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Winter 2011, Volume 24, #4

Cover Photo: Kevin McNeal.

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Northwest Dharma News

In 2012, a New Editor for the News

The Northwest Dharma Association is very happy to announce the hiring of Steve Wilhelm as editor of the **Northwest Dharma News**. He begins work in January in preparation for the Spring 2012 issue of the **News**.

Steve is a professional journalist on the staff of the **Puget Sound Business Journal** in Seattle. He is also a longtime supporter of the Northwest Dharma Association, having served on its board for many years, including several as President of the Board. Steve welcomes suggestions and news tips for upcoming issues. Please contact him at stevellen95@comcast.net.

Retiring is Julie Welch, also a former NWDA board member, who has volunteered as writer and editor since the **News** went online in September 2007. She plans to continue as a contributor to the **News**.

Julie wishes to thank all the writers, photographers, and other inspirational collaborators who have contributed to the **NW Dharma News** during the last four years. David Forsythe, Timothy O'Brien, Amy Groncznack, Caterina De Re and fellow members of the Northwest Dharma Association Board of Directors come to mind for all their hard work and wisdom, but there are many, many others who have shared their time, knowledge, and skills. Very special thanks goes to graphic designer Stephen Schildbach, not only for being such an excellent partner in this endeavor but also a beautiful example of Dharma in daily life.

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Northwest Dharma News

Northwest Dharma Association Board Looks to Future

The mission of the Northwest Dharma Association (NWDA) is to support Buddhist teachings, practice, and community in the Pacific Northwest.

How it does this has been the focus of discussions at our board meetings the past several months. These discussions have centered around the five major areas of: **Website Development; Membership Benefits and Conferences; the Northwest Dharma News; Membership and Teacher Outreach; and Financial Planning.**

Once we recognized we had focused on these five areas we created task forces to address the issues in each area. In so doing we invited past board members to join us in these endeavors as they all had a wealth of knowledge about the Association and its history. We also welcome NWDA members who would like to assist us to get involved with one of the task forces.

The **Website Task Force** will concentrate on both the design and content of the NWDA website. For example, there is now technology available that would allow NWDA to provide easy-to-develop websites for its members. Should it adopt? Another thought was to add a section on the "Basics of Buddhism", which would be directed at the person who has an interest in learning more about Buddhism and its history.

The **Membership Benefits and Conferences** team will address the issue of what NWDA can do for its members and what conferences it will sponsor in the coming year. NWDA has concluded that a major benefit to members is information and the ability to bring Buddhist groups together. But what information exactly should it share? And on what programs should NWDA bring groups together? In years past NWDA has sponsored conferences on prisons, families and the environment. Are these the programs our members want?

The **News Task Force** major goal was to hire a new editor to replace Julie Welch. We are happy to report that former NWDA Board president Steve Wilhelm has taken on this job. Steve has many years of experience in the newspaper business. Steve nonetheless will be seeking advice from members on the content of the News, which will continue to be published online quarterly.

The **Membership and Teacher Outreach Task Force** will establish a process whereby both members and teachers can easily communicate their needs to the NWDA leadership. In October, NWDA hired an outreach coordinator to set up meetings between Buddhist groups and NWDA Board Members.

The **Financial Planning Task Force** has been charged with the task of developing a new dues structure and monitoring its impact on revenues. Guiding this work will be the question, "is the dues charged by NWDA worth it to its members?" From now until the end of March the Task Forces will report to the full board on their progress. The goal is to have all work completed by the end of March, 2012. From that point onward the Task Forces will be asked to monitor continuously their work in order to see if the intended consequences occur or not, and what course corrections may be needed. The overarching principle is how well we are serving our members. Members will be kept apprised of this work in the **News**.

NWDA members interested in working on a Task Force should contact Timothy O'Brien at info@northwestdharma.org.

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Northwest Dharma News

Supporting the Dharma Network

One day Ananda, one of the Buddha's closest disciples, said to the Buddha, "Lord, I think that half of the Holy Life is spiritual friendship, association with the lovely." And the Buddha replied, "That's not so; say not so, Ananda. It is not half of the Holy Life, it is the whole of the Holy Life."

These words are the inspiration behind the work of the Northwest Dharma Association. We, the volunteers who make up the board and staff of NWDA, are fostering spiritual friendship across traditions. We are creating a larger sense of community and connection among Buddhists in the Pacific Northwest. We are bringing Buddhists together in order to increase the richness and depth of the Dharma.

Your active participation in this process is what makes this possible.

Our website, our events, and the NW Dharma News are possible now because of the generosity and wise intentions of those who have come before us. We are enjoying the good fortune of many people's vision, hard work, and commitment to this non-sectarian journey. In order for us to continue this work in the future we need the support and generosity of our community.

Donations that you offer today will be used to carry our work forward into the future and provide opportunities for community and connection for years to come.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated and will be used to nourish the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, for all Buddhists in the Pacific Northwest.

It is easy to give. You can give through our secure donations page by clicking [here](#), either as a one-time gift or to set up a monthly pledge amount. A very important source of support comes from people who give each month. A donation of as little as \$5/month is greatly appreciated.

We hope that your practice of dana will include a gift to the Northwest Dharma Association.

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Sharing the Heart Sutra

In early November, Seattle's Dharma Friendship Foundation (DFF) hosted "Profound Illumination – The Heart Sutra within Buddhism", a weekend conference bringing together teachers and scholars from three primary Buddhist faiths: Tibetan Buddhism, Rinzai Zen, and the Mindfulness tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. The event was conceived by Yangsi Rinpoche, spiritual director of DFF, as a way to foster dialogue about one of the key sutras within Mahayana Buddhism. Below are excerpts from talks by the various teachers.

Eileen Kiera, Dharma heir of Thich Nhat Hanh, guiding teacher of Seattle's [Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound](#), and resident teacher at [Mountain Lamp](#) community in Deming, Washington.

"I'd like to tell a story. A monk named Xuan Zang met a beggar and did him some kindness. In return the beggar offered him the words of the Heart Sutra which struck him deeply. Xuan Zang memorized them and decided to go on pilgrimage to India to learn more about Buddhism.

"He set out in 629 A.D., journeying 10,000 miles across the Taklamakan Desert and the Hindu Kush Mountains, chanting the Heart Sutra for protection as he endured sandstorms, thirst, robbers on the Silk Road, avalanches, snowstorms. He made it to northern India where he studied for many years, returning to China in 645 A.D. with tales of protection from the mantra.

"On returning to China he stopped at the [caves](#) near Dunhuang and his translation of the Heart Sutra was written and sealed away, not discovered until the beginning of the 20th century.

