrustment ceremony unfolds before me, reflections from other times nod as they pass through the space that is called my mind.

We three university students have unrolled indoor-outdoor carpet strips on a damp linoleum floor. Someone rings a bell, and we sit facing a concrete block wall, each absorbed in a particular version of wandering about, wondering what to do.

Some time later, we are upstairs, on the second floor. Pier One bamboo curtains cover the windows. Mats are aligned on the floor. A simple altar sets at one end of a small room. Someone rings a bell, and we sit facing each other, each wandering about in his or her

heart-mind, wondering what to do. Visitors, some hardly noticed and others settling down, dot the room. It is seldom, if ever, full. The “Heart Sutra” has been semi-memorized, and as the chant is intoned there is always the excitement of perhaps getting through to the end without a major restart. Eido Roshi visits Syracuse, and the room becomes Hoen Zendo. The room is seldom, if ever, full.

Roko Sherry Chayat [and her first husband, Shoro Lou Nordstrom] comes to Syracuse from Dai Bosatsu Zendo and Shobo-ji. She brings experience, dedication, and kindness. The bell is struck at the proper time. Chants are learned more reliably. The house and its room pass away; we move to the basement of Grace Episcopal Church. Again the indoor-outdoor carpeting is rolled out. The basement moisture is familiar.

*“Once she rang the bell.
Now she is the bell.”*

We renovate the attic of Roko’s and Andy’s house and create a zendo. A handful of years have gone by. A few have been to Dai Bosatsu Zendo. A few have attended seven-day sesshin. The Time-Being continues to dance.

The lineage begins to haunt the sittings; the room, while hardly ever full, is overflowing. The Time-Being stretches out, welcoming those from the past, encouraging those in the present, and sending forth those for the future. The Sangha begins to awaken from its eternal slumber, revealing again its eternal presence. The few from now and then become those who are sitting at Hoen Zendo, and now the room is always full, even as it is frequently empty.

The ceremony unfolds on October 12, 2008. A buddha statue awakens to become a Buddha. A calligraphy is unveiled to reveal a blossoming flower, an awakening heart-mind. Eido Roshi renews his invitation to his student, Roko Shinge, to join him on the pilgrimage that is the lineage. The young woman is now older. Once she rang the bell. Now, she is the bell. Chanting fills the gathering with the rhythm of time in motion. This time, another time. Which one, anyone, this one. How many times have I been here before? A moonbeam passes through, carrying old ones on their journey to fulfill their vows. The mystery reveals a glimpse of light dancing within its many-partnered shadows. How heavy the robe and bowl! Best to leave them behind and follow the ceremony to its ending.

The zendo, once filled to overflowing, is now empty. A few pass through, collecting, straightening up, arranging this and that. The faint scent of incense is slowly vanishing within the Onondaga Valley breeze. Light is settling in the West. A single sandal is left behind as the Time-Being, forever wandering, forever wondering what to do, looks furtively around for the rolls of indoor-outdoor carpeting. They are no doubt just around the corner, over there, somewhere, here. □

**Entrustment
Ceremony
Teisho**

**Blue Cliff
Collection,
Case 11,
Obaku's
"Gobblers of
Dregs"**

**By Shingeshitsu
Roko Sherry
Chayat Roshi**

Good Afternoon. First, I must express my profound gratitude to Eido Roshi. Indeed, I am embarrassed. Indeed, it will take far more than ten years – lifetime after lifetime – to walk in the footsteps of the great masters, to walk in the footsteps of Muishitsu Eido Shimano, a great, great Roshi.

Thank you all, esteemed teachers and honored guests, Sangha members and Dharma friends from near and far. It's great to look around and see so many of you. My deep thanks to this Sangha. Everyone worked very hard to make this day possible, and I'm truly, truly grateful, and again, ashamed – how can I be worthy of this?

As some of you well remember, in early October of 1998, the renovation of this carriage house was nearly complete. It had been used for nearly a century for horses and carriages and carpentry and parties and all number of things we don't even want to know about. It was a storehouse for junk when we got it, and basically a shambles. So, no one could quite understand when I stood here the day that we first saw this property and said, "Ah, this will be our zendo!" But soon, with that

renovation process, everyone understood, and eagerly awaited the completion of the work. Our contractor was hurrying, knowing Eido Roshi was due to come up on October 18 to conduct an important ceremony in this building. Everything was finished except for putting in the doors and the windows.

Today is October 12.



*Shinge Roshi
addresses the
Shitsugo assembly.*

Exactly ten years ago today, just before dawn, I got a phone call from Nikyu. He said, "Roko, the carriage house is on fire!" I sped over here. The mist hovering over the gorgeous hills was transfused with the radiant color of the day's first light. As I got closer, the mist grew thick and dark. Smoke lay heavily over the entire Onondaga Valley. Fire engines lined the road. I parked

and ran toward the carriage house. The firemen had almost extinguished the flames, but it was clear that the building was severely damaged. In six days, Eido Roshi was supposed to conduct my transmission ceremony here. What were we going to do? I called Roshi. I told him what had happened, and said, "Perhaps we could rent a tent." After a shocked silence, he said, "All right. Let's do it as planned, in a tent."

October 18, 1998, was a perfect autumn day, just like this one – warm and sunny, with golden leaves sailing down and scuttering into the big white tent. There were about the same number of people as are sitting here now. On the altar today is our new Shakyamuni Buddha, seated in deep samadhi, carved by Tom Matsuda-sensei, who is also here. On the altar that day were a piece of charred wood and a blackened stone.

I had tried to prepare for the transmission ceremony earlier that fall. I attended Golden Wind Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and I spent a week in solitary retreat there afterward, but somehow I didn't feel ready. The fire brought everything dramatically into focus.

In the months that followed, we came to understand that the fire was absolutely necessary. The fire was the purification needed so that a true zendo could be built, true practice could be engaged in.

So, what was transmitted that day, ten years ago in that white tent, from Eido Roshi to me? Fundamentally, nothing. Certainly nothing that could be named or grasped. And yet, in spite of knowing that – in spite of myself, or rather, because of myself – there was some feeling that something, in fact, had been given. I was carrying something around. What was it? Some kind of self-awareness as a transmitted Zen teacher, or another way to put it, a stinky sack of shit.

It took some years before I really felt this nothing. Nothing. Truly appreciating the words of Ummon Zenji: "Something, no matter how wonderful, is never better than nothing."

For the past eight years, reading intently and probing each sentence, we have devoted our monthly Dharma Study meetings to *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind*. Obaku, or Huang Po in Chinese, died in 850, and was Master Rinzai's teacher. In the *Rinzai Roku*, Chapter 1 of "Record of Pilgrimages" tells of Rinzai as a young monk, spending three years at Obaku's place, yet never going for dokusan. Encouraged by the head monk to do so, the young monk says, "I don't know what to ask." The head monk directs him to ask, "What is the quintessence of Buddha-Dharma?" He does so; before he can even finish his question, Obaku hits him. This happens three times. And then there is this wonderful passage: Rinzai "humbly returned to the head monk and said, 'I was lucky to receive your compassionate guidance. You forced me to ask the question three times, and three times I was hit. I deplore deeply that my accumulated karmic impediments are preventing me from getting the profound meaning of Osho's intention. I have decided to

leave.’ ” This is so important for us. Receiving some kind of severe teaching, how do we typically respond? Most often we say something like, “How could that have happened to me?” or, “It’s not fair!” instead of, “I deplore deeply that my accumulated karmic impediments are preventing me from getting the profound meaning.”

The great Obaku Zenji, whose physical stature – he was seven feet tall – matched the brilliance of his insight, was once traveling to a sacred mountain, and met another pilgrim along the way. The two of them immediately felt some kinship, talking and laughing together as though they had always known each other. This story reminds me of Soen Roshi’s journal entry and poem of March 10, 1931. He writes, “A young wanderer who is exhausting himself on the great matter of birth and death visits Meibaku hut, where I have secluded myself, on the night of the full moon. Although he and I have never met before, we immediately feel a strong bond, and we talk all night.” And his haiku:

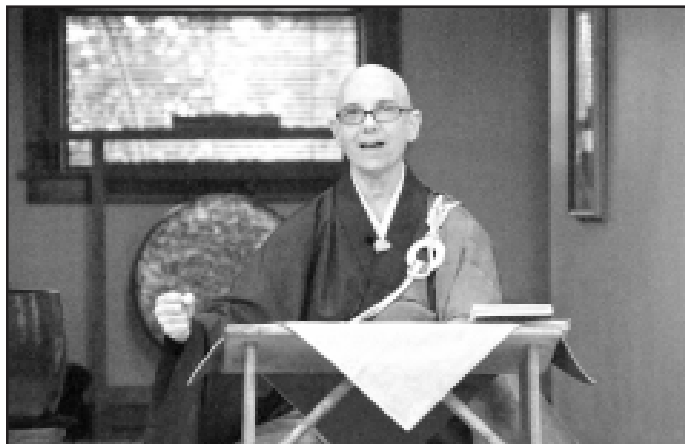
Extraordinary link
we find each other again
bright moon

Back to the story: the two pilgrims went along together and they got to a swollen valley stream. Obaku stopped, took off his hat, and thrust his staff into the ground. The other monk tried to lead Obaku across. Obaku said, “No, go ahead, you cross.” The other monk gathered up his robes and walked over the turbulent stream as if he were walking on the ground. This has a familiar ring to it, doesn’t it? Then he turned back to Obaku and said, “Come on!” Obaku said, “You self-perfected guy! If I had known you were the sort to concoct miracles, I would have broken your legs.” No need for anything supernatural for Obaku – just that fierce thrust of the staff into the earth. The other monk sighed admiringly, and said, “You are a true vessel for the teaching of the Mahayana,” and vanished!

In his Introduction to Case 11, Engo gives Obaku the highest praise: “Here is someone who has Buddha’s supreme power wholly in his grasp.” See Obaku with his staff? Grasping Buddha’s supreme power – in other words, here is someone who grasps nothing whatsoever. All the spirits of heaven, all the beings on earth are in his command. Striding boldly through the universe, he is his own master. Engo continues, “Even his casual words and sayings amaze the masses and startle the crowds.” Obaku challenges the assembly not with some great metaphysical text, but with his direct observation. Right here, in this large gathering, look! Last night’s moon was almost full. Geese are migrating; maples are turning red. What more need we seek? Then Engo says, “With every gesture, with every act, he removes chains and knocks off fetters.” He’s just an ordinary fellow, yet every act

comes from the depths of the fundamental and manifests his supreme power.

We may think that we need to show our understanding through an important speech, an impressive deed, and we get fixated on figuring out just what that might be. Our fixation has a strange effect on us: it's



Shinge Roshi raises an imaginary staff.

called paralysis. So, then what? We can't respond. What is needed in this moment? Let me go back to the script, we think. But there is no script! This Dharma must be actualized through the pores of our skin, with no trace of self-consciousness, effortlessly. Rinzai's great term for this was *buji*, nothing doing, nothing to manipulate or force or will into place. From the beginning the Buddha-eye is open – and yet, as Eido Roshi said, something is obscuring our clear vision. How do we unveil this eye? How do we make this effortless effort? This is really the crux of our practice.

This Entrustment Day was very complex to put together; it required a lot of work. But when we think, "I have to do all of this, I have to get all of that done," such self-conscious flailing about can only lead to a sense of feeling overwhelmed and frenzied. When that happens, there are many mistakes. Things get broken, more work is created, the atmosphere becomes tense, people get defensive, and everyone suffers. So this has been a great teaching for everyone. We have come to know, working together, the difference between the kind of effort that is caught up in self-importance and the single-minded effort that just flows from *buji* – from deep stillness, clear attention and direct response. You all know the expression, God is in the details. Each detail is the whole of it. William Blake spoke of it: "to see a world in a grain of sand." When we work this way, then as Engo says, in every circumstance, transcendent potential is met with transcendent principle. We can do anything, coming from nothing doing.

Obaku said to his monks, "You are all gobblers of dregs. If you go on studying Zen like that, you will never accomplish the Way." Gobblers of dregs! Do you think that you can accomplish the Way by drinking down the dregs, the

leftover sediment, from others' insights? Nyogen Senzaki warns us, "If we are filled with emotional pining for something outside, for someone else's understanding, we are cut off from our own inner wisdom."

Obaku continues, "Do you know that in all of China there is no Zen teacher?" Nyogen Senzaki says, in his commentary to Case 27 of the *Gateless Gate*, "All masters describe or explain Truth, but none of them can make you realize it. You must open your own inner gate by yourself.... A master never preaches the inner, or esoteric, teaching. But the kind of preaching that merely entertains listeners is rather harmful. It gives them the burdens of delusion endlessly" – the dregs. He adds, "When Zen is answered by words, it is no longer Zen."