"We don't know who wrote the Heart Sutra. It was possibly written in Afghanistan. We don't know who is speaking it or where it came from. It is asking us to enter into not knowing. Like the not knowing of Bodhidharma, the first Zen ancestor who came from India to China, who when asked by the emperor, "Who is this standing before me?", replied, "I don't know", not the passive cop out "I don't know", but the "I don't know" which asks us to engage in each unfolding moment of our lives, dropping our story, all our concepts, dropping all of our ideas, to just be, radically present. In the place where we have dropped all that, we don't know. Then, we can truly say that we don't know where we are going, where we have come from. We are open to that boundless spacious mind... We enter into what the Heart Sutra is inviting us to go to, beyond our personal story."

The Great Heart of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) Sutra

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva while practicing deep Prajnaparamita perceived all five skandhas were empty and was saved from suffering and distress.

Shariputra, form is no different from emptiness; emptiness is no different from form.

That which is form is emptiness, that which is emptiness is form. Feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness, the same is true of these.

Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness. They do not appear or disappear, are not tainted or pure, do not increase or decrease.

Therefore in emptiness no form; no feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness; no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind; no color, sound, smell, taste, touch, object of mind; no realm of eyes and so forth until no realm of mind consciousness; no ignorance and also no extinction of ignorance and so forth, until no old age and death and no extinction of old age and death; no suffering, origination, stopping, path; no cognition, also no attainment.

With nothing to attain the Bodhisattva depends upon Prajnaparamita and the mind is no hindrance. Without any hindrance no fear exists. Far apart from every inverted view, the Bodhisattva dwells in Nirvana. All Buddhas in the Three Worlds depend on Prajnaparamita and attain complete unsurpassed enlightenment.

Therefore know the Prajnaparamita is the great transcendent mantra, is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra, is the supreme mantra, which is able to relieve all suffering and is true, not false.

So proclaim the Prajnaparamita mantra, proclaim the mantra that says:

Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasamgaté, Bodhi Svaha.

Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone all the way beyond, Bodhi Svaha!



Venerable Thubten Chodron, Founder and Abbess of [Sravasti Abbey](#), a monastic community in Newport, Washington and former spiritual director of Dharma Friendship Foundation.

"Why is the Heart Sutra important? To understand that we must understand our present situation and what causes it, which leads us right into the Four Noble Truths. We are experiencing various levels of *dukkha*, (roughly translated as "suffering"), not just the ouch kind, but also what we call pleasure which lasts for a while, but doesn't satisfy us, and the third kind of *dukkha*, merely having body and mind under the control of afflictions and karma.

"Our situation is beginningless, but its origin lies in ignorance. In everything we do there is this feeling of me as an agent: I am doing this and that, going here and there. And the objective world out there is perceived as separate from us. This worldview is so natural and spontaneous. We didn't even learn it, but this worldview is a path to disaster. This concept of a real me and real everything is actually what lies at the basis of all of our misery.

Participants in Dharma Friendship Foundation's panel discussion on the Heart Sutra. From left: Genjo Marinello Osho of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji in Seattle; Eileen Kiera of Seattle's Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound and Mountain Lamp Community near Bellingham; Ven. Thubten Chodron, Abbess of Sravasti Abbey in Newport, Washington; Dr. James Blumenthal, Associate Professor of Buddhist Studies, Maitripa College, Portland, Oregon.

"The Heart Sutra tells us to check on this assumption. This is what it is calling us to examine, investigate and probe: the path to freedom. If we are able to overcome this fundamental ignorant apprehension of how things exist, we gain real freedom, not bound by anger, jealousy pride, competition, and so forth. So it is very important to understand *prajnaparamita*, the perfection of wisdom, the wisdom that perceives things in the exact opposite way of how ignorance apprehends.

"Then we gain real freedom and aren't forced to be reborn again and again under the force of ignorance and afflictions and karma. We see reality exactly as it is and can act in the world in a compassionate way at the same time. Then we can be of the highest benefit to all sentient beings. That's why it is important to understand *prajnaparamita* which is the subject matter of the Heart Sutra."

Dr. James Blumenthal, Associate Professor of Buddhist Studies at [Maitripa College](#) in Portland, Oregon and at Oregon State University.

"Interfaith dialogue is good and the Heart Sutra is a great topic since it is so widely appreciated in the Mahayana traditions.

"The Heart Sutra has had a variety of uses, including as protection on travels as mentioned by Eileen. Within Indian Buddhism it forms a part of a tantric sadhana. Atisha talked about using the Heart Sutra for exorcism. Also, it is used ritually before teachings on emptiness.

"The Heart Sutra is unique. There are two main translations. The translation we've used tonight is the shorter version. The longer version contains "Thus I have heard once" and puts the whole setting together with the Buddha present and spoken by Avalokiteshvara.

"The Heart Sutra is considered a Buddhist sutra even in the short version, without the standard "thus I have heard at one time" indicating that the person recounting this was present at the teaching with the Buddha. This is the only exception among hundreds of sutra, and the speaker is not the historical Buddha. This shows the openness of the Buddhist canon. What is important for Buddhism is not necessarily that it came from the mouth of the historical Buddha, but that the authority is an enlightened mind, enlightened wisdom. Avalokiteshvara's voice is authoritative because his mind is enlightened. I think this is important as the Buddhist tradition gets passed down from teacher to student, ideally to enlightened masters, that we recognize that kind of authority."

Genjo Marinello Osho, teacher in the Rinzai Zen tradition and Abbot of [Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji](#), a residential Zen community in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle.

"We chant the Heart Sutra every day. Whenever in doubt, we chant the Heart Sutra.

"Why? To settle the mind for meditation, to gain harmony. The key is the last line: Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha. A rough translation from a practice perspective: Those who have realized their bodhisattva nature will see the world as at once empty like a dream, like a fantasy, and at the same time be in awe of the myriad manifestations of this great emptiness. With this simultaneous view we can't help but be compassionate to all beings great and small, animate and inanimate.

"We need to awaken to our bodhisattva spirit, having penetrated beyond outward experiences, penetrated to an alive emptiness. The Chinese character for emptiness is *Mu*, incomparably profound and minutely subtle...the reality prior to heaven and earth, and the reality that is heaven and earth. Coming awake to this reality is what the Heart Sutra is calling us to do."

Yangsi Rinpoche, Founder of Maitripa College and spiritual director of Dharma Friendship Foundation.

"So, for a few days, you have been having this Heart Sutra conference. What a precious opportunity; particularly this topic, the Heart Sutra.

"The Dharma came from India to Tibet and all through Asia and now to the west and it is changing through the culture and language. So we need to come together and see where is the meaning in the center of all these changes. I rejoice in our opportunity to come together for this sharing. This is one of the most important sutras and in our discussions we should try to be grounded. Not just getting many different opinions and more knowledge, but how can we ground and deepen our wisdom?"

"Our awareness is the most important thing. We need to take care of that and not feed the



Seventh century Buddhist pilgrim, Xuan Zang.

mind junk food. No matter how much healthy food we feed our stomach in a day, if we lose healthy thoughts and emotions, that takes over and ruins everything. It all comes down to training the mind. The key point of the Heart Sutra is that it is a way to create freedom, freedom within our own self, a way to transform our environment into a pure land. The Heart Sutra mantra is like propaganda: Hey we can go, we can go further, we can go to our unlimited potential.”

Complete audio files of the conference are available for listening and downloading on the [DFF website](#). Reflections on the conference by Sally Zenka Metcalf can also be found in the Autumn 2011 issue of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji's quarterly publication, [Plum Mountain News](#).

For more information about Dharma Friendship Foundation, please visit: www.dharmafriendship.org.

Contributor: Jordan Van Voast.

Photo: Jordan Van Voast.

Image: Wiki Commons.

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Practicing with the Body: Conversations on *Medicine & Meditation*

"I wanted to write this book to give others hope that despite chronic illness and pain, there are options to how one learns to accept suffering," writes Nancy Welch, psychotherapist and Zen practitioner. "It is my hope that the voices here will lead others, too, to the profound, loving, and most of all, joyful acceptance of life on its own terms."

The twelve voices in Welch's compilation, *Medicine & Meditation*, belong to dharma practitioners who experience chronic, debilitating illness as well as those who interact with them: caregivers, physicians, psychologists and teachers. Many of them live, practice, or teach in the Northwest.

Included in the collection are interviews with Norman Zoketsu Fischer on working with the chronically ill; Ruth Ozeki on caring for her mother with Alzheimer's; and Marsha Linehan, PhD, on the Buddhist foundation of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy.



Psychotherapist, Zen practitioner, and author, Nancy Welch.

Welch is a psychotherapist and Zen student who lives in Bellingham, Washington where she is active in the Red Cedar Zen Community. She has received Lay Entrustment to teach meditation from her primary teacher, Zoketsu Norman Fischer. Since the age of seven, when she developed juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, she has had intimate knowledge of both the physical and psychological aspects of chronic illness and pain.

"Therapy and medications were helpful," she recalls, "but it was not until I began exploring the practice of Zen that I was able to put my 'suffering' into a completely different perspective. Through the quiet of just sitting, attending to my breathing... I found I could have moments of peace in my mind. Reading some of the teachings of Zen, I learned that I was creating much of my own inner turmoil by piling suffering upon suffering in the form of the hate and shame and condemnation I felt toward my disease."

In the conversations recorded in *Medicine & Meditation*, the skillful examination of "pain" and "suffering" is a recurring theme. "I don't know that suffering is optional," offers Dr. David Zucker, medical director of Cancer Rehabilitation Services at Swedish Cancer Institute in Seattle. A student of meditation for many years, including formal Buddhist monastic training, Zucker uses meditation in his work with cancer patients. "What I believe is that by learning to turn toward suffering with skill and kindness, well-being is possible."

Florence Caplow, a Bellingham-based botanist and ordained Zen priest who also practices Vipassana meditation, has had a challenging auto-immune disorder for the last ten years. "There are different levels of suffering," she says. "The fact is physical suffering can be incredibly intense... Then there is our learned response to pain, how we interpret the sensations we are experiencing... If we judge the experiences to be intolerable, we will experience them as intolerable." At a month-long Vipassana retreat Caplow found that she "...could either experience the pain as pain that she really desperately wanted to stop... or I could just note it as an unpleasant physical sensation." She became aware that there were many sensations happening all at once, some "pleasant, even wonderful" and others "unpleasant, even terrible". But, she realized, "I could choose what to attend to, and remember that all of it was impermanent, even the pain."

A number of contributors are quick to point out that though meditation can be extremely helpful, it is not a panacea or permanent solution for illness, fatigue, or pain. Sandy Taylor, founder and former teacher of the Seattle Soto Zen sangha, explains, "Let's say you have an injury and you are sitting meditating and it hurts like fury. You acknowledge it: 'It hurts. It hurts.' Meditation is not a cure. It is a form of coming to grips with your body."

Tim Burnett, Zen priest and head of Bellingham's Red Cedar Zen Community, is the

companion and, as needed, caregiver for his wife, Janet Martinson, who for several years has experienced a form of chronic fatigue syndrome. "Meditation is not a quick fix to any emotional or physical problems," he says. "My sense is that since I have practiced meditation all these years, it is much more possible for me to be patient and especially humble through this process. I believe patience and humility are two of the most important qualities for a caretaker."

Patience and acceptance are common themes in these interviews. Having or caring for someone with a chronic-relapsing type of illness teaches the importance of accepting whatever conditions prevail in any given moment. Several contributors recall struggling in the early days of illness with the hope or expectation that each "improvement" signaled a permanent abatement of the condition, followed by disappointment when symptoms returned. What they learn is to recognize and respect what is possible and even joyful "in this very moment".

Confronting what could be called the "limitations" of physical discomfort, fatigue, and other cognitive conditions brings to light attachments to what are revealed to be inessentials, such as the "right" zazen posture, a daily sitting schedule, a certain duration of meditation. Adaptability becomes a practice of compassion.

What one learns from **Medicine & Meditation** is not merely that sickness, old age, and the pain of approaching death are teachers, but rather the extent to which they are such very good teachers. In the words of David Zucker:

"What Buddhism teaches is inherent in the illness experience without having to be named... The full potential of what it is to be human is right there in the center of illness. It is a matter of focusing in a way that inclines the heart toward wisdom and well-being. It is a way of life."

[NEXT COMPASSIONATE ACTION ARTICLE >](#)

*For more information about Nancy Welch and **Medicine & Meditation**, please visit: www.medicinemeditation.com.*

*Contributor: Julie (no relation!) Welch.
Photo: Janet Martinson.*

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Enso House: End-of-Life Care the Zen Way

“The enso, a single stroke Zen Circle, symbolizes the unity of all things and the endless transformation of things. Its inclusiveness combines the visible and the hidden, the simple and the profound, the empty and the full, the beginning and the end.” — Enso House.