So then a monk came forward. Maybe one of you would like to do so now and ask, "Wait a minute, there was just this ceremony, and this ceremony followed another ceremony ten years ago, and there was the transmission of an amazing lineage of Buddhist teachers all the way back to Shakyamuni Buddha and even before, what about that?" Does anyone desire to come forward? Why not? We need someone to come forward. This is what Zen practice is all about! "Well, I don't know what to say; I'm just listening, I don't have to do anything, she'll finish up soon, teisho will be over and we'll have a concert." How long have you been waiting to respond? Three years? "Have you been to see the Master?" "No, I don't know what to ask." Well, from Obaku's assembly, a monk came forward and asked, "But surely, there are those who teach disciples and preside over the assemblies (like yourself) – What about that?" Obaku replied, "I do not say that there is no Zen, but that there is no Zen teacher."

One who considers oneself a Zen teacher is automatically leading others astray. Watch out! There's a kind of interlocking ignorance, a perfect combination, if you will. Students want to be given something, and teachers want to be seen as having something to give. It makes for a perfect ball of putrefaction. And it's a subtle matter, isn't it? Eido Roshi's *shitsugo* is Muishitsu – from Rinzai's "true person, no rank." No such thing as teacher, no such thing as roshi, no such thing as Zen master, therefore, vital, vibrant, alive!

About this paradox of being a teacher, Master Rinzai said, "This mountain monk has not a single Dharma to give to people. All I can do is cure diseases and untie bonds." Now, in this financial climate, you may misunderstand (laughter). He's talking about the kinds of bonds that Engo spoke of in his Introduction – removing chains and knocking off fetters. This, of course, helps us understand that bonds are inherently empty. Retirement accounts are inherently empty. So, no problem! (everyone laughs)

In *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind*, a student asks Obaku for guidance. How does he respond? "I have nothing to offer. I have never had anything to offer others. It is because you allow certain

people to lead you astray that you are forever seeking intuition and searching for understanding. Isn't this a case of disciples and teachers all falling into the same insoluble muddle?"

Obaku said, "There is no Zen teacher." Shonen Shinran, whose followers considered him the founder of Jodo Shinshu, said, "I don't have a single disciple." And yet Shin

Buddhism became very popular, because the teachings held that ordinary householders could practice Buddhism by simply reciting the Name of Amida Buddha. No matter how terrible one's karma, no matter what one's

"Students want to be given something, and teachers want to be seen as having something to give. It makes for a perfect ball of putrefaction."

station in life, one could simply chant Namu Amidabu, Namu Amidabu, Namu Amidabu – I entrust myself to Amida Buddha – at any time, in any place, and enter the realm of the Pure Land. With thousands of followers, still Shinran said he didn't have a single disciple. He was simply expounding the Pure Land teachings, with no intention of attracting followers.

Someone asked Master Rinzai, "What was the intention of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" The Master said, "If there was any intention, he couldn't even have saved himself!"

It may seem as if the Jodo Shinshu teaching of "Other Power" (salvation through Amida Buddha) is quite different from the emphasis in Zen on not seeking outside oneself, but is "Self Power" really separate from "Other Power?" Remember what Master Dogen says in *Only Buddha Knows Buddha*: "Throw yourself into the house of Buddha. Let him initiate you and simply follow him effortlessly without anxiety." Throw yourself away; let this very moment initiate you; without thinking it should be different or you should be better than you are; simply respond effortlessly, intuitively, from your unfettered, unhindered mind of Zen.

Obaku said, "I do not say that there is no Zen, but that there is no Zen teacher." So I tell you, I have no intention to be a Zen teacher. People come as they are: Welcome. People go as they are: Farewell. I'm just along for the ride.

I will end with a haiku that I wrote at Dai Bosatsu Zendo last autumn:

Breeze on my bare head
intimate caress of fall
Buddha's final word □

**Humility
and
Responsibility,
Celebration
and Joy**

***By Myorin
Catherine
Landis***

The Entrustment Ceremony for Roko Osho could hardly have fallen on a more brilliant autumn day. Sugar maples flared pink and orange against clear blue skies. During morning zazen, windows open wide, we listened to the occasional dull thud as squirrel-cut walnuts struck the parking lot. Flute-like notes of song sparrows; calls of jays and passing geese.

From Roshi and Roshi, we heard about humility and responsibility. At least, such were the themes I took away from the October 12 Shitsugo ritual for Roko Osho, now Shinge Roshi. It was not about flashing lights, great awakenings, titles, and epiphanies, but rather the hard but liberating work of training the mind and loosening bonds, moment to moment. We might even experience this as boring or annoying, which it is to the impatient mind.

In her teisho, Shinge Roshi reminded us of Rinzai's reply to the head monk at Obaku's monastery: "I deplore deeply that my accumulated karmic impediments are preventing me from getting the profound meaning of Osho's intention."

We discover that our impediments are ones of our own making, and we begin to peel away at them, layer by (seemingly) intractable layer.

Hearing the story of young Rinzai again, as well as Shinge Roshi's expression of humility in receiving her "room name," frees and invites us to examine our own vanity. I might think, I'm jisha – so I'm special or chosen in some way – but it's just another practice, no better or worse than any other. And I've made enough mistakes that the role has become quite humbling.

We tasted the treasure of Sangha working together, and celebrating, as one. Sushi, sweet potatoes, rice with red beans, bok choy, endive boats, plums and chocolate cake. The joy of having Entsu Scott Rosecrans once again among us, my co-conspirator in appreciation of wild things, plant and otherwise. Dr. Nakatsugawa explaining to me how to make tofu from soybeans. Later, walking outside with the dog, under the gibbous moon.

This is indeed a time of Thanks-giving: to our teachers Eido Roshi and Shinge Roshi; to Jikyo, Jisho, Kanro, Gyoshin, who put in many hours to bring this event about;

to all Sangha, whose every effort and good intention helped it manifest; to moon, stars, sky, waters, and all the life that supports us. □



Rafe Martin, Jane Hirshfield Events

To thank our Sangha and Dharma friends who have supported Hoen-ji in so many ways, we are scheduling two special events in early 2009. Children are warmly welcomed for a warm, enjoyable social time with Sangha members and their families.

Captivating storyteller Rafe Martin will perform several Buddhist *Jataka Tales*, based on the life of the Buddha, at 4 p.m. on Sunday, January 25 in the Joshua Forman House, followed by a reception. His books include *The Brave Little Parrot*, *The Eagle's Gift*, *Foolish Rabbit's Big Mistake*, *The Hungry Tigress*, *The Language of Birds*, *The Monkey Bridge*, *Mysterious Tales of Japan*, and *One Hand Clapping: Zen Stories for All Ages*. Rafe is the 2008 recipient of the Empire State Award, a one-time honor presented to a living author or illustrator currently residing in New York state.

Renowned poet Jane Hirshfield will join us for Buddha's Birthday on Sunday, April 5. Our regular Morning Service and zazen will be followed at 11 a.m. by the ceremony of bathing the Baby Buddha, chanting, and storytelling, then potluck and birthday cake. At 7 p.m., Jane will give a reading and speak about the interrelationship of her Zen and poetry practices.

Jane received her bachelor's in Princeton University's first graduating class to include women, and began practicing at San Francisco Zen Center and Tassajara. Her books of poetry include *After* (2006); *Given Sugar*, *Given Salt* (2001), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, *The Lives of the Heart* (1997), *The October Palace* (1994), *Of Gravity & Angels* (1988), and *Alaya* (1982). She is the author of *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (1997) and has also edited and translated *The Ink Dark Moon: Poems by Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu*, *Women of the Ancient Court of Japan* (1990) with Mariko Aratani and *Women in Praise of the Sacred: Forty-Three Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women* (1994).

The Beginningless, Endless Path

By GyoShin
Virginia Lawson



*Shinge Roshi and
Gyoshin Virginia
Lawson during
Gyoshin's ordination
Oct. 19, 2008*

When asked to write an article centered on my preparation for ordination as a Rinzaï nun, I realized there would be no end to “preparation.” Ordination, the public taking of vows, is yet another beginning.

In my training here at Hoen-ji, I had to acknowledge that my defense of my constructed *self* against any appearance of what I defined as “failure to measure up” was affecting not only my own practice, but that of those around me. I was confronted by several of my Dharma sisters, who kindly pointed out my tendency toward isolation and defensiveness. The very real shock of finding myself “not separate” caused what I can only

describe as a melting of my self-constructed edges. I had heretofore always seen my spiritual path as just that: *Mine*.

Their confrontation, an act of loving-kindness, brought home to me the implications for everyday living of true interdependence. The experiencing of interdependence in this situation, the melting of boundaries between self and other, paralleled what was surfacing in my Clinical Pastoral Education training for hospital chaplaincy at Upstate Medical Center. This training put me on the hospital units as a chaplain intern, gave me didactics and sounding boards for exposing

my actions, thoughts and reactions as I encountered dying patients, recovering patients, grieving families and staff and rejoicing families and staff.

My daily practice was an immersion in life and death and the transition to death. I experienced a softening of the boundary between being alive and being dead. I observed the loosening of attachment in the dying and especially in the grieving process. The sadness, the anger, the denial, all these emotions are common and there at the bedside. But also common is the beginning of coming to terms with the separation of death. Then the stories, the memories come out and there is an easing ... not complete, of course. But the beginnings are there. And, while the separation of death is not wanted, the fact of death and the feeling that death is not the end of

whatever constituted a person gradually comes into the room. My part was to be a witness, most often silent, sometimes asked to pray, sometimes offering to pray, but mostly being close, standing beside and silently being with.

That chaplaincy internship allowed me to experience the truth that *life is precious*; that the world and all therein is beautiful and to be treasured with gratitude.

More than ever before, this year of preparation has brought me to see that I am in Indra's Net, both receiving and reflecting light. I am part of a community, a Sangha without limits.

To so many I owe gratitude. First, for the stalwart practice of the Ancestors and Teachers: had any one of them or their supporters faltered, I would not have this path, this lineage to follow.

I find it wondrous how the Dharma carries a person to the events or opportunities that are just the ones needed "in any moment, in any place and in any event" to provide the opportunity for deepening of practice. Incredibly, Dharma, as manifested in life and circumstances, worked to put me in Syracuse, practicing with Shinge Roshi and Sangha here at Hoen-ji and the Rev. Terry Culbertson, my supervisor in the Clinical Pastoral Education program at Upstate Medical Center. Shinge Roshi's support and encouragement, as well as that of Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, has allowed me to move toward ordination and the continuing training beyond.

My partner, Michael Cody, stepped right in to take care of the financial and practical details of our household while I spent kessei at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and he continues in his loving support as I live and study at Hoen-ji for another year and spend a second kessei at the monastery.

So I come back to the fact that ordination preparation is nothing but practice, and that after the public vows, there is nothing but practice. I live in joyous gratitude in the understanding that I am ever at the beginning of my path. □

Dream

I dream that i'm on the side
of a sphere of water
that dances and sparkles in sunlight
and doesn't fall off

I awaken, and find myself on a sphere of water
that shifts and sparkles in sunlight
and doesn't fall off

- Myorin Catherine Landis

**Sho Shin
Sangha
“Beginners’
Mind Sangha”
at Auburn
Correctional
Facility**

**By Jikyo Bonnie
Shoultz
and
MyoEn
Deborah
Bateman**

Roko Osho received a letter last July from an inmate at Auburn Correctional Facility. Daniel (not his real name) said he had been transferred to Auburn from Great Meadows Correctional Facility, where he was a member of a Sangha facilitated by Zen Mountain Monastery and had committed his life to the Buddha Way. Surprised to learn that Auburn had no Buddhist service, he asked Zen Mountain Monastery whether they could come as far as Auburn. The monastery suggested he write to us. Roko Osho asked me to respond, as I was already a contract chaplain for the Onondaga County Department of Corrections and she knew I was interested.

In Onondaga County, six of us have come together in the last two years to teach meditation through a chaplaincy contract with Interfaith Works. Three times a week we visit the Justice Center and until recently, we went twice weekly to Hillbrook youth detention center. We teach meditation, hold short sittings and discussions, and teach breathing exercises and yoga, hoping to give people some tools for stress reduction and self-management.

It’s a short-term setting for most people. They aren’t required to register as Buddhists; only rarely do we meet someone who identifies as Buddhist. MyoEn, who has consistently taught meditation in both sites, and I volunteered to work in Auburn. There had been no formal Buddhist practice there since the 1980s.

The beginning

Daniel and I corresponded for a few months, and I assured him that we were willing to set up a Buddhist service. Without Daniel, who guided me in the beginning steps, it would have been difficult. First, I needed to contact the Catholic chaplain, a deacon who was



Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz (center), MyoEn Deborah Bateman (right) and an Ithaca volunteer at the gates of Auburn Correctional Facility.

assigned to assist us. Auburn has Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish chaplains on staff. It took several weeks to reach the deacon, who told us to contact the volunteer office to request forms so we could register as volunteers. After several months, the eight-page form arrived. We were required to supply documentation on several things, including proof that we had had recent tuberculosis tests. It took weeks to be approved as volunteers. Meanwhile, I corresponded with Daniel. I was told that once we were on the volunteer rolls, neither written correspondence nor visiting would be allowed.