Earlier this year members of the Puget Sound Zen Center (PSZC) on Vashon Island, Washington, formed a group dedicated to exploring questions about how to make dying a more acknowledged, accepted, and honored part of their lives. To learn more about end-of-life care from a Buddhist perspective they visited Enso House, a hospice on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle. Many of the Enso House staff are affiliated with nearby Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery, founded in 1995 by Zen Master Shodo Harada Roshi. Following is a report on their visit:

Enso House is a small quiet house in the country, with a long mown field stretching back behind it. The visitors were greeted by Dr. Ann Cutcher, Executive Director and resident physician, who welcomed us into what seemed a magically large interior. Touring the facility, we saw a high, bright living room with a fire-place and islands of armchairs, a dining room, kitchen, a large sunroom filled with plants in growing tables, bedrooms for the guests and their families and, downstairs, a meditation room, bedrooms for staff, and a laundry. Ann lives in an adjoining cottage. No guests were currently in residence.

After the tour, we sat down to talk. Ann described how Enso House began, how it is organized, and its work through the years. The property was given to the Tahoma One Drop Zen Monastery years ago. Enso House opened in 2001, stemming from Tahoma Abbot Shodo Harada Roshi's vision of a home for the dying who, for whatever reason, could not die at home, a home where the qualities of humility, service, compassion, forgiveness would deepen in those both giving and receiving care.

Enso is organized as a non-profit, licensed adult care home, legally independent of the Zen Center. It is run largely by volunteers (including Ann), a nurse, CNA caregivers, trained sangha and community volunteers, and Zen practitioners on six-month rotation. They have helped 54 people and their loved ones go through the process of dying, people of all kinds whose names and faces are seen throughout the house. With care time donated by volunteers and monks from Tahoma Zen Monastery, Enso House is able to keep the cost to families relatively low. In addition to serving residents with a terminal diagnosis, the community also offers respite care to family members and other caregivers.

Enso House describes itself as placing “a special emphasis on caring for hospice patients who desire a supportive environment to deepen their spiritual exploration. While some of the staff and volunteers of Enso House are Zen Buddhist practitioners, people of all religious and spiritual traditions are welcomed and supported. The intention is to enable each individual to live the time remaining to them with grace and dignity and with full opportunity for inner healing, growth and completion.”

We discussed the process the PSZC Living and Dying group has been moving through toward finding a community service. Ann was enthusiastic about the idea PSZC has entertained of sponsoring caregiver retreats. Enso House also offers day-long caregiver retreats four times a year at the nearby monastery. These are quiet days with sitting and walking meditation, gentle movement/exercise, and a meal served to the participants.

Before leaving, our group walked a few minutes through a forest trail to the Monastery, an orderly arrangement of wooden buildings and gardens in a large clearing. Head monk Dairin kindly took time to welcome us and showed us the Roshi's house and the zendo, where we all sat and chanted the Heart Sutra together.



[CLICK ON IMAGE TO VIEW THE PHOTO GALLERY](#)

*For more information about Enso House, please visit:
www.ensohouse.org.
To learn more about Puget Sound Zen Center and the
Waking to Living and Dying group, see: www.pszen.org.*

*Contributor: Sissel Johannessen.
Photos: Katka Grofova.*



Northwest Dharma News

The Way of Tea at Whitman College

In Japan, a traditional tea room often receives an individual name suggesting something of the simplicity, respect for nature, and mindful attentiveness associated with tea ceremony. In Walla Walla, Washington, Whitman College's two-year-old Yabunouchi style tea room bears the name Chikurakken or "Enjoying the Bamboo Room". The source of the name is a calligraphy scroll that reads:

"Bring in some bamboo and enjoy its cool wind and shadows."

Designed by Professor Akira Takemoto, Chair of Whitman's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the Chikurakken serves as classroom, art gallery (housing some of the Whitman College Davis Collection of Asian Art), visitor attraction, and tea ceremony space. Professor Takemoto, who has taught at Whitman since 1983, is an ordained priest in the Nishi Hongwanji lineage of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. A student of the Yabunouchi school of tea since 1976, Takemoto has been authorized to teach it by the current Grand Master, Yabunouchi Jochi.

A rare and revered commodity when it entered Japan from China in the late 8th century, tea was prepared and consumed with disciplined formality in Buddhist temples and became the focus of elegant gatherings among the nobility of the Heian court (795-1185) in its capital, Kyoto. Meticulous attention to the design of tea spaces and their decoration, to fine utensils, flower arrangements, costume, and poetry became essential components of the tea aesthetic.

During the Kamakura period (1185-1333) and following centuries, a trend toward simplification arose. The "elegant refinement" (*miyabi*) of the Heian style was met by the idea of *wabi*, which placed emphasis on restraint, naturalism, and, ultimately, emptiness. According to Takemoto, "The *wabi* world invites us to enter tea spaces 'just as we are' and to encounter the world 'just as it is'." This period also saw innovations in religion in Japan, with the rise of Zen, Pure Land (Jodo Shinshu), and Nichiren traditions.

The Yabunouchi school of tea dates to the 16th century. Its founder, Yabunouchi Kenchu Jochi, trained under the renowned tea master Takeno Joo and had connections to the two other most important tea teachers of the era, Sen no Rikyu and Furuta Oribe. In 1640, Kenchu's son, by invitation of the abbot of Nishi Hongwanji, took charge of all tea gatherings held at the temple, headquarters of the Jodo Shinshu sect. This role has remained in the Yabunouchi family unbroken for thirteen generations and their close connection with Nishi Hongwanji continues today.



The Chikurakken tea room at Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington. At right is the *tokonoma*, a traditional alcove where calligraphy and flower arrangements that enhance the tea experience are displayed.



Professor Akira Takemoto demonstrates the art of tea, Chikurakken tea room, Whitman College.

Whitman's Chikurakken is modeled after the grand tea room located on the grounds of the Yabunouchi residence in Kyoto, adjacent to the Nishi Hongwanji temple. The Kyoto tea room bears the name *Shukido*, meaning "Hall of Shining Light". Shukido is where Professor Takemoto began his tea training in 1976 and where he received his formal permission to teach the Yabunouchi style of tea. He returns to Kyoto annually to continue his practice at Shukido.

Like Shukido, the Chikurakken tea room invokes both the austere *wabi* aesthetic of simplicity and frugality as well as elements of the elegance and vigor introduced by 16th century warrior tea masters such as Oribe. Somewhat smaller than its model, the Chikurakken has a six and a half tatami mat space for preparing and serving tea and a one tatami *tokonoma*, a traditional alcove where calligraphy and flower arrangements that enhance the tea experience are displayed. Chikurakken's calligraphy scroll was written by Yabunouchi Jochi, the current grand master of the Yabunouchi tea tradition, and given to Professor Takemoto in 2004. It reads:

"The Ordinary Mind; That is the Way."

Each tea gathering invites participants to experience fully, mindfully, and calmly all the factors unique to that event. As Professor Takemoto puts it, "**Chanoyu**, the art of serving and receiving tea has been called a collaborative art form because it requires the skills, the sensibilities, and the athleticism of performers, ceramic artists, calligraphers, poets, architects, flower arrangers, sweets makers, tea shop owners, Buddhist priests, and lacquer, metal, and bamboo utensil makers. But perhaps most of all, it requires the willingness of guests to set aside the time to enjoy how a tea gathering happens."

In the words of Konnyo Kozui, 22nd Abbot of the Nishi Hongwanji sect of Shin Buddhism:

"The essential truth of the teaching of tea is, entering a state of contemplative peace, to seek to be active in the midst of calm. Thus calm activity, activity and calm together, become the teaching of tea."

"Jodo Shinshu," explains Professor Takemoto, "remains a tradition firmly settled in the ground of the community (the sangha) where people of all ages bring different energies to a dynamic and complicated gathering place and share life's many challenges. As Gary Synder once wrote, Buddhism is not necessarily only about solitary, meditative, or cerebral contemplative practices, it is what he called the 'mastering of the 24 hours'."

"The Whitman College campus is very much like a Jodo Shinshu temple where students and faculty participate in a wide variety of activities. The Chikurakken tea room serves as one of many training halls on a campus where students can learn to anticipate, respond, and serve the needs of their friends."

"In tea, the idea of serving and sharing is called **motenasu**, that is, to bring friends into a context and 'serve' them with a different kind of sensory experience. In many ways, it is a way to share the dharma; not by using words or ideas, but by providing an opportunity to experience precious moments."

"The students who do the 'serving' practice what it means to clean and prepare the tea room; they look for flowers, boil water, make tea, and clean up. Students and faculty who enter as guests participate in an event that is always **ichigo ichie**, 'a gathering that happens only once'. It is a sharing that is always done 'for the first and last time'."

"For this reason, the Chikurakken remains a unique place that is not divorced from the academic and social life of the college. The Chikurakken, as a vibrant reminder of Jodo Shinshu ideas, exists and finds itself comfortably sitting in a classroom setting, a place where complex, chaotic, and energy-filled discoveries happen."

For more information or to schedule a visit to the Chikurakken tea room, please contact [Whitman College](#).

*Contributors: Akira Takemoto; Julie Welch.
Photos: Courtesy of Whitman College.*



Book Review: *Inner Freedom*

During my recent visit to Vietnam, I was very fortunate to meet many great monks and Buddhist teachers, one of whom was the Venerable Thich Nhat Tu, Ph.D. He is the abbot of a temple, a university professor, deputy rector of the Vietnam Buddhist University, deputy chair of the National Department of International Buddhist Affairs, editor-in chief of Buddhism Today magazine and the Vietnam Buddhist University Series, as well as a lecturer and learned monk. He has written over 40 books in Vietnamese and has started having his works translated into English.

Inner Freedom is a book of Dharma talks that Ven. Thich Nhat Tu gave at prisons in Vietnam. His lively style of teaching and practicing the Dharma comes across very well in this book. He speaks of the practical side of ignorance, desire/lust, and anger and how these aspects of egoist existence cause us to violate the laws of humanity and the cardinal precepts of Buddhism. He uses simple stories and explanations to help us understand freedom and the real prison of our own beginning-less greed, hate, and delusion.



Venerable Thich Nhat Tu visiting a women's prison in Vietnam.

In one wonderful tale he tells the story of the eel and the tilapia fish. They were very close friends and would often join together to play and hunt for food. One day the eel came to the tilapia and said, "I just found a wonderful 'food pile' – you must come with me and have some."

Well the tilapia had just eaten and was really quite full so she suggested that the eel go on and eat without her. "But, I don't want to eat alone," cried the eel. Reluctantly the tilapia agreed to join her friend for a snack.

The "food pile" turned out to be a fish-trap, which had a large opening at one end (which was easy to enter) but a very narrow opening at the other end, making it impossible for a fish to exit easily. The eel charged right in and started gobbling up some delicious tidbits and the tilapia joined her after some coaxing.

After eating her fill the eel easily swam out of the narrow exit. When the tilapia tried to leave she could not get through and was soon grabbed by the fisherman. Both of them were sad and cried at their fate and both felt the terrible loss of friendship and freedom. The story ends there.

Ven. Thich Nhat Tu goes on to talk about the motivation and intent of each being. The eel wanted only to share good food with her friend, the tilapia wanted only to be with her friend. Good intentions on both parts caused the tilapia to become dinner for the fisherman. Venerable Thich Nhat Tu describes how many of us are lured by fish-traps in life: wealth, beauty, fame, food, entertainment etc. All of them are very tempting and yet all of them are fish-traps –easy to enter and difficult to exit.

In using simple tales Ven. Thich Nhat Tu allows us to easily see the nature of the fish-traps in our own lives and how we too have been caught like the tilapia and experience terrible suffering. "The way to turn around and reach the other shore of peace and happiness is to cultivate compassion". Once we have turned, then we become aware of the other shore and the journey of Buddhist practice begins in earnest. It seems that just avoiding fish-traps will considerably shorten our journey.

Using simple stories and Buddha's teachings, Thich Nhat Tu leads us towards realizing that the real bars of our prison are not made from metal and stone, but rather are created in our

own minds.

These Dharma talks, while given to prisoners, are actually a way for all of us to look at our own lives and our own prisons. The Dharma talks have a fresh and easy manner yet are filled with guideposts and advice on Buddhist practice.

The Mt. Adams Zen Buddhist Temple hopes to place at least one copy of *Inner Freedom* in every prison library in Washington and Oregon. If you can help with this goal please contact us.

Inner Freedom is available from Mt. Adams Zen Buddhist Temple, PO Box 487, Trout Lake WA 98650 (e-mail Kozen1@embarqmail.com). There is no charge for the book but we would appreciate a \$5.00 donation to help with postage. The Vietnam Buddhist University Publications published this book. You can contact them at vbu_information@yahoo.com or their website www.vbu.edu.vn.

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For more information about Mt. Adams Zen Buddhist Temple, please visit: www.mtadamszen.org.