Finally, in February, we went to the prison to meet the chaplain and the coordinator of volunteers. On that day, two photographs were taken – one for a badge that we would wear when we were inside the prison and the other to be used for a hostage photo, if needed. We were oriented as to the rules for volunteers, especially rules for leading a religious service, and we were shown the chapel.

Auburn's chapel area has an interesting feature that permits services from different faith traditions to be held. There is a set of chaplains' offices, off a hallway that leads to several rooms including a sacristy and a room where an inmate assistant does clerical work for the chaplains. Deacon Jim showed us a "lazy Susan altar" in one of these rooms. It consists of a rotating disk that contains three altars – one for the Catholic Mass, one for the Jewish service, and a third one for use in other services. The lazy Susan is turned so the appropriate altar faces the chapel, and the unused altars are hidden. The chapel is a large room with pews facing a stage; on the stage is the altar. At one side is a row of lockers and other paraphernalia, such as stacks of chairs, room dividers, a fan. In the back of the room is a desk with a phone and light, where the correctional officer sits during services. The men enter through a door behind the desk when they have received "the call out."

During the first meeting, we learned about items that are allowed or not allowed – no glass, but ceramic bowls are OK, incense and matches are OK, fresh flowers can be brought each time in a plastic vase along with a mokugyo, and so on. We asked the deacon to put in a purchase order for a Buddha, flower vase, water bowl, candle holders, incense burner, and zafus. He said the state budget would allow for purchase of zafus right away, but other things would have to wait for the new budget to be passed. He kindly offered to let us use the artificial flowers used during the Catholic Mass, but we declined.

The volunteer coordinator explained the dress issues. I planned to wear robes and open-toed sandals. Tie shoes are standard, in case you have to run, but they said my sandals would be acceptable. The "standing gate pass" lists all the items we would bring in and take out each time; if we wanted to bring something different, perhaps a handout or a book, we would need to write to the chaplain to get it put on the gate pass. From then on, we could

Chaplaincy Graduation

From September 2007 through July 2008, Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz participated in the first class of the Buddhist Chaplaincy Program established by the newly formed New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care

Her training was supported by a grant from the Alex Nason Foundation to the Zen Center of Syracuse to provide a Buddhist chaplain at Syracuse University. She traveled each month to New York City for one or two days of training, performed 100 hours of volunteer chaplaincy work at Upstate Hospital, and did much reading and writing.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Jikyo, "one I'd recommend to anyone interested in giving of him or herself to others. For my final project, I wrote an article about Sho Shin Sangha at Auburn Correctional Facility," which has been abridged and printed here.



Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz (front row, right) with her class at the Buddhist Chaplaincy Program

only communicate with the inmates through the chaplain or during services. We were given a list of the seven registered Buddhists; because there were seven, the Deacon ordered seven zafus. We agreed to start in March.

If we wanted a real Buddhist altar for the first day, we knew it was up to us. During the next few weeks, MyoEn found everything we'd need for the altar. Many items came from thrift stores; the Zen Center of Syracuse had a brass vase we were allowed to take. MyoEn found a Buddha statue, nearly two feet high and made of a durable resin with a nice finish, on Craigslist. I purchased it for \$15 from a nice man who had given it to his Thai wife. They were moving and were happy to see it go for a religious purpose. We borrowed extra zafus

(for ourselves) and a medium-sized mokugyo from the Zen Center. Zafus, mokugyo, handouts, flowers, and later, books were put on our standing gate pass.

Our first service was on the second Friday in March 2008, and since then there has been a Buddhist service every Friday from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Two men came the first time – Daniel and a man who had been active at Great Meadows in the 1990s. I had not met Daniel face to face, but it was clear to MyoEn and myself that although he didn't speak much, he was thrilled to see us and the altar and once again to sit with a Sangha. That first day, he told us he has caused a great deal of suffering to others and himself, and had found Buddhist teachings extremely helpful in dealing with that suffering. He sent a wonderful letter of appreciation to Albany, the Auburn administration, and our teacher.

On the second Friday, another man came, a self-described organizer of inmate activities. He explained some of the fine points of inmate organizing for religious and other purposes. This man, Chess (not his real name), is very active with the Alternatives to Violence Program. He suggested that Daniel be designated the inmate liaison between the Sangha and the deacon. When Daniel demurred, Chess agreed to advise him on what might be required but said he was too busy with other organizing efforts to be the liaison. Daniel agreed, and as a result we also designated him to lead the service if we cannot be there. The chaplain had encouraged us to designate someone as soon as possible.

Before the service

We start from home at 7:15 a.m., and arrive by 8:15 at the gate, where we sign in, gather our badges, and go through security with the items on our gate pass. To gain access to the prison, we have to remove any jewelry, anything in our hair, and our shoes before walking through the metal detector. Each week is a little different. Sometimes we bring handouts or books, but we always have flowers, mokugyo, and zafus. Once through security, our hands are stamped with an invisible ink that glows under a black light lamp at the first security checkpoint. Then we await our escort, which can take 20 minutes or more. So far, we have always been able to get to the chapel.

The escort takes us through the prison and deposits us at another checkpoint – a desk where volunteers, staff, and inmates must check in before going to the library, counseling center, or chapel. We almost always wait there until the correctional officer in charge of security during the Buddhist service arrives to let us into the chapel. He takes us in, and we begin setting up.

Some of the men come in and help, and by 9:10 or so we are ready. The men remove their shoes and jackets, put down any items they're carrying, pick up any handouts they need, approach the stage, bow toward the altar, and sit. Some of them bow facing their seat before sitting down.

The schedule of service

We silently set up and wait for the men to get settled. In the first weeks, some introductions and basic information was offered during this time, especially for newcomers. Now, if a new man comes, Daniel quietly gives him a brief introduction. The zafus are arranged in a semi-circle around the altar. At 9:15, I bow to signal MyoEn, who sits across from me, to light the incense and the chanting candle. We made a folded sutra handout for chanting. We start with "Purification," followed by "Opening This Dharma," the "Heart Sutra" in English, and "Great Vows for All" in Sino-Japanese and English. In the early months, we did two chants, but we are introducing more as time goes on. Then there are signals for prostrations, followed by sitting for half an hour. A bell signals the beginning of two rounds of walking meditation.

Discussion lasts no longer than 20 minutes, sometimes less. It consists of a short conversation about a Buddhist text that we have brought, and announcements. The chaplain has now approved the text so the men can have it in their cells. Sometimes we talk about how better to organize the service and/or the space. We end the service by chanting the "Metta Sutta."

The correctional officer in the chapel signals at 10:15, letting us know that we must finish by 10:20. The time is dictated by security schedules. We would prefer more time, and have asked for this. The only way we could get more time, we were told at first, is to have our service in the evening. We've given much thought to this issue, by ourselves and with the men. Recently, the deacon has been able to get us an extra 15 minutes.

Enhancements

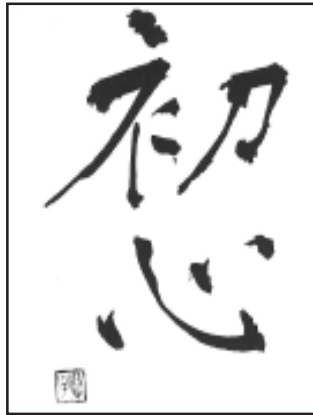
We now include another volunteer, a woman who teaches at Cornell University extension sites in two prisons. In Ithaca, she practices with a Thich Nhat Hanh Sangha and a Shambhala Sangha, so she was excited to hear about the Buddhist service from Daniel, one of her students. She drives up as often as possible to be with us, and during July offered a noncredit course called "The Science and Practice of Meditation" at the prison. Unlike those attending the Buddhist service, her course participants are not required to be registered Buddhists. I attended two of the classes, and MyoEn went to all of them. The class had twelve registrants. The men clearly wanted it to continue.

A course or program of this type has its own security concerns. To gain access to the school after going through security, we were escorted through two exercise yards and other outdoor areas of the prison. On the way to class, these yards were deserted, but when we were escorted out, the yards were full of men. Our class participants had been summarily called, by block name: "A, D & E." We had just ended a meditation, not knowing when members of our Sangha might be called. The men immediately gathered everything and left. Five minutes later, B & C were called – they had told us the call was for evening recreation in the yards. Any evening course must fit in with the security schedule, and "security" has veto power over offerings.

Sho Shin Sangha

Thirteen men have come to the services since March. Three have come as visitors (not registered as Buddhist), and the others either were registered already or have changed their registration to Buddhist in order to participate. Most of the men use zafus, and sit very well. The men behave with great respect toward us and the service. When the service ends, several of them approach the altar to smell and touch the fresh flowers. They are in sharp contrast to the brick, steel and asphalt of their daily lives. Many of the men are articulate and intelligent, and many have been engaged in some form of meditation and Buddhist practice for years, maybe even decades. We understand that some have studied and/or practiced for a long time, but we've focused the discussion around some basics.

We're using *Prison Chaplaincy Guidelines for Zen Buddhism*, a book written by Kobutsu Kevin Malone, who advocated for Buddhist services in the early 1990s at Sing Sing Prison. We started with readings about the "Heart Sutra," because two men asked about its meaning and about some of the words in this sutra; now we are reading and discussing "The Four Noble Truths" and "The Eightfold Path." Sometimes a participant will comment that, following our discussion, he has applied Right Intention, for instance, to everything he has done during the week.



Sho Shin

The men have studied in different traditions, especially Shambhala, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Soto Zen; now we are bringing Rinzai form and tradition to them. We've told them that they can view the form as a container for their own

practice, without having to discontinue studying or practicing anything that has been meaningful to them. They seem comfortable with this approach. Chess said, "I've been in Auburn for ten years now, and I haven't had anyplace to practice formally. I've been studying Thich Nhat Hanh's writings especially, but I'm really interested in learning from you. I'd say, just go ahead with it."

The men chose a Sangha name early, but didn't receive the Japanese characters and translation for the name until July. That enabled us to get a stamp made for the Sangha's books and materials, so the men could keep them in their possession. Unstamped or unapproved materials are considered contraband.

"I think the Sangha should be named something that anyone can relate to," said Chess, as the discussion began. "Beginner's Mind" was suggested, a reference to Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's book. "'Beginner's Mind' would be something we all can share in," said Chess, adding that he had a friend in

Japan whom he could e-mail asking for a translation and the characters. The character *sho* means something like “the start” or “a beginning” and *shin* means “heart-mind.”

Changes

In mid-July, the deacon said that he would look into the procedures to make me a volunteer Buddhist chaplain for the facility. He had no doubt this would take place, he said. I would then be able to have individual meetings with men who wished it, either during our service or between 3 and 4:30 p.m. He explained it was important to understand the point of view of “security,” which is that any of these men could kill one of them at any time, and that volunteers could become “negotiating points” if there were an uprising. He said he was very impressed with us and our understanding of and willingness to learn the rules. Many volunteers fold up in a couple of weeks due to their disagreement with or lack of compliance with necessary rules, he said. He showed us a sheet listing Buddhist holidays approved by the Department of Corrections, and said that on or near Buddha’s Birthday we could have a family gathering if the men wanted it, with food provided by the facility. We could organize all-day sittings in the future, with the facility helping out. We talked about work practice during these sittings. Finally, we explained Jukai, taking the precepts, and told him our abbot would give the precepts to those who are interested, if I oversaw their course of study beforehand. He said that would be fine. We could do that during an all-day sitting, if we wished. He agreed to order everything we had requested – two more zafus for the new men who had joined the group, sutra books from Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and a mokugyo – and they have all arrived.

Sho Shin Sangha now has nine members. Many issues have arisen during the six months we have been going to Auburn. For example, one man asked for help in getting the Food Service to allow him to eat a “Buddhist” diet. We discussed it as a group. We talked about the importance of approaching whatever one eats with reverence, and offered to bring in the meal chants used in the Rinzaï and Thich Nhat Hanh traditions. The men seemed grateful.

Hopes and plans

All of us believe we are building a foundation for future practice at Auburn Correctional Facility. We have talked about planning all-day sittings at least once a year, about my becoming a volunteer chaplain, and about commemorating special Buddhist days. They want to move ahead with all of these. We have talked with two people at Hoen-ji who work with people in jail; both are interested in volunteering, especially for the more labor-intensive events at the prison. We also hope to offer a Jukai class, and a credit course on Japanese culture is being offered through Cornell’s program, as well as the non-denominational meditation course. Above all, we continue to support the building of a real Sangha inside those walls. □

Yesterday, I cried throughout most of zazen. Not just a silent tear trailing down my cheek, but wracking sobs that came and went in wave after wave, punctuated by moments of stillness until ... another wave. And today? More waves. Lesser, but still there.

The reasons for the tears are unimportant – indeed, I really don't know. I can postulate all sorts of reasons, from childhood to adult experiences, but that would simply be a diversion from the experience that is occurring *right now*. It would give a conceptual reason and answer that my mind can tuck away in its dusty filing cabinet and say, "There, that's what the tears are. Okay, all done now."

No, **not done**. Go deeper!

I have been working on a koan and, at this juncture ... copious, purifying, cathartic tears. The barrier gates to my own heart open and the koan becomes clear.

This barrier reflex is an actual physical sensation that I feel in my chest. The reflex clamps down and prevents me from openly and freely expressing the truth of the moment. If I feel there is a chance of negative recriminations or judgments being leveled at me (just a *chance*, not even the reality!), my pericardial shield rises in self-protection. But when that self is not busy protecting its self-interests, ahhhh ... just amazing flowing openness!

As a young child, Hakuin Zenji was consumed by an overwhelming fear of going to hell. In his autobiography, *Wild Ivy*, he exclaims to his mother, "I can't even go into the bath without having my knees knock and my blood run cold. Just think what it will be like when I have to face the burning fires of hell all by myself. What am I doing to do? Isn't there any way to escape? This intolerable agony continues day and night – I can't bear it any longer." Thus began his immersion in sutra recitation, pleading with deities for intervention, engaging in various religious practices and, finally, Rinzai Zen practice.

As a young child I, too, was consumed by my own measure of intolerable emotional pain. This pain led me to some starkly low emotional places – a depression of self-hatred that seemed to have no end. It was during this time that my sister, and then my mother, had a

Hakuin Zenji and The Heart of Zen

By Dave Fisher

*"Our practice is
the wild
determination to
know the truth of
the matter of our
lives."*

revitalization of their Christian faith and brought that faith experience into the family. They gave me a pamphlet that outlined the four spiritual laws of Christianity and said that if I accepted Christ as my lord and savior, all my sins would be washed away. Briefly stated, these laws are (1) God loves you (I certainly did not feel lovable), (2) All humanity has sinned and is separated from God (I could agree with this based on the way I was feeling), (3) Jesus has come as a bridge to that separation, and (4) You must pray for forgiveness for all the evil that you have done and invite Jesus into your heart, and then you will be reunited with God. I was not sure about the latter two points, but was feeling such a level of desolation that I had nothing to lose by trying. The pamphlet claimed that if Jesus came into my heart, my life would begin anew. All my evil karma (oops, my Buddhist slip!) would be like a chalkboard that is suddenly wiped clean.

So I prayed, “Jesus, forgive me for my sins and please come into my heart.” I waited. Nothing. I sank deeper into depression. A few days passed and I decided to try again. “Jesus, I know that I am a miserable person, please ... forgive me.” Again, nothing. Apparently I’m not even good enough for God, I thought. Then, around a month later, I recall lying in my bed one evening, tears streaming down my face. The depression and self-hate were excruciating. I lay there in bed, staring at the ceiling and prayed, “Jesus, I am so, so sorry. I hurt so much. Please ... please, forgive me ... take my sins away ... help me. Come into my heart and make it new.”

And, then, amazing, unforeseen, unexpected grace. I felt a tangible presence fill the room and swell the boundaries of my heart. My mind went quiet and, indeed, it was just like the pamphlet claimed. I became a vast, blank canvas and felt like a chalkboard that had been wiped clean! I was jubilant and could not stop smiling! From that day forward I became deeply immersed in the evangelical Christian faith, for many years.

Hakuin Zenji was tough – tough on himself and tough on what he called the “do-nothing zennists” of his time – the practice of “just sitting” with no thoughts. Indeed, he was quite scathing in his recriminations of this form of practice, calling them “wooden blocks,” an “odious race of pseudopriests,” and “withered tree stumps.” These are the more mild of his colorful descriptions! That school of thought advocated “silent illumination” as a means to realize the Way. Hakuin’s approach was anything but silent. He would propel himself into dedicated practice – long nights of zazen and days of sutra recitation. He experienced satori after satori that had him jumping up and jubilantly dancing around.

“How grievously sad that people today have discarded this way of kensho as if it were dirt!” he passionately exclaimed. “As for sitting, sitting is something that should include fits of ecstatic laughter – braying – that make you slump to the ground clutching your belly.” At one point during a demonstration of exactly this behavior, he was called “Crazy monk! Crazy

monk!" by those around him, just after they broke and ran, perhaps afraid that whatever had possessed Hakuin was contagious!

As our Lakota brethren would put it, Hakuin is heyoke. He is contrary, wild, and strange, one who walks backward and consequently does the unexpected. It is like watching water flow uphill or rain return to the cloud. And, yet, it is this very wild nature that Hakuin, with great determination, meets face-to-face.

As expressed by Shodo Harada Roshi in *The Path To Bodhidharma*:

Do not breathe in a dark hole, but burst through the entire universe with your energy, crash through the heavens with your feet at the roots of the trees, and then bring that life forth – express that life! There is nothing that needs to be forced or produced. There is nothing to think about and then bring up. Put everything into it! Do not leave anything undone or unexpressed. And then, when it is all expressed, even if kensho is not realized, how bright and fresh you will become!

Our practice is the wild determination to know the truth of the matter of our lives. We are chalkboards, vast and wide. Thus, this Wild Ivy mind both calls out to me and at the same time scares me to death. Practice takes courage and I find that relinquishing my sense of control into the hands of what Hakuin calls the Wild Ivy Deity is not always an easy thing. It calls for full surrender of my self, my conception of my self, my self-organizing faculties, my self-protecting mechanisms and all those things that would otherwise constrict my heart and cloud my mind. Indeed, this Wild Ivy mind bursts forth time and time again and turns all these definitions inside out and upside down.

Reading *Wild Ivy* has been like finding a long-lost friend. As I was going back through the book to select quotes for this article, I found myself being swallowed by the pages and re-reading the book. Hakuin vividly reaches across 300 years and is amazingly fully present. How can this be? He was quite prolific, but instead of leaving the rusty relics of words, he left the wild, loving energy of his life, complete with all his ups and downs, joys and frustrations. He exhorted his contemporaries not to settle for a do-nothing Zen, but rather to dare the wild, untamed Zen that transforms our everyday lives.

So I say, Yes! Bring forth that brilliance that is us! Let this Wild Ivy reach deep into the soil of our hearts and burst forth! If that means sobbing, then sob! If it means laughing, then laugh riotously! Let these tendrils reach out to all those around you – your mother, father, Sangha sisters and brothers, friends, those who drive you nuts or hurt you – indeed, the entire world. Then, with one hand on heart and one raised to heaven above, we are nothing less than Great Mystery itself! □

Reflections on Shobo-ji Sesshin: Cannot be Grasped

By Myorin
Catherine
Landis

Recently I had the privilege of attending the New York Zendo Shobo-ji 40th Anniversary Sesshin along with Roko Osho and several other students from Hoen-ji. During sesshin the zendo walls were lined with pictures of those who came before and whose efforts contributed to Shobo-ji's inception and its ability to flourish. Gempo Roshi, Soen Nakagawa Roshi, Yasatani Roshi, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Doris Carlson, Chester Carlson, D.T. Suzuki: they seemed uncannily present as we sat in this room day after silent sesshin day. Looking further back, we also felt the presence of venerable ancient teachers, such as Obaku, Rinzai, Tokusan, as they were invoked in teisho and in dedications.

During his teisho, Eido Roshi spoke of this lineage and its transmission. He read from Chapter IX of the *Rinzai Roku (The Book of Rinzai)*, which he called the most important chapter in the book. Here Obaku acknowledges Rinzai as his Dharma heir, telling his attendant to bring the backrest and table he had received from his teacher, Hyakujo. Rinzai takes an iconoclastic stance toward these outer tokens of transmission, telling his teacher: Yes, and bring fire, also.

Only those who are aware of the beneficence they receive can requite it, Kyozan tells Isan (later in Chapter IX), when discussing this story of Rinzai and Obaku. Only those who realize the foundation laid for those practicing here, at Shobo-ji and at Hoen-ji, can requite it. The 40th Anniversary Sesshin and celebration at Shobo-ji left me

with a strong sense of that foundation and the "beneficence," the tireless labors and sacrifices of Zen pioneers who made it possible for us to engage in Zen practice here, today.

Roko Osho and Eido
Roshi toast at
Shobo-ji's 40th
anniversary
celebration



Nyogen Senzaki, Soen Roshi, and later Eido Roshi and our teacher Roko Osho, who came to Syracuse from New York and Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 1976.

How can we requite such a gift? Kyozan quotes Ananda to answer this question: "Serving uncountable beings throughout the myriad worlds with my whole heart: This is called requiting the Buddha's beneficence." In other words, many of our Zen forebears are deceased, and there is no way we can return the gift in a personal sense. But we can carry forward their strong Dharma spirit, propelled by the same deep vow and intention to "serve uncountable beings" wholeheartedly.

Reflecting on the pictures, the Chinese masters and Zen pioneers in America, my thoughts turned to the present, and the latest among these outripling waves of great masters. I thought of our teacher, Roko Osho, sitting with us at Shobo-ji and serving as Master of Ceremonies for the 40th anniversary celebration on the final day of sesshin. Roko Osho first visited the Zen Studies Society in 1967, a year before the Shobo-ji temple (a carriage house turned garage, then zendo) even existed.

Ten years ago, Eido Roshi gave Roko Osho Inka Shomei (Dharma Transmission). On October 12 of this year, he traveled to Syracuse to confer on her the title of Roshi in a Shitsugo, or entrustment, ritual at Hoen-ji. Literally translated "room-name" or "cave-name," Shitsugo occurs when the teacher feels the maturity of the disciple's insight has ripened.

The historic significance is staggering. At Hoen-ji, we recite Teidai Denpo, our Dharma Lineage, every other Thursday night. Not one of the hundred or so masters mentioned is female or Euro-American. One might thus conclude that the titles and talents of Zen teachers are the exclusive provenance of Indian and Asian men. More likely, this lineage reflects cultural restrictions that blocked training opportunities for women and a silence surrounding any female masters of the past.

We also might conclude that authentic Zen in America depends on a continual stream of imported Asian teachers. That would clearly be false, since a few great teachers are appearing among us – not by accident, but through years and years of dedicated, persistent training.

Despite cultural restrictions and anonymity, women appear throughout the history of Zen. Of all the stories recounted by Eido Roshi during his teisho at Shobo-ji, perhaps the most memorable to me was one about Tokusan, a *Diamond Sutra* scholar who eventually burned his lengthy commentaries on this sutra. As the famous story goes, Tokusan stops at a hut for a snack and tea during a long journey. An "old lady" appears to wait on him. When she hears he is a *Diamond Sutra* scholar she inquires:

The *Diamond Sutra* says, Past mind cannot be grasped; present mind cannot be grasped; future mind cannot be grasped. With which mind will you eat your snack?

Dumbfounded, Tokusan discovers that all his scholarly knowledge about this sutra, the weighty tomes he has written and carries around on his back, are useless in responding to this simple question. From the woman he learns of a teacher, Ryutan, whom he decides to visit. Between Ryutan and Tokusan there is “Dharma congeniality,” as Eido Roshi put it, and they talk into the wee hours of the night. As Tokusan finally turns to leave, Ryutan gives him a candle – then *whoooo!* blows it out, leaving them both standing in total darkness. At that very moment Tokusan is enlightened.

“Old ladies” such as the one Tokusan encountered appear many times in Zen stories and koans. Nameless, sometimes toothless, they stump the monks who encounter them. In the case of Tokusan, the old woman was asking, “How does your Zen understanding penetrate this moment, something as ordinary as eating a snack?”

I like to think that, along with acknowledged ancient masters, these old women were with us on October 12. During the Shobo-ji sesshin, there was a sense of timelessness, but also of the passing of time and the transmission of mind across generations. Before the Entrustment Ceremony, Roko Osho wrote:

I feel strongly that this is not a personal achievement, but rather an indication of This Dharma, minutely subtle and incomparably profound, manifesting right here, right now, in Syracuse, New York.

We are all dharma recipients of the beneficence of the uncountable beings whose efforts brought Zen practice from India to China to Japan, and most recently to America and to the shores of Onondaga Creek. May we deepen our own trust in This Dharma. May we renew our vow, and our efforts to requite the beneficence of our teachers, *serving uncountable beings throughout the myriad worlds with [our] whole heart.* Nyogen Senzaki, Eido Roshi, Roko Shinge Roshi, and all those who came before, men and women, plant and animal, nameless and named, who made it possible for us to practice in this very place. □

Three Haiku

Outside, fallen leaves.
Inside, the kitchen is clean.
This old novice bows.



The sea rises, falls.
This old trawler casts its net.
Seagulls wheel about.