*Contributor: Ven. Thich Minh Tinh (Kozen Sampson).
Photo: Courtesy of Ven. Thich Nhat Tu/Buddhism Today.*

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Northwest Dharma News

The Prison Dharma's Evolution

On November 17 five Buddhist teachers and volunteers arrived at Steilacoom, Washington, showed their IDs to a corrections officer and stepped on the ferry to McNeil Island, where the Special Commitment Center (SCC) still operates under the State of Washington Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS). The larger Department of Corrections (DOC) facility on the island has been closed due to budget cuts. That facility was originally built by the federal government and served for decades as the Northwest's version of Alcatraz. Later, it was turned over to the State of Washington and served as a prison in the DOC system, housing more than 1500 men.

Inmates at the SCC, we were later told to call them "residents," live out their lives in one of those strange legal black holes that the American justice system has been so good at inventing since 9-11.

It was their Buddha Day. Under Washington Department of Corrections policy, each inmate gets to choose a religion—or none—and each religious group inside gets to choose one day a year when they can invite family and outside religious guests to help them celebrate their faith.



Celebrating the November Buddhafest at the Special Corrections Center (SCC) at McNeil Island prison in Washington were (from left to right) SCC resident, Jeff Hadashi Miles (seated), SCC resident, Kobai Scott Whitney, Koro Kaisan Miles, Dan Ryan, and Lenny Reed.

This annual holiday is a big deal for inmates because it involves special food, the ability to wear civilian clothes and the pleasures of time spent with family and friends.

Chaplain Greg Duncan, who serves as our chaperone and guide, worked for the DOC facility as well as DSHS, and is about to retire after long service in both agencies. He points out the many deer, squirrels and raccoons which roam the contours of the island on this late afternoon. "They're all very tame and used to humans. The men often leave food scraps for them outside the fence," though this is against the rules, he hastens to add. "Every so often, the Department of Ecology will bring new deer on to the island so the herd doesn't get too inbred."

The three men in the first facility are very nervous that everything work out smoothly and are effusively thankful that we have come. There had been one of the usual bureaucratic snafus and the dinner, which had been ordered as vegetarian, arrived as spaghetti with meat sauce, which was the "mainline" meal. After the meal, we meditated and shared a bit about "What Buddhism Means to Me."

Our visit to the facility was just a small piece in the mosaic of Buddhist activities in Northwest jails and prisons. Early pioneers, like Aryadaka Dharmachayi and Ven. Santidhammo in Washington, Rowan Conrad in Montana and Karuna Thompson in the Oregon system are now being succeeded by a new generation. As this history unfolds, progress toward full acceptance of Buddhism as a faith tradition has blossomed in the Northwest. (By contrast, California's Department of Corrections has yet to recognize Buddhism as a valid religion. Dharma volunteers in many institutions there must still be accompanied inside by a chaplain of a "mainstream" faith.)

There are several opportunities for volunteers in Northwest institutions, both male and female. Rev. Genko Kathy Blackman, a Zen priest and teacher, can direct interested Mahasangha members to the appropriate contacts. She can be reached at genkokb@gmail.com.

At this time the Federal Detention Center at Sea-Tac, Washington is looking for either a contract chaplain or volunteer to lead Buddhist meditation once a week. To

qualify to bid on a contract, applicant should be ordained or otherwise endorsed to teach. Contract chaplains generally come in between 1 and 4 pm on weekdays. The Buddhist contract chaplain would be expected to visit 2 - 3 units each week, staying 45 minutes to an hour at each unit. Volunteer time commitment would be similar but ordination is not a requirement. Please contact Chaplain Ellis at Sea-Tac FDC, 206-870-5771 (direct line) or tcellis@bop.gov for details.

Guidance on how sanghas can start up prison work, and some of the pitfalls involved, can be found in ***Sitting Inside: Buddhist Practice in American Prisons*** which is available on the "Prison Dharma Press" link on the [Prison Dharma Network](#) website, or from [Amazon](#).

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*Contributor: Kobai Scott Whitney.
Photo: Rev. Greg Duncan.*

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Northwest Dharma News

Aspiring Rainbow Women: Seattle's Lotus Sisters

Lotus Sisters is an LGBTQ (Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer) meditation community based in Seattle, Washington whose aspiration is "to be a vibrant, evolving, awakening, queer rainbow women's sangha."

"We are guided by the dharma, rooted in our individual and interdependent growth," declares the sangha's mission statement. "As we strive to create a multicultural, anti-racist practice we are committed to transforming ourselves, our relationships, our sangha, our community and our cultures."

The Lotus Sisters owe much of their inspiration and commitment to the guidance and example of their teacher, Arinna Weisman. A student of Vipassana meditation for over 30 years, Arinna has been teaching since 1988 in the lineage of the great Burmese master U Bha Khin and was empowered to teach by Ruth Denison. She is the founding teacher of Insight Meditation Center of the Pioneer Valley in East Hampton, MA, and the co-author of "A Beginner's Guide to Insight Meditation."

In a recent interview recorded by the sangha, Arinna Weisman talked about developing a commitment to building multicultural spiritual communities. Here are excerpts:

Would you tell us what drew you to the dharma in your life and how you developed an interest in your most recent focus to explore the relationship between the dharma and race, privilege, and other social inequities?

Growing up in apartheid South Africa inside a politically active family was both an inspiration and a challenge. My dharma practice is an unfolding of the fruition from that inspiration and challenge. I lived in a house where people like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Helen Suzman came to organize an end to apartheid. I was touched by their commitment and energy and felt the living reality of what it's like to be part of a movement with a vision.

I've never doubted the possibility of a small group of people coming together and making a difference. I have total faith in that. As a queer woman I stand on the shoulders of all the people who have come before me, who have created the conditions for the movement we have now; gay/straight alliances in the schools, gay marriage, and non-discrimination laws. It's amazing what's happened in 25-30 years and a huge reflection of our capacity to transform oppression. This inspiration has led me to find ways of building freedom in social and cultural contexts.

The other motivation for healing and transformation came from the sexual abuse I experienced as a young child and the silence surrounding it. I wanted to find a way to live with the legacy of that pain. I believe the ways we work politically need to include personal, spiritual, and psychological explorations and practices.

Although we can be deeply committed to this personal practice we can still act out behaviors that are harmful if we don't include in our individual spiritual practices an inquiry into our social and cultural conditioning.

As meditators it is therefore important to challenge the ways we think about freedom or transformation. And as political activists we need to include the personal, spiritual and psychological spheres. We can't leave anything out. This has led me to integrate theories of social oppression with the Buddha's teachings of delusion and ignorance.

How do you see the sangha in the Puget Sound area taking hold of this call to freedom and addressing these challenges you have mentioned?