Awake with Buddha
Through the chill Rohatsu night
Practicing zazen.

– Eric Gustafson

At Roko Osho's encouragement, I sat yaza Saturday night during Hoen-ji's October 2007 sesshin. Cool autumn air flowed through the open windows.

Various figurines, Buddhas, jizos, bodhisattvas, crowded the altar awaiting the eye-opening ritual planned for the following morning. One by one the others left, and I was alone. Then a remarkable thing happened. Physically I felt an opening, especially hara and chest, but all over, vanishing separate self. Still thoughts floating by, but like strands of sea vegetable in a wider sea, nothing to attach to. This is cool! was one thought. But, no use to judge or rate. Sat in joy and curiosity until midnight or so.

Not sleepy, not wanting to disrupt bodily stillness and oneness, I nonetheless thought I would go to my tent. I remembered how Nyozan would spend nights in the zendo, reciting the Diamond Sutra and doing walking meditation between periods of zazen. So I rose from my seat to begin kinhin. How striking, to have the zendo to myself and hear the sound of my feet as they touched, then lifted off the floor. A bit of friction, sweat stick, accompanied unpeeling of mammalian footpad. Wonderful sound, your own feet breaking the midnight silence.

I began for the very first time to feel the topography of the zendo floor – a slight linear mounding, curved upwellings, infinitesimal shifts in elevation of the surface on which I have walked hundreds of times. An animate zendo, living wood beneath my feet. It responded to my presence with one of its own. Soles of feet, souls of trees. The topography was north-south, in accord with the local ridge and valley forms, claw marks of the Finger Lakes region. Ridges and lakes, mountains and rivers. On the floor these lines were rounded, soft, wooden; subtle, but unmistakable.

As I walked, the floor yielded with tiny creaks – whispers, really, but ear-splitting in my rapt state. It was the most remarkable sustenance, just to listen to this sound – kinhin of one in the candlelit zendo. It reminded me of the many times I have listened transfixed as Roko Osho returns to the zendo after a long sesshin evening. First lineage chanting, then two hours or more where she has given continuous dokusan, no break (for her). Silence of the zendo and dark. Then she enters; and how

Mountains and Rivers: Discovering the Zendo Floor

*By Myorin
Catherine
Landis*

naturally my ears tune in to the tiny creak creak creak as her feet rhythmically meet the “dead” wood of the zendo floor.

I had listened to this sound many times in awe, but had never really heard the sound of my own feet apart from others in the kinhin line. I had never really felt the floor and listened to it in turn, as tonight. I continued to go round and round – ever so slowly. Just one more time, a voice insisted – though I was weary. Creak creak – almost, ache ache – as though the heartache of my combined longing and deep happiness were voiced, and echoed in the water-conducting tissue now exposed to the light and polished on this floor.

Gold, Roko Osho called the leaves that fell all day from the silver maple. We call these leaves, she said. But we have no idea what they really are. Nor wood, I thought, nor hardwood floor, except the little glimpses our feet reveal.

feet meet flowing wood
zendo floor at midnight lives
soles of feet, souls of trees □

Does a dog have Buddha nature?

A monk asked Joshu, Does a dog have Buddha nature? Joshu answered, mu.

I'm going to the source for this koan – a dog.

Nikita, I have something to ask you – hi, yes, I'm so happy to see you too – but you must sit – *sit!* – that's better – good girl ok that's right, calm down – this is a serious matter which is the current focus of my spiritual efforts – yes, come over here, we can sit on the couch together and talk about it. Yes, come up here That's a good girl – oh yes kisses, I love you too – now lie down, that's right I'll just rub your belly – that's right just be quiet that's a good girl. OK so there's this story about a monk and a dog, and his teacher – Does a dog have Buddha nature? The teacher responds, *mu*. No? OK, you're no help at all, let's go out in the back and throw the ball.

– Myorin Catherine Landis

Editor's Note: Horen Vaughn Bell is public art project manager for the Department of Transportation in Seattle, Wash., where she and her husband, Brennon Staley, live. Her work is exhibited widely; she was recently commissioned to create an installation for a show called "Badlands: New Horizons in Landscape," at MASS MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in North Adams, Mass., which addressed contemporary ideas of exploration, population of the wilderness, land usage, environmental politics and the relativity of aesthetic beauty. Horan received a grant from the Kamiyama International Artist in Residence Program in Kamiyama, Japan, where she lived and worked for three months last fall. Kamiyama is a small town on Shikoku, in Tokushima Prefecture.

Oshogatsu is the New Year's Day holiday in Japan. It's celebrated on January 1, as in the West, and it's very important. The new year is a new beginning, a time for gratitude, as well as a clean slate. This word meant something additional to me after my travels this fall, which included a two-month artist residency in Japan, followed by travels in Japan and Southeast Asia with my husband, Brennon Staley.

As an artist, my process is often one of simply trying to pay really close attention to what is happening around me. Most of my work responds to a specific site or situation and is created for that site, so the form and content emerge from the place. Another continuous aspect of the work I have done has been my attraction to using organic and living materials. In the case of my project in Japan, when I arrived there I had

Shogatsu

Art with an Element of New Year

By Horen Vaughn Bell



*"Rice Becomes a River," an installation by Horen Vaughn Bell
Rice straw extends about 45 meters along the forest floor;
as it decays it feeds the new vegetation.*

the impression they expected me to make something with moss or other living plants, as I had in some previous works. Ironically, partially because these works had been inspired by my previous experiences of Japanese gardens, I was not immediately compelled to make something with living plants there. I was in an idyllic valley in the Japanese countryside, with mountains emerging from the surrounding rice fields, and it seemed that every house had at least one row of bonsai in front, carefully tended by the elderly men who lived there. My creation of the moss-filled biospheres had initially been a response to a harsh urban environment, and here seemed unnecessary.

The rice paddies struck me as one of my primary aesthetic impressions of the place, and one that was not acknowledged. In attracting people to the area, the mountains and waterfalls were advertised. Appreciating the aesthetic appeal of the terraced rice fields was a bit like appreciating corn in Iowa – it's beautiful, but you see it every day. When harvest time arrived just after I did, the waves of green turned to gold on the ground, and various methods of hanging the rice straw to dry were built all over the place. My impulse to use the rice straw as material for sculpture was partially that it was beautiful, and seemed so appropriate as a material. Also, in the back of my mind was the thought: there is tons of this stuff – and it must be cheap!

In the end, I created two big installations with the rice straw, one outside in the forest, another in the martial arts hall of the high school. Outdoors, the rice straw will decompose and sink into the ground. Inside, the space became filled with the smell of the dried straw, as if being in a barn. In each installation, I used the straw to create the form of a river flowing through the space – a microcosm of the valley where I was working, in which the river and the boundaries of the watershed define the town's character and borders.

Creating a new project seems to me to always have an element of “new year” to it. I usually work on something for awhile, continuously make decisions, come up with ideas, and at some points feel as if I just discovered something that had been plainly obvious all along, but that I just noticed. The element of working in a foreign place added endless dimensions to this process. The difficulty of communicating, both about the work and about everyday things like buying food, taking out trash or going to the hardware store, added an element of struggle, as well as an aspect of humor. Building a big installation usually requires at least four or five last-minute trips to Home Depot, but here there was none. I had no idea how to ask someone where to find the screws, let alone the 2-by-4s (which don't exist in the metric system) or “those little plastic things that you use to hold the extension cords to the wall” or “the cable to run the sound from the DVD player to the speakers.”

Everything came together because of the immense help of the townspeople. I made lists of the things I needed and the help I needed. At times I was not sure it was going to come through. I had a lot of “assistants,”

but they were volunteers. A few things I had to search around for, or ask for quite a few times. But it did come together – the installation was finished in time, the videos and sound worked, and I created a final public outdoor piece working with a stone carver and the high school students.

While it was difficult, the experience of being surrounded by unfamiliar culture and language was also the most important part of the experience. I had many wonderful and revealing conversations with Japanese people who spoke little or no English (although more than my negligible Japanese). Some of my favorite times were working with Mr. Mori to build something or discuss some aspect of the installation. With little mutual language, I would often rely on hand gestures or sketches. He almost always understood and often presented a better idea. I also had great conversations about art with the Japanese artist who was also a resident. This was the context in which I first learned the word *shogatsu*.

Satoshi Uchiumi is a painter. I often stopped by his studio to see how work was going, and we would converse using pens and paper and an electronic translator. At one point, he said what he hoped his work would do for the viewer was to create “*shogatsu*,” which he translated as “new year for eyes.” Subsequently, any image, work, or experience that generated that feeling of – “ah ha, NOW I SEE!” could be lauded as “*shogatsu*.” *Shogatsu* could be “new year for eyes,” “new year for nose,” “new year for mind.” When looking for an English translation/title for his painting, I helped him come up with the title “eye opener,” which conveys this same sense: a new eye opening, perhaps to what was there before but remained unnoticed.

This sense of constantly having my eyes opened was so significant to my time in Japan. I had traveled there with the Hoen-ji Hakuin pilgrimage in 2003. I had a strong affinity for Japan after that trip and because of my practice at Hoen-ji. Being there on the pilgrimage, seeing the magnificent Rinzai temples, walking in gardens and sitting in ancient zendos gave me a deep, strong feeling of connection to all my ancestral teachers and deep gratitude that I had found this practice here, in America.

Returning to Japan was very different. I was more aware of the aspects of Japanese culture that were confusing, mysterious, and completely inaccessible to me. I was aware of myself as a foreigner and constantly in a state of unknowing and confusion. These aspects were perhaps even closer to the heart of my practice. I really did have to give up knowing what was going on and being in control of the situation. I was constantly aware that the assumptions I made about things were most likely wrong. I had to look at my own thinking and creative process and question it over and over. And I had to stop looking for Zen practice anywhere outside of my own experience – it was right here, dealing with each thing that came up, allowing my eyes and heart to be opened. □

Dharma Dance

By Dave Fisher

It started with scraping and bleaching mildew off the outside of the zendo walls one Saturday morning. As I'm carrying a bucket of bleach, Kimpu and Andy unexpectedly emerge from the zendo. Andy spots me and exclaims "David! What a delight to see you!" in the way only Andy can – as though meeting a long-lost friend, seeing him for the first time after many years (even though it was actually just the day before). And yet, what a truly delightful chance meeting!

Later, Kimpu calls to me while I am up on an extension ladder against the zendo. He holds up a piece of homemade banana bread on a napkin, an offering with a smile that eventually woos me down from the ladder for a break. I later find out he made this treat for that morning's Tibetan Dharma study.

As I sit in the quiet kitchen of the Forman House, I hear someone else walking down the hall. Suddenly, Linda, one of my Jukai classmates, appears in the doorway. We both startle in surprise and suddenly I am Andy – "Linda! What a delight to see you!" We then share the next half hour, getting to know each other more deeply as we talk about our life journeys and histories.

Two days later I'm driving home from work and I call Osho to see if I could come over to work on Andy's speakers. One had died and we were trying to figure out why.

"Sure, come on over now!" she says.

"Oh! Okay, I'll be there in a few minutes."

So the dance, which I thought was taking me home, unexpectedly takes me to Osho's and Andy's. After diagnosing the speaker issue I ask Osho if she had had a chance to look at the poster for her book signing I had e-mailed her the previous day for review. It was a response to a request-for-help e-mail from Mokuon. One of the needs was a poster sign for the Zen Center's table at the Westcott Cultural Fair.

"Do you have your laptop computer with you?" Osho asks.

"Yes, it's in the car."

"Let's look at it now."

So there we are: Andy to my right and Osho to my left sitting on the couch making changes to the poster. I become the hands to Andy's creative eye as he points to

the screen and says, "Move that there," and the expression of Osho's grammar as she reworks the content of the sign. Part of me says, "But this was only a sign." And, yet, there on the couch we are three collaborators, one mind. And ... it's fun.

This small offering of words was inspired by a recent conversation with Jisho. We were talking about how much needs to be done (always needs to be done) before Shitsugo and Fall Sesshin. I related the above vignettes, adding that there is a greater choreography at play as we move in and out of the shared work of Zen Center life.

"We think we are individual, but we are not separate," she said.

This is so true. Most of us have very busy and demanding schedules. Yet, it is such a marvelous thing to be part of the Dharma's dance as it moves through each of our lives at Hoen-ji. My own dance took me in other directions for several years, which makes the reunion that much sweeter.

It is so easy to become overwhelmed with all the work that needs to be done at Hoen-ji. Yet, I feel there must be a deep and abiding trust in the dance itself. All this work is not up to me or any one person – that would be coming from "individual mind." When something does not get done, or there is no one available to do that "something," perhaps the time was simply not right for that activity. And if someone offered to do a task and it did not get done, then we have an opportunity for compassionate understanding that we all sometimes step on each other's feet and suffer disappointment or frustration.