Two expressions of oppression are the inequity in access to resources and also the negative beliefs and ideology that hold this in place. Perhaps even more painful is that these patterns of oppression are not openly acknowledged. When we find ourselves in a



Arinna Weismann, guiding teacher for Seattle's Lotus Sisters.

privileged position, we don't see our privilege and the impact of our behaviors on the target groups. Some of us find ourselves in a privileged position by being white, upper middle class or wealthy, heterosexual, formally educated, able-bodied, middle-aged, men, gendered, and citizens. And some of us find ourselves in the target positions of being people of color, poor, queer, informally educated, differently-abled, non-gendered, and immigrants.

Once we learn more about what it means to be privileged we become more conscious of the impact of our negative behaviors in our relationships and can take responsibility for them. For example, I have a friend who comes from a poor family. Before my education around privilege, I found myself judging her for not wanting to see foreign movies with English subtitles. Reading quickly was a challenge for her. She didn't have the option to learn to read as a child. As a middle class person my negative judgment that she was personally deficient made her responsible for the inequities of the class system. When I don't acknowledge my place of privilege I assume my experience is like everyone else's and discount the experience of the targeted person.

I'm so impressed by the importance of the work you are doing, Arinna. Living in such a diverse society, we have got to address our denial of privilege and oppression before we can truly address a shift toward equality and empathy for each other.

Exactly. Otherwise we keep reproducing the same old relationships. For example as white people, when we come into a situation where we are new to a group with people of color, we often dominate the conversation unknowingly, expecting to be heard and listened to. Of course we do! We'd have to be "dead" not to! It's our conditioning. And until we're aware of it, and see it over and over, it doesn't transform. That's why there are monastics who are great meditators, and totally sexist. They are not seeing their own behavior. By inquiring into all fields of life we develop the capacity to see where our hearts and minds are defended and shut down. We have the choice to enter into a relationship of respect and dignity with ourselves and with each other across our differences and with all of life.

Many people are saying the planet is in jeopardy. And unless we work in all these areas, unless we make these connections, it will be difficult to save ourselves. I've heard some senior teachers say, "Well if the world comes to an end, that's the karma of the earth." **But it's also our karma to save it!** We at the Lotus Sisters have experienced the amazing transformative capacities of our own hearts and minds through the practices of the Buddha's teachings of mindfulness and loving kindness. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., "we believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality."

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For more information about Lotus Sisters and to see more of this interview, please visit: www.lotussisters.org.

*Contributor: Linda Robinson.
Photo: Courtesy of Lotus Sisters.*



Seattle Zen Pioneer Receives Japan's Order of the Rising Sun

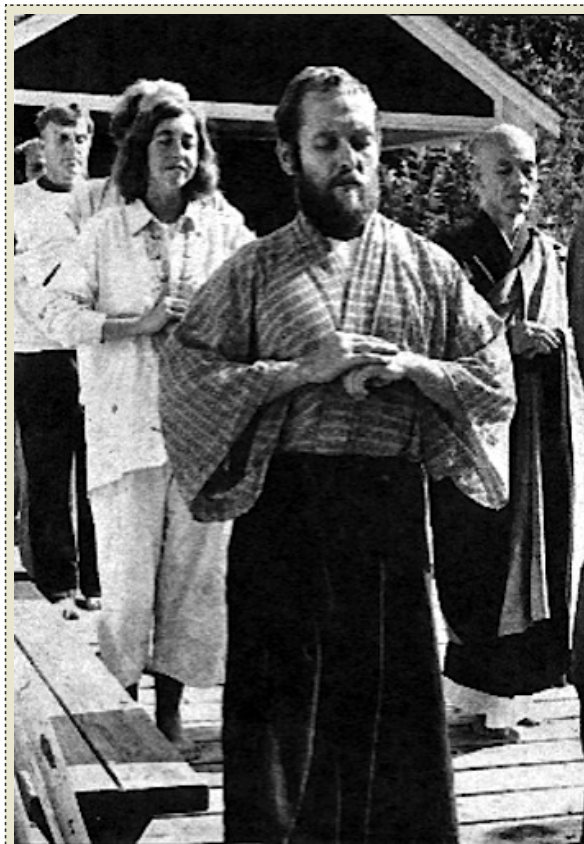
In November the Consulate General of Japan announced the Fall 2011 recipients of Japan's Order of the Rising Sun. Among them was Dr. Glenn Kangan Webb, a former University of Washington professor (1966-1987) in the School of Art and the Jackson School of International Studies. A renowned scholar of Japanese art, ordained Rinzaï priest, Urasenke tea master, and enthusiast of Japanese culture, Webb was honored for his "contribution to the advancement of Japanese studies and the promotion of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and the United States."

First awarded by the Emperor of Japan in 1875, the Order of the Rising Sun was conferred on Dr. Webb on behalf of Emperor Akihito by Consul General Jun Niimi in Los Angeles on November 15. Among those who attended the ceremony were many old friends and former students, including early members of the Seattle Zen Center which Kangan Webb Sensei founded. Genjo Marinello Osho, director of Seattle's Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji, the sangha that evolved from the Seattle Zen Center group, and Kankan Kurt Spellmeyer Roshi, now leader of the Cold Mountain Sangha in Rutgers, New Jersey, traveled to L.A. for the event.

As a gifted young pianist, Glenn Webb studied with Juilliard teachers in New York where, in 1951, at the age of 16, he became acquainted with Dr. Daisetsu Suzuki. Through his writing and teaching, Dr. Suzuki was then introducing Japanese Zen Buddhism to the West. For Webb, the encounter determined his future studies and career.

In 1964, Webb received a Fulbright scholarship to do doctoral work at Kyoto University for two years. There he connected once again with Dr. Suzuki, who became his mentor, along with other prominent Japanese scholars. In addition to his academic study of traditional Japanese arts, Webb also trained in Buddhist temples and was ultimately ordained in the Rinzaï Zen priesthood, Kanzan (Cold Mountain) lineage. While in Kyoto he also studied the Urasenke "way of tea", becoming an accredited tea master.

After receiving his Ph.D. in East Asian Studies from the University of Chicago in 1966, Dr. Webb began his teaching career at the University of Washington. Among his many activities, he co-directed the Center for Asian Arts, ran the UW's Kyoto exchange program, and published important contributions to the study of Japanese art.



Dr. Glenn Kangan Webb in the early days of the Seattle Zen Center.