When this happens, we must reach out to clasp each other's hands and try the dance move again in whatever way makes most sense at that moment. In this way we are all collaborators at Hoen-ji – One Mind deeply manifesting itself through the reality of Indra's net. And that is, indeed, one fine dance! □

This poem was written in October 2007, during Hongo David Robertson's first sesshin.

Inside
hushed by cool evening autumn currents
silhouettes sit silently empty
outside
golden leaves wind kissed released
guided softly to fertile soil home
within
death, rebirth, new life

– Hongo David Robertson

Zen Christmas and New Year's Eve

Are you dreaming of a Zen Christmas? Join us on Christmas Eve for our annual Hoen-ji holiday chant request night. For five years, we have gathered on Dec. 24 to select our favorite chants, from "Atta Dipa" to excerpts from "The Diamond Sutra" and even chants from traditions such as Korean (Won) Buddhism. Anyone is welcome; no prior experience is required.

On New Year's Eve, we will host our traditional ceremony and celebration. It begins at 9 p.m. Dec. 31 with a personal purification ceremony. Participants write down all the conditioned behaviors they would like to discontinue on a slip of paper, and, while reciting the "Verse of Purification," burn the paper in the Joshua Forman House fireplace. By 10 p.m., we enter the Carriage House Zendo for a period of zazen meditation, followed by a teisho by Shinge Roshi. The service culminates with 108 times' chanting of "Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo," invoking the Bodhisattva of Compassion and our own compassionate nature as we take turns striking the large gong.

Refreshments, dancing, and conversation follow in the Forman House, often until the wee hours. All are invited; bring a non-alcoholic beverage or light vegetarian dish to share.



Doshin David Schubert strikes the gong during our New Year's service last year..

Fresh smell of earth's strength
Vibrant interdependence
Peace meditation

— Robin Gross

In the fall of 2000, when I retired from SUNY Upstate Medical Center as a social worker, I came to touch clay by a mystical chance. My first lesson was when a ceramist friend, Laura Kreidler, and her husband, a co-worker at the clinic where I worked, invited me to their house. Laura gave me a handful of soft clay to make a simple hand-built bowl. It was a wonderful and ineffable moment, touching the clay in my hand. I squeezed, rolled, pinched, hollowed, and piled the clay with pleasure. By the time that handful of clay was formed into a bowl, I was seduced and hooked by its magic. That led me into "a path with clay."

For seven years, I have taken ceramic courses under the guidance of excellent teachers Andy Schuster, Paul Moleski, David Webster, and Keith Penny at Onondaga Community College. In 2003, my soul pushed me to the edge (as it does in meditation). I felt compelled to have a pottery shop built in my backyard. I took money from my retirement fund (blindly, so it seemed) and had a small shop built. It was 15 feet by 16 feet, like a little hut. I still am amazed that my pottery shop came into being. It has been my unfolding mystery. I named my shop "Pleasing Pottery."

In 2004, I was accepted as a Syracuse Ceramic Guild member, and have participated in the Pottery Fair at Stone Quarry Art Park ever since. This August, two of my works were selected for a juried exhibition at the Everson Museum.

For me, working in clay is a continuum of mystery. I get much joy from it. I'm also compelled to work through my inner self. Suzuki Roshi reminded us to sit with "Beginner's Mind." I apply the concept in centering clay and creating pots.

I have no background in the Japanese ceramic tradition, although I was born in Japan. Perhaps that gives me some innate connection. Each time I throw clay body on the wheel, I am a beginner in centering the clay and making a cylinder. The clay body never lies; it seems to have its own mind. When I am not centered and am unable to be present, the clay body does not open into a centering cylinder.

I seem to be incapable of creating perfectly symmetrical, beautiful pots. My pots often appear

A New Journey of Centering in Pottery and Self

By Fumiyo Hirano

coarse, unrefined, irregular, incomplete, and vulnerable. When I try to control the clay body with the technological thinking mind, the clay becomes uncooperative to my will. I often feel helpless and dissatisfied with the results.

So I am letting go of wanting to create universally appealing pots. I am learning to breathe with awareness for a few moments as I throw clay onto the wheel and to connect with the clay body with my wet hands and my whole body. Sometimes I feel intimately connected with the clay body and am able to be comfortable with my own ambiguity about what to make and how to make a pot. Pleasing pots emerge when I let clay, earth, water, fire and all other elements claim my body, mind and spirit.

Currently my work is displayed at the Zen Center. I am honored and grateful to be given this opportunity by Shinge Roshi and to have the support of the Hoen-ji Sangha. □



Fumiyo Hirano's pottery is on view in the Third Floor Art Gallery of the Forman House until January, as part of an exhibition of area artists called "Nature/True Nature."

Shizen Ichimi *

How far away those robed,
Severe aficionados
Of unremitting change,

Their human pyramids
In rows, their darkened zendo,
Their distant mournful gong.

What have they to do
With paeans to wine and roses
And cries of vain desire

Or with those celebrations
Of lips, breasts, eyes,
The falling negligee?

Everything, I think,
This cool September morning,
These yellow leaves intact

But on the verge of falling,
These zinnias still red
As lips but losing color

And in these lines a bow
To transitory joys
And unreturning lives.

— Ben Howard

*Poetry and Zen are one

Many Sangha members have asked about their own and loved ones' funerals, cremation, and burial or scattering of ashes in the Zen Center's Sangha Memorial Grove, the wooded area along the kinhin path that now includes several gravesites with Bodhisattva statues.

We have begun planning for the future development and management of the Sangha Memorial Grove, and we invite your participation in this planning process. Several Sangha members have already placed the ashes of their loved ones there, and/or have requested that their own ashes be buried or scattered in the Sangha Memorial Grove.

End-of-life and funeral arrangements

When a death is imminent, Shinge Roshi, other clergy, and Sangha Care Committee members are available to provide supportive services to the Sangha member, including chanting at the bedside and sitting with the person in the hospital, at home, and after death. Please call the Zen Center to arrange for such services.

When a death occurs, the Sangha member or family should contact Jikyo or a member of the Sangha Care Committee for information regarding funeral homes, crematorium arrangements, and other important decisions. A funeral can be arranged at the Zen Center, with cremation and burial or scattering of ashes in the Memorial Grove; a funeral at the Zen Center can be followed by burial elsewhere; both funeral and burial can be elsewhere, but an *ihai* (memorial plaque) can still be placed on the zendo altar, with Segaki chanting for the deceased.

If the wish is for a funeral at the Zen Center, arrangements should be made with a funeral home (we can make recommendations), which will coordinate with the crematorium.

Ho-en-ji Sangha Memorial Grove

***By Jikyo Bonnie
Shoultz***



Artist Barbara Andrus weaves a panel for Memorial Grove, positioned behind the Jizo carved by Tom Matsuda. Andrus, who lives in Maine and New York City, donated the panel, which had been part of an installation at Stone Quarry Hill Art Park, Cazenovia.

There are three ceremonies in the period following a death.

1. A ceremony is conducted by Shinge Roshi and/or other Hoen-ji clergy at the crematorium. The cremation usually takes place three days after death.

2. A funeral service is conducted at the temple, with the deceased's ashes and photograph on the altar. Family and friends are invited to speak if they wish. The zendo can accommodate up to 140 people.

3. A final service is done with the cremains at the Sangha Memorial Grove. The ashes may be scattered, or, if buried, the cremains are mixed with salt and water and wrapped in a pure white cloth; they are not contained in a box or urn, in keeping with Buddhist teachings of impermanence (therefore there is nothing that can be disinterred at a later date).

After 49 days, a memorial service is held to mark the end of the deceased's transition (*bardo*) period. This service can be requested even if the funeral service has been held elsewhere. At this point the *ihai* (plaque) is removed from the altar; the person's name goes into our permanent memorial records, and chanting is offered at every sesshin and at O-Bon.

It is customary to offer the temple a donation for funeral and memorial services, according to one's financial ability – a minimum of \$300 for the three funeral-related ceremonies is suggested.

Sites in the Sangha Grove may be marked by small statues, plaques, or simple stones, with or without names. Hoen-ji has information on artists like Tom Matsuda who specialize in figures of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Memorial Grove improvements

Landscape architectural plans for the Sangha Memorial Grove have been developed by Onondaga Community College professor and landscape architect Tom Price, based on ideas provided by Sangha members and the initial garden design by Vaughn Rinner. Funding to make this possible is

Dog

I wake up at night and look into a face –
the face of a dog.
my teacher's dog.
You may say, Oh – just a dog.
I say, Dog is just a name for it
dark eyes meet mine
soft, rippling hair fine as silk,
warm, moist nose touches my cheek –
whose face is this, and whose does she see in me?

- Myorin Catherine Landis

addressed below. We would like to contract with him to develop a detailed plan/design as financial support allows.

It is important to note that we are not planning large clearings for formal cemetery plots, but inconspicuous sites in keeping with and fostering the continuation of wildlife habitats. Downed trees and brush are essential for the ecology of the soil. Proper forestry management principles will be followed, allowing for the planting and flourishing of evergreens as privacy screens and other indigenous bushes and trees. Memorial sites will be created on the west side of the kinhin path; the area toward the back of our property and along the creek will be left wild for animals and birds' nesting and food.

To enhance the garden and maintain it over time, we ask that a one-time fee of \$500 be paid by or for anyone who would like his or her ashes placed in the Sangha Memorial Grove. Gifts on behalf of Sangha members also may be made in advance. The payment reserves a site. Families are welcome to place a memorial tree, sculpture, stone, or other marker at the site; directions for this can be stated in a person's will. An investment now ensures a site and allows the Zen Center to commission Tom Price to realize his design, and to purchase materials and plantings for the Sangha Memorial Grove. The first ten people to make a commitment have their choice of sites, and will be able to help develop the grove into the beautiful space we envision. Please contact Jikyo, bshoultz@syr.edu, if you would like to participate.

Right Hand

This hand that has for decades opened doors
and held itself aloft in earnest gestures
of friendliness or imminent departure
endeavors still to make my wishes known,
moving with intent across the page,
as though this empty space were nothing less
than joy itself, unstained, unqualified.

How easily it rests, its work completed.
No pen to hold or quarter note to play,
it lies before me like a guileless child,
as if my every thought and inclination,
which all day long it labored to oblige,
were in the end a necessary burden
that now it sheds as readily as water.

– Ben Howard

From the Abbot

The year 2008 has indeed been a historic one. This is true not only for those of us at Hoen-ji, not only for Eido Roshi and Aiho-san and the Sanghas of New York Zendo Shobo-ji and Dai Bosatsu Zendo, but indeed, for the evolution of Buddha-Dharma in the West – and for our country, which we can at last truly call the United States of America. Writing this just as Barack Obama has been elected president and 45 years after Martin Luther King Jr. told us “I have a dream,” I know that with everyone’s hard work and sacrifice, the dream of a nation guided by compassion, wisdom, and justice for all can be realized.



Roko Osho and Eido Roshi at Nyogen Senzaki's grave in Evergreen Cemetery

I cannot recall a year of more intense Dharma activity, befitting the 50th anniversary of the passing of Nyogen Senzaki, the first patriarch of Zen in America.

Compiling and editing *Eloquent Silence: Nyogen Senzaki's Gateless Gate and Other Previously Unpublished Teachings and Letters* was a profoundly moving experience, one through which I felt an ever-deepening *in-nen* with this courageous pioneer.

In April, having finished proofreading the page proofs, I went to Los Angeles at the kind invitation of Eido Roshi. On that Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day, we chanted the full service at Nyogen Senzaki's grave in Evergreen Cemetery, and invited him to come to Dai Bosatsu Zendo the following month to be with us for the Nyogen Senzaki Memorial Sesshin. We offered the box containing the pages of *Eloquent Silence* at the grave, under the headstone inscribed with Nyogen Senzaki's words: “Friends in Dhamma, be satisfied with your own heads. Do not put on any false heads above your own. Then minute after minute, watch your steps closely. These are my last words to you.” What a Mandala Day that was!

Several excerpts from the book were compiled into a preview publication designed by Banko Randy Phillips, and were given to participants at that 50th Anniversary Memorial Sesshin, where we strongly felt that Nyogen Senzaki had indeed joined us. On May 7, at the memorial service, Eido Roshi offered him a Chinese poem he composed.

On Mandala Day in May, I was pleased to participate in the transmission ceremony from Eido Roshi to my Dharma brother, Genjo Osho Marinello, in Seattle. At dinner that evening, Eido Roshi said, "Who was Nyogen Senzaki? Nobody. What did he do? Nothing. Where did he go? Nowhere. And *that* is why, 50 years later, he is remembered."

On Mandala Day in June, Andy, Myoko and her family, and I went to the Enthronement Ceremony of the young tulku identified as the reincarnation of Andy's teacher, Domo Geshe Rinpoche. It took place outdoors in a large tent at the Dungkar Gonpa Society, Gangjong Namgyal, the closest neighbor on Beaverkill Road to Dai Bosatsu Zendo, where Andy and I stayed the night before. Later that day, Eido Roshi and an Obaku School Roshi and his monks who happened to be visiting from Japan paid their respects at Gangjong.