Kangan Webb Sensei's teaching wasn't limited to the academic arena, however. As he became known as an actual practitioner of Zen Buddhism and interest in Buddhism in the Seattle area began to grow, slowly and quietly at first would-be students of Zen sought him out. By the early 70's, Webb led a zazen (sitting meditation) group in the art building on the UW campus.

"He was on the fourth floor and I used to carry a zafu and zabuton up four flights of stairs," recalled Kannin Dorothy Deming, an early student of Webb's. "He had 45 people sitting in an art room." Deming, now deceased, was 55 at the time. She continued practicing, was ordained in 1995, and went on to found the Cold Mountain Hermitage in Seattle. Deming attributed her several decades of practice to "the shining light of Glenn Webb."

Webb's sitting group became the Seattle Zen Center, which he led until 1978 when, at his suggestion, the sangha invited Zen Master Genki Takabayashi to become its resident teacher. Kangan Webb moved to Malibu, California in 1987 to direct the Institute for the Study of Asian Cultures at Pepperdine University.

Under Genki Roshi, the Seattle Zen Center took the name Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen



The Order of the Rising Sun was conferred on Dr. Webb at the residence of Japan's Consul General in Los Angeles, November 15, 2011.

Ji (“The Listening to the Dharma Zen Temple on Great Plum Mountain”), now under the direction of Genjo Marinello Osho.

“If you have ever heard me use the term kokoro (heart/mind),” says Genjo Osho, “or okage-sama de (I’m in your shadow), these come directly from my association with Kangan as one of my most influential teachers.”

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*Contributors: Julie Welch, Amy Groncznack, Genjo Marinello.
Photos: Courtesy of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji.*

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Northwest Dharma News

[VIEW PHOTO GALLERY](#)

Ceremony Opens New Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji, Rinzai Residential & Practice Center in Seattle

On Saturday, October 8, 2011, the members of Seattle's Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji sangha held an Opening Ceremony for their new Residential and Practice Center with approximately 100 sangha members, friends and neighbors in attendance at the new Zendo. Chobo-Ji is a Rinzaï Zen temple under the direction of Genjo Marinello Osho. Located in what was formerly an apartment building in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, the center now is able to offer practice and living space for residential students as well as non-resident members of the sangha.

The dedication ceremony began with Rev. Genchoku Johnson playing the shakuhachi (Japanese flute), followed by Charlie Taishin Blackman playing the Makah drum. Following a traditional incense poem, the group chanted sutras.



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Opening Ceremony Incense Poem

Indigenous spirits circle
with the Autumn Wind.
What is the root of Great Plum Mountain?
Sitting solid in the midst of impermanence.
Clouds quickly pass without hindrance.

Genki Roshi's Incense Poem

Autumn wind around
Dai Bai Mountain's peak-
Chobo-Ji's Zen energy embracing
everything, everywhere.
Dharma spring grows deeper, longer;
Over Lake Washington
a bird flies with ease.

Genjo Marinello Osho made opening remarks emphasizing the need to be good caretakers of the land as the First Peoples learned to be. Thanks were given to the earth, heavens and wildlife, especially salmon – the harvest and processing of which provided major funding for Chobo-Ji's new center through the generosity of one of its members. Carolyn Josen Stevens spoke words of gratitude on behalf of all of the Chobo-Ji community for the many people who gave generously of their funds and their time to create the center.

Genko Blackman ni-Osho and Rev. Genchoku offered ceremonial tea at the main altar. Unable to attend in person, Chobo-Ji's founding abbot, Genki Takabayashi Roshi, sent a recorded message urging sangha members to "Practice, practice, practice!"

Genjo Osho's concluding remarks thanked the many who were not mentioned by name but who also made invaluable contributions of one kind or another. Though the center's practice space is new, it feels old, he said, because of the many years of practice, training and experienced execution that have gone into creating it.

After the ceremony many stayed for a potluck lunch. As usual at Chobo-Ji there was much good food and fellowship over the meal. Joining the celebration was John Daijo Lowrance, one of the center's Dharma Angels who made its expansion possible. Later an Open House was held where friends and neighbors could tour the space.

Chobo-Ji began in 1978, when Genki Takabayashi Roshi arrived in Seattle at the invitation of Dr. Glenn Webb, professor of art history at the University of Washington (see article this issue), to become a resident teacher. By 1983 Genki Roshi had formalized his teaching style around a small group of students and founded Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji ("Great Plum Mountain Listening to the Dharma Zen Temple"). Genki Roshi trained for nearly 20 years at Daitoku-Ji, one of the major Rinzaï Zen training monasteries in Kyoto, Japan. Before coming to the United States he also directed a Rinzaï Zen temple in Kamakura, Japan.

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For more information about the Chobo-Ji practice center and programs, please visit: www.choboji.org.

Contributor: Genko Blackman; adapted from Plum Mountain News, vol. 18.3, Autumn 2011.

CONTRIBUTORS

Genko Kathy Blackman	is ordained in the Rinzai Zen tradition. Active for many years in prison dharma work, she serves on the Religious Services Advisory Council of the Washington State Department of Corrections.
Amy Groncznack	is a writer, editor and spiritual explorer. She is a former member of the board of the Northwest Dharma Association.
Genjo Marinello	received Dharma Transmission from Edo Shimano Roshi. He leads the Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji sangha in Seattle.
Dick O'Connor	is president of the Northwest Dharma Association and a jolly old soul.
Timothy O'Brien	is Office Manager of the Northwest Dharma Association.
Sissel Johannessen	is an active member of the Puget Sound Zen Center on Vashon Island, Washington, where she coordinates the Waking to Living & Dying group.
Linda Robinson	lives in Seattle and is an active member of the Lotus Sisters sangha.
Akira Takemoto	is Assistant Professor of Language & Literatures at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. He is ordained in the Nishi Hongwanji Jodo Shinshu tradition and an accredited teacher of Yabunouchi <i>chanoyu</i> .
Thich Minh Tinh (Kozen Sampson)	has been ordained and a student of Zen Buddhism for over 45 years, and now teaches Vietnamese Thien (Zen) Buddhism at Mt Adams Zen Buddhist Temple in Trout Lake, Washington. He calls his practice "laughing farmer zen - living our practice, sitting zazen, being here - right now!"
Jordan Van Voast	serves on the Board of the Dharma Friendship Foundation and is the co-founder of CommuniChi, a community acupuncture clinic on Seattle's Beacon Hill.
Julie Welch	is former president of the Northwest Dharma Association and departing editor of the Northwest Dharma News.
Kobai Scott Whitney	is guiding teacher of Plum Mountain Refuge in Aberdeen, Washington. A former prison chaplain, he is particularly interested in post-prison work and recovery issues.

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