Meanwhile, unlike many other publication projects, *Eloquent Silence* sailed along without a hitch. We were trusting that Wisdom Publications would have the books ready so that they could be given to those who attended New York Zendo Shobo-ji's Fortieth Anniversary Sesshin September 11-14. A full month ahead of schedule, on the eighth day of the eighth month of 2008 – a mystical and powerfully auspicious date – the books arrived at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, New York Zendo, and the Zen Center of Syracuse, and were gratefully received by all sesshin participants.

In addition to attending the Nyogen Senzaki Sesshin at DBZ and the 40th Anniversary Sesshin at Shobo-ji with several Hoen-ji students, I was guest teacher for a sesshin at Austin Zen Center. I gave a talk at Zen Center of Los Angeles on Nyogen Senzaki, and my teisho at our own three- and five-day sesshin all featured excerpts from *Eloquent Silence*; I held book readings at Hoen-ji and at area bookstores.

This memorable year also included three ordinations: two young men at DBZ, Tenrai Frederick Forsythe and Giun Stefan Streit, and our own Gyoshin Virginia Lawson at fall sesshin here; also at fall sesshin, I named Jisho Judy Fancher my Senior Disciple. Hoen-ji's special events included one-day retreats, guest speakers, weddings, funerals, memorial services and baby welcoming ceremonies.

One of the biggest and most time-consuming yet rewarding projects this year, besides my work on *Eloquent Silence*, was a six-month-long institutional lifecycle assessment, starting with a day-long strategic planning retreat attended by most of our trustees, committee members and Sangha at large. A small group of us then steeped ourselves in the assessment process, and after many drafts, we were able to submit a final proposal for a capacity-building grant from the Gifford Foundation. We learned at the end of the summer that we were awarded \$15,000, which will go toward needed office equipment, electrical work and other support functions for our volunteers. The Gifford Foundation had given us a grant last year for our programs for

young people and families in the inner city; this capacity-building grant will be of great help in bringing the Zen Center to maturity as an organization.

From mid-summer on, all our efforts were focused on preparations for the Entrustment Day. Everyone pitched in, and on any given day – early mornings, weekends, evenings – people could be found scraping and painting, weeding and putting down mulch, washing windows, entering data, running to the printer, addressing envelopes, repairing steps and railings, preparing gifts, rehearsing music, arranging accommodations, shopping and cooking, and doing hundreds of other tasks. Everything came together beautifully on October 12, as Eido Roshi, Genjo Osho, Seigan Zenji, Hoen-ji and Zen Studies Society Sangha and Dharma friends – some 140 people from all over the country – took part in a day we will never forget.

As the November moon waxes, with vow renewed, I bow in gratitude for this inconceivable Dharma harvest.

Gassho,
Shingeshitsu Roko Sherry Chayat

Sangha Passages

Grandmotherly kindness award

Congratulations to Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, who was named Honorary Grandmother of Self-Advocacy in New York by the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State for her work on behalf of people with disabilities. The award was given at the association's state conference in Albany.

Artist residence fellowship

Sangha member Konreki Randlett Walster, a novelist who recently retired from her work as an environmental attorney, has received a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for a two-week period in the winter-spring season, from February through May of 2009. Since its inception in 1907, the prestigious fellowship has granted residencies to people from a diverse cross-section of creative disciplines to live and work at its idyllic property in Peterborough, NH. It's the oldest arts colony in the U.S.

Returning home

Gozan Paul Worden has completed his monastic training at Ko on-ji, a Rinzai temple on the outskirts of Tokyo, and is returning to Syracuse in late November. He and his fellow monks traveled through India, Nepal and Thailand recently, a gift for all their efforts for the monastery's 600th anniversary events of April.

Of his time in Japan, he wrote Shinge Roshi, "Life is truly like a dream. It has been the challenge of my life, grueling, grinding, and uplifting in an incomparable, inexplicable way. It has consumed everything, has been my

entire focus for almost five years. Thus, naturally, it is slightly daunting to suddenly 'pull up stakes,' so to speak. But I'm ready. Whatever of life's vicissitudes await, in my hara, things are steady; however, there is still an endless path to traverse and lots of work to do. I'm looking forward to it."

His parents visited him in Japan at the end of his stay at Ko on-ji, and they are heading home the week of Thanksgiving.

Wedding in Italy

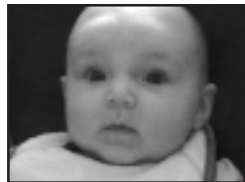
Christina Pickard, daughter of Sangha member Jim Pickard, married Timothy Robathan on July 19, 2008 in Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy, a town on coast of Italy, near Genoa. Christina had lived in London for a few years and Tim is from Perth, Australia. Jim and his wife, Kathy, traveled to Italy with other family members for the wedding.

Sangha births

Several Sangha members welcomed babies into their families during the last year, and ceremonies were conducted for them at the Zen Center.



(Left) Aria Margaret and Zachary Robert Grisanti-Bizzell were born Nov. 6, 2007, at 2:27 p.m. and 2:29 p.m. respectively. Their parents are Sangha members Ryosei Theresa Bizzell and JoEn Joanne Grisanti, who recently moved with their family to Northampton, MA, where Jo works at the River Valley Market, a food cooperative.



(Right) Daughter Morgan Slade was born Feb. 18, 2008, to Mai-Liem and Chuck Slade of Lexington Park, MD.



(Left) Willow Beverly Walworth, daughter of Tainin Brad Walworth and Tara, who live in Ithaca, was born at the end of 2007.

Deaths in the Sangha family

We offer our deep condolences to those who have lost the following beloved family members: Douglas Rauscher, father of Jushin Barbara Rauscher, and Barbara Arnold, Jushin's grandmother; Eugene Batkin, father of Reijitsu Paul Batkin; Ruby Brown, mother of Beverly Brown; Raymond John Bernet, nephew of Jika Lauren Melnikow and cousin of Dokyo Paul Melnikow; Betty M. Gustafson, mother of Eric Gustafson; Margaret Weinstein, mother of Ryobo Gary Weinstein; Doris Montgomery, aunt of Meigetsu Rebecca Beers; Walter J. Ward, father of Kyugen Dan Ward; and the mothers of Tainin Brad Walworth and Jikai Jane Keenan.

New 2008 Sangha Members

The following people became provisional or full Sangha members this year. Full members have completed at least one three-day sesshin.

Paul Aviles	Robin Gross	Caroline Savage
Irja Boden	Sookie Kayne	Debbie St.Germain
Monica Bradbury	Mark Kuney	Pat Stapleton-Young
Kaity Cheng	Albert Lenowicz	Lisa Turkki
Alex Dumanian	Jon Propper	Tom VandeWater
Maxine Free	Carol-Ann Pugliese	
Linda Gehron	Brian Rutledge	

Ordained in 2008

Gyoshin Rogetsu Virginia
Lawson

Fall 2007 Jukai Class

(as pictured, L to R)
Kensei Jim Spencer
Togan Tim Kohlbrenner
Kimpu Jonathan Swan
Hongo David Robertson Jr.



Roko Osho and the Fall 2007 Jukai class

2007 Year-end Contributors

Donors to the year-end fundraising effort for 2007 include the following Sangha and friends, whose gifts are deeply appreciated. Our special thanks to Alex Nason for his generosity in funding the Zen Center's Buddhist Chaplaincy at Syracuse University.

Judy Antoine	Dr. Paul and Linda Cohen	Adrienne Eddy
Meigetsu Rebecca Beers	Rudolph Colao	Jackson Edwards
Horen Vaughn Bell	Daishin Paul Cook	Rev. Koshin Paley Ellison and Rev. Chodo Robert Campbell
Chogen Rene Berblinger	Joraku JoAnn Cooke	Richard Ellison
Eishun Phyllis Berman	Mushin Thomas Crisman	H. Brainard Fancher
Ken and Cathy Bobis	Rev. Renji Ellen Darby	Jisho Judith Fancher
Richard and Laura Braaten	Tori DeAngelis	Dave Fisher and Deb Badera
Peter Brouwer	Daphine DeRosa	Wendy Foulke
Robert and Mary Burdick	Kathleen Deters-Hayes	Betsy Fuller
Nick Cavanaugh	Amy Doherty	Enko Mary Beth and Peter Gamba
Rev. Sanghyeon Cheon	Kanro Christine Dowling	
Richard Cocks	Alexander Dumanian	

2007 Year-end Contributors, continued

Paul Glavin	Gyoshin Virginia Lawson	Charlotte Haas
Charles and Sandra Gowing	Laura Leso	Kathryn Rabuzzi
Gary and Bonnie Grossman	Yetta and Alvin Lipton	Jushin Barbara Rauscher
Frederick Guereschi	Linda Lowen	David Richards
Karen Gutelius	Getsuan Ann Marshall	Dorothy Riester
Rev. Koshin Robert Hanson and Karen Igvoldstad	Rose and Rafe Martin	Vaughn Rinner
Cindy Helms	Michael and Alice McGrath	Entsu Scott Rosecrans
William Hewitt	Brian McKee	Beth Ryan
Chris Hickey	Jika Lauren and Walter Melnikow	Bill Schnell
Ed Hinchey	Rev. Reiho Ellen Meyers	Roger Sharp
G. Victor Hori	Pam Monaco	Clint and Tonya Shenandoah
Shiju Ben Howard	Gay Montague	Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Myoun Lorraine Huang	Steven and Melissa Montgomery	Mai-Liem and Chuck Slade
David Humphrey	Professor Tsutomu and Sensei Masako Nakatsugawa	Dr. Jeffrey Sneider and Gwen Kay
Kiyoshi Ike	David and Jane Pajak	Heidi Stephens
Janet Jenkins	Jackie and Brian Parker	Nikyu Robert and Sandra Strickland
Elizabeth Jones	Walt Patulski	Samuel Tamburo
Dennis Keegan	Kishan and Dawn Perera	John Toomey
Rev. Saigyo Terry and Jikai Jane Keenan	Linda Perla	Lisa Turkki
James Kelly	Banko Randy Phillips and Saiun Atsumi Hara	Thomas Walsh
Julia Ketcham	Daiku Linda Piddock	Konreki Randlett Walster
Robert Kleinberg	Richard and Neva Pilgrim	Kyugen Daniel Ward
Paul Kocak	Jeanette Powell	Myoko Jennifer Waters and Joe Cota
Leslie Kohman	Ruth Putter	Fred Zolna
Eiko Krezdak	Gary Quirk and	
Myorin Catherine Landis		
Cheryl and Robert LaRochelle		

2008 Capital Campaign Contributors

The following are contributions made during 2005-2008 to the Capital Campaign, which culminates in 2010. We are profoundly grateful for your generous and continuing support.

James Angerame	Frank Cardile, Sr.	Adrienne Eddy
Goetz and Antje Arndt	Dr. Renate Chevli	Rev. Koshin Paley Ellison and Rev. Chodo Robert Campbell
Daigan David and Teresa Arnold	Rudolph Colao	James Emmons
Meigetsu Rebecca Beers	Daishin Paul Cook	Jisho Judith Fancher
Chogen Rene Berblinger	Joraku Joann Cooke	David Feldman
Eishun Phyllis Berman	Carolyn Coyle	Dave Fisher and Deb Badera
James W. Betro	Ishin Bill Cross and Sheila LeGacy	Chosei Heidi Flint
Ryosei Theresa Bizzell and JoEn Joanne Grisanti	Rev. Terry Culbertson and Dr. Mark Savad	Sokyu David Franke
Hogen Howard Blair	Nengaku Roger Cunningham	Nyozan Steven and Stacy Fuller
Robert Blumenthal	Amber Davis	Enko Mary Beth Gamba
Susan D. Boettger	Jed and Barbara Delmonico	Hal and Jan Garman
Ona Bregman	Janet Dodd	Wayne and Jill Gibbs
Beverly Brown	Amy Doherty	Fugan Sam and Julia Gordon
Anju Anne Burnham	Kanro Christine Dowling	Toku Ellen Grapensteter
Mary Jean Byrne-Maisto	Alexander Dumanian	Robin Gross
Diane Cannavale	Jisei Joann Dwyer	Gary and Bonnie Grossman

2008 Capital Campaign Contributors, continued

Karen Gutelius	Laura Leso	Kigetsu Jennifer Sampson
Rev. Koshin Robert Hanson and Karen J. Ingvoldstad	Kyosho Pat Linnemeyer	Naoko Sasaki
Anne Helfer	Anna Madden	David Scheinburg
John Henley	Rev. Kobutsu Kevin Malone	Vicky Schipper
John Herrling	Getsuan Ann Marshall	Irene and Kent Scruton
Ed Hinchey	Rose and Rafe Martin	Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Myotan Patricia Hoffman	Tinnie McAlpine	Mai-Liem and Chuck Slade
Mitsudo Ted Hoppenstedt	Kevin and Suzanne McAuliffe	Ryushin Michael Sobel
Shiju Ben Howard	Alice and Michael McGrath	Kensei Jim Spencer
David Hubbard	Alex Melnikow	Horen Vaughn Bell and Brennon Staley
Leonora Hurst	Dokyo Paul Melnikow	Ginger Storey-Welch
Kushu Damir and Mary Jamsek	and Daisho John Corso	Nikyu Robert and Sandra Strickland
Sozan Alan Johnson	Jika Lauren and Walter Melnikow	Kimpu Jonathan Swan
Robert and Sue Ann Kayne	Chimon Bill Mitrus	Syd Tenenbaum
Rev. Saigyo Terry and Jikai Jane Keenan	Alex Nason	James and Debbie Trombino
Hokyo Sara Keith	Mokuon Karen Nezelek and Dick Molitor	Tom Vandewater
Shugetsu Sandra Kistler-Connolly	David and Janey Pajak	Hoetsu Amy Vondrak-McCord and Mugai Brian McCord
Myoho Victoria Klawitter	Ungo James Pangborn	Konreki Randlett Walster
Togan Tim Kohlbrenner	Walt Patulski	Tainin Brad Walworth
James Kraus, Esq., Kraus and Barone	Ann Pia	Kyugen Daniel Ward
Eiko Krebsdak	James R. Pickard	Myoko Jennifer Waters and Joe Cota
Myorin Catherine Landis	Richard and Neva Pilgrim	Ryobo Gary Weinstein
Christine Lane	Jeanette Powell	Jenna Lou Weitzel
Cheryl and Robert La Rochelle	Kathryn Allen Rabuzzi	Melissa Whittaker
Rev. Gyoshin Virginia Lawson	Jushin Barbara Rauscher	Muju Rene Wilett
Zuicho Elaine Leahy	Dorothy Riester	Fred Zolna
	Vaughn Rinner	
	Jennifer Roberts	
	Entsu Scott Rosecrans and Fernand Armii Cloutier	

Entrustment Ceremony Contributors

We are deeply grateful for the contributions in honor of Shinge Roshi's Entrustment Ceremony.

Daigan David and Teresa Arnold	Robert and Mary Burdick	Amy Doherty
Josh Bartok, Wisdom Publications	Revs. Gyokuko and Kyogen Carlson,	Kanro Christine Dowling
MyoEn Deborah Bateman	Co-Abbots, Northwest	Alexander Dumanian
Meigetsu Rebecca Beers	Dharma Rain Zen Center	Jigen Madalyn Eisenberg
Ven. Dai-En Bennage Roshi, Abbot, Mt. Equity Zendo Jihoji	Ven. Eido Frances Carney Abbot, Olympia Zen Center	Rev. Koshin Paley Ellison and Rev. Chodo Robert Campbell
Chogen Rene Berblinger	Rev. Sanghyeon Cheon	James Emmons
Eishun Phyllis Berman	Daishin Paul Cook	Jisho Judith Fancher
Ryosei Theresa Bizzell and JoEn Joanne Grisanti	Joraku JoAnn Cooke	Dave Fisher and Deb Badera
Hogen Howard Blair	Daisho John Corso and Dokyo Paul Melnikow	Nyozan Steven and Stacy Fuller
Barbara Block	Ishin Bill Cross and Sheila LeGacy	Linda and Paul Gehron
Robert Blumenthal	Rev. Terry Culbertson and Dr. Mark Savad	Ellen Golden
Hoen Monica Bradbury	Amber Davis	Robin Gross
Ona Bregman		Eric and Anita Gustafson
		Gabor Hardy
		Fumiyo Hirano

Entrustment Ceremony Contributors, continued

Myotan Patricia Hoffmann and Bill Cuddy	Dr. Janet Mark	Vaughn Rinner
Mitsudo Ted Hoppenstedt	Getsuan Ann Marshall	Sevan Ross,
David Humphrey	Rose and Rafe Martin	Chicago Zen Center
Robert and Sue Ann Kayne	Dennis McCort	Mara Sapon-Shevin
Rev. Saigyo Terry and Jikai Jane Keenan	Michael and Alice McGrath	Naoko Sasaki
Shugetsu Sandra Kistler-Connolly	Jika Lauren and Walter Melnikow	Noreen Shea
Bodhin Kjolhede, Abbot, Rochester Zen Center	Mokuon Karen Nezelek and Dick Molitor	Ven. Eido Tai Shimano Roshi, Abbot, Dai Bosatsu Zendo
Myoho Victoria Klawitter	Professor Tsutomu and Sensei Masako Nakatsugawa	Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Myorin Catherine Landis	Ann Ogburn	Ryushin Michael Sobel
Christine Lane	Walt Patulski	Charles and Cheryl Spuches
Rev. Gyoshin Virginia Lawson	Banko Randy Phillips and Saiun Atsumi Hara	Nikyu Robert and Sandra Strickland
John Lawton	Ann Pia	Lisa Turkki
Zuisho Elaine Leahy	Daiku Linda Piddock	Tom VandeWater
Minch Lewis	Susan Jion Postal, Empty Hand Zendo	Sal and Dianne Villano
Christian Lord	Jeanette Powell	Kyugen Daniel Ward
Marie Luther	Jushin Barbara Rauscher	Myoko Jennifer Waters and Joe Cota
Genjo Osho Marinello, Abbot, Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji	Dorothy Riester	Muju Rene Wilett Patricia Young

Entrustment Ceremony Volunteers

We are enormously grateful for your enthusiastic spirit. If we have unintentionally omitted anyone from the following list, we humbly apologize.

Daigan David Arnold	Sokyu David Franke	Mokuon Karen Nezelek
Deb Badera	Paul Gehron	Joseph O'Brien
MyoEn Deborah Bateman	Linda Gehron	Jikishi Celia Oyler
Reijitsu Paul Batkin	Fugan Sam Gordon	James Pickard
Meigetsu Rebecca Beers	Anita Gustafson	Jeanette Powell
Chogen Rene Berblinger	Eric Gustafson	Jon Propper
Hogen Howard Blair	Zenshin Michael Haederle	Carol-Anne Pugliese
Irja Boden	Anne Helfer	Jushin Barbara Rauscher
Kaity Cheng	Fumiyo Hirano	Caroline Savage
Rev. Sanghyeon Cheon	Todd Hollely	Nyogetsu Ronnie Seldin
Daishin Paul Cook	Myotan Pat Hoffmann	Debbie St. Germaine
Joraku JoAnn Cooke	Mitsudo Ted Hoppenstedt	Rev. Doshin David Schubert
Daisho John Corso	Shiju Ben Howard	Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Joe Cota	Mary Jamsek	Ryushin Michael Sobel
Ishin Bill Cross	Togan Tim Kohlbrenner	Kensei Jim Spencer
James D'Aloisio	Mark Kuney	Bill Steinbacher
Amber Davis	Myorin Catherine Landis	Ginger Storey-Welch
James Douglass	Gyoshin Virginia Lawson	Nikyu Robert -Strickland
Kanro Christine Dowling	Theodore LeGacy	Florence Sullivan
Alexander Dumanian	Christian Lord	Kimpu Jonathan Swan
Jisho Judith Fancher	Getsuan Ann Marshall	Hakan Tayga-Hromek
Mary Ann Fierro,	Tom Matsuda Sensei	Kyugen Daniel Ward
Business Art and Framing	Dokyo Paul Melnikow	Myoko Jennifer Waters
Dave Fisher	Jika Lauren Melnikow	Daishin Pawel Wojtasik
Chosei Heidi Flint	Dick Molitor	Tetsunin Pat Yingst

Winter/Spring Programs 2009

COURSES

Conscious Stress Reduction: Taught by Ishin Bill Cross, Ph.D., 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 28-March 18 (winter series), April 15-June 3 (spring series). Sept. 16-Nov. 4 (fall series). Includes meditation/mindfulness training, yoga and stretching, body awareness and visualization, and learning methods to integrate change into one's daily life. Helpful in adjusting to daily stress, high blood pressure, chronic pain and life-changing situations. Cost (includes 4 CDs and workbook): \$200. Booster classes offered Wednesdays between sessions. Anyone is welcome to attend the boosters. Sliding scale, \$15. Carriage House Zendo. Call Dr. Cross, 474-3762, to register.

Deep Presence: An Introduction to Zen Meditation: Taught by Roko Shinge Roshi, abbot. 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays, April 28-June 2. Instruction in sitting and walking meditation, through awareness of breath and posture. Cost: \$125, or \$85 for students and seniors. Carriage House Zendo and Joshua Forman House. Call (315) 492-9773 to register.

Dharma Kids (and their families): Taught by experienced practitioners. 11 a.m. to noon, first Sunday of each month. Activities such as poetry writing, art and storytelling, age-appropriate sitting meditation and introduction to the zendo (meditation hall), chanting and ceremonial gongs and drum. Residence Hall. Call Myoko Jennifer Waters, 247-8613, to register.

Movement Meditation: Taught by Won Buddhist Minister Sanghyeon Cheon. 10:30-noon Saturdays, Jan. 24-March 14. Cultivate the physical and mental practice of keeping a calm and alert state of mind through serene movements, drawing upon Tai Chi, Qi-gong, yoga, and sitting meditation. Cost: \$40 for eight classes. (\$10 Sangha members). Joshua Forman House. Call 481-4197 by Jan. 14 to register.

Working with Pain: Meditation and Hypnosis: Taught by Robert G. Strickland, Ph.D., senior Zen practitioner and psychologist, board-certified in clinical hypnosis. 6:30-8 p.m., Mondays, March 16 to April 6. Cost (includes classes, materials, and an individual appointment with Dr. Strickland): \$150. Joshua Forman House and Carriage House Zendo. Call Dr. Strickland, 479-8494, before March 3 to register.

Yoga: Led by Dick Molitor. 5:30-7 p.m. Fridays and 1-2 p.m. Sundays. All levels welcome. No pre-registration required. Members, free; non-members, \$5. Joshua Forman House. Call 475-7610 for information.

EVENTS

Annual Meeting: Followed by Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day Chanting, Dec. 21, 2008. Board of trustees meeting, 4-5 p.m.; annual meeting, 5-6 p.m.; potluck supper, 6-7 p.m.; Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day chanting, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve Ceremony: 9 p.m. Dec. 31. Includes Personal Purification Ceremony in Forman House, zazen, teisho at 10 p.m., and chanting of Kanzeon 108 times from 11:30 p.m. to midnight, with participants taking turns striking the large gong. Followed by refreshments, conversation and dancing in the Forman House.

Storytelling by Rafe Martin: 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 25. Martin will perform several of the Buddhist *Jataka Tales*, based on the life of the Buddha. Children welcome. Followed by a reception. Free, in gratitude to all who have supported Hoen-ji in so many ways over the past year. Joshua Forman House.

All-Day Haiku Meditation Retreat: Taught by Roko Shinge Roshi. 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, March 28. Enter into haiku writing and appreciation through meditation. Includes a vegetarian lunch and teachings. Cost: \$75; register by March 24 by calling (315) 492-9773.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration: 11 a.m. Sunday, April 5. Regular Morning Service begins at 9, followed by zazen. We'll go to the Dharma Hall at 11 a.m. for the ceremony of bathing the Baby Buddha, chanting, and storytelling, followed by potluck lunch and birthday cake.

Poetry Reading by Jane Hirshfield: 7 p.m., Sunday, April 5. Internationally known Buddhist poet Jane Hirshfield will read and speak about the interrelationship of her Zen and poetry practices. Free, in gratitude to all who have supported Hoen-ji in so many ways over the past year. Carriage House Zendo.


PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES at the Zen Center of Syracuse

Rohatsu Sesshin: Led by senior students to commemorate the Buddha's enlightenment. Dec. 1 to 8. Early morning and evening sittings daily and all day on weekend days. See zendo bulletin board for times. Roko Shinge Roshi and other ordained attend Rohatsu sesshin Nov. 30 to Dec. 8 at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day chanting: 21st of each month, 7:30 p.m. Free.

Dharma Study: 7-9 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month unless otherwise noted on the website. Free.

For more information on programs and events, visit www.zencenterofsyracuse.org.

<p>Heartworks</p>  <p>Therapeutic Massage</p> <p><i>More than Massage~ Healing Sound & Touch</i></p> <p>Dave Fisher, LMT (315) 345-0223 www.heartworksmassage.com</p>	  <p>Serving Premium Deli Sandwiches and Salads, Fresh Coffee and Homemade Ice Cream!</p> <p>210 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, NY 13205 Phone/Fax: 468.1234/423.7729 (Across from Meacham Field)</p> <p>Let us cater your next event!</p>
--	--



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