



Eugene Zendo

January 2004 Buddha Eye Dharma Association Volume 4 Issue 1

Rohatsu Retreat

About a dozen attendees gathered this year for the Eugene Zendo's first Rohatsu sesshin commemorating the Buddha's enlightenment. Samu included sewing new zabutons, reorganizing the library and gardening. The week culminated in Norval receiving the Buddhist precepts. His dharma name is Choshin, which means "all surpassing faith."

Library

The new library check out system is duly in place thanks to the efforts of Nick and Choshin. To check out books, simply take the card out of the inside cover, put your name and the date on the card and file in the grey box according to the month of checkout. Gensei will be monitoring the system. So that everyone can have a chance to read books, please keep your checkout time limited to about 1 month.

By Lines

The authors' names of the articles in last month's newsletter were accidentally left out. Jeff wrote the article beginning with the Tao Te Ching quote and Ejo authored the piece on the Rohatsu retreat.

New Year's Eve & Day at the Zendo

The zendo will be open on New Year's Eve for anyone who wishes to come by and offer incense for the year ending and the ear beginning. Tea and snacks will be available. The doors will open around 4 PM and will continue until midnight, with people coming and going, as they like. On New Year's Day a ceremony is planned for 1:30 PM - all invited!

Spring Ango

This coming 2004 spring Ango period will focus on the study of Dogen's Bendowa which translates to *On the Endeavor of the Way* - with minimal text reading compared to our last Ango on Basic Teachings. There are several translations and two books of commentary we are trying to locate for the group. We will only have one long sesshin and two shorter, one-day retreats that will be centered around a particular theme or "body practice" - namely chanting and oryoki. We have added an optional monthly sangha circle evening before Fusatsu to serve as a forum for practice discussion. If you'd like to make practice or training commitments this term, or volunteer for one of the zendo positions please speak with Ejo first and note any sign up information on the bulletin board or commitment forms at the zendo before the first day of Ango opening.



Dharma Talk How Should We Practice?

It seems to be a continuous issue for beginners and long-time sitters whether they are sitting enough Zazen. People tend to develop some idea about how much they are supposed to be sitting or participating in Zendo events and then measure themselves against that idea. Most of us come to this way with a lot of concepts about what we will do through practice and naturally want to dedicate energy to those pursuits. As we face practice holding our concepts as guides, a great barrier to actually sitting Zazen arises. We try to sit the way we think we are supposed to. All kinds of resistances face us as we try to uphold our ideal, and guilt tends to strengthen as we perceive ourselves not living up to our expectations.

Zen has developed with an emphasis on discipline. The rigor of the way some people practice can look daunting especially when we are just beginning. There is also a certain amount of gossip and heroic talk that has been going around for centuries about people who practice severely, and it is easy to get confused about the importance of discipline and its role in pursuing the way. Over time we must develop discipline but not so that we can do some special kind of severe practice. We take up the discipline as a way to train, and it always develops through deepening realization and faith. Discipline or severity should never be considered the mark of true practice or an end in itself. We simply can't use our judgmental mind to pick up discipline.

I want to encourage people to not get lost in ideas about what they are supposed to be doing in relation to practicing Zazen. Feeling proud or guilty about what we are able to do is no good. Please don't let your ideas about

discipline get in the way of what draws your heart to Zazen. We learn to appreciate our lives through practice, but we also learn to practice through appreciating our lives. Take a few moments to recognize the simple beauty of sitting up straight and let it help guide you in this way. - *Gassho, Ejo*

Begging Bowl

*May we, with all beings,
realize the emptiness of the
three wheels; giver,
receiver and gift.*

Quality TOOLS

*New or in very good shape
contact: Ejo*

**6i Fiberglass Ladder
Hammers**

**Tape Measures
& Assorted Basic
Carpentry Tools**

Flooring

See Enclosed Note

9 BOWS

in gratitude

for Rohatsu Snacks

*Douglas, Megan, Carmelita,
Aido*

Rohatsu Dinners

Carmelita, Sydney, Jeannie

Towels

Beth

*Please let the editor know if
you wish to remain anonymous
for your donation*

Sangha Reflection

At Play in the Field

In the Pali Canon, *sangha* is called *the supremely rich field*. Yet with all our focus on Buddha and Dharma, does it become the least of the three jewels? How is it that we experience this rich field in its historically new setting where we do not live as monastics, but meet one another in the zendo and over cookies and tea? It has to mean more to us than just *nice group of folks*. Above my sincere warmth for our group, I want to know how we awaken together. For me, *Sangha* has proved to be the hardest and most surprising work of all. Much of what has been revealing to me I owe to the efforts of my teachers, Kyogen, Gyokuko and the sangha of Dharma Rain. Through them, I have been shown up close and personal, the outdated defenses and deep fears of the identified self and its release, the subtle joy of just practicing together. The work is endless. Inside, we go kicking and screaming, but without having the mirror of sangha during these long hours living side by side, I feel the opportunity to question those well-protected aspects of our lives isn't easily recognized. It is not so much that we need to be like another sangha, but that we have a chance to open up genuinely to who *we* are as the Eugene Zendo sangha.

With my recent sprained ankle, I learned something about community at Rohatsu. Having an obviously visible physical injury is socially easy - people see what's going on, do appropriate and kind things like carry chairs and open doors, and are not afraid that they'll catch it (unlike the virus *anxiety*)! It was ironic to me that I received so much kindness towards this physical pain which is nothing compared to the sufferings of the mind that is not so easily identified. In an ideal world of practice, I imagined it would be simpler if we went around with ace bandages on our heads (or hearts or hara as the case may be) so others could respond appropriately, "Ouch - you think you're separate, fundamentally flawed and experience non-stop confusion" "Yep, *been going around lately...* Our outdated crutches would wobble - addictions, fantasies and emotional loops. But we'd be given new temporary ones - leaning on the sangha when we see we do not do this in a vacuum. *Risk new steps*. We'd be OK with the raw fact of *dukkha*, help where we could, but more importantly just reflect a large space. *No instant cure*. Everyday people noticed my improvement walking ñ I could do kinhin more easily, stumbled less and was not always the last one back to my cushion. In kind, we'd witness each other remove the bandages of the mind and allow *mudida* (sympathetic joy) to naturally emerge. *Slow, intimate, true*.

If we do not foster a place where we can be who we really are in front of one another, we meet each other in a place where social convention and our patterned defenses dictate a comfortably familiar narrow set of possibilities - like *how-are-you-I'm-fine*. At the last several zendo steering committee meetings, we have engaged this issue in context of our own growing group ñ how the sangha meets its members, how to create intimacy and support for each other's practice. Ejo has been making efforts to explore this kind of communication, but really it is not as much his role as a priest, as it is *ours* as a community.

As we've grown, we've taken a small step backwards from our little Potter St. group of many years - for, unintentionally, we have lost the easy forum for people to come forward, bear witness to each others lives, and question the artificial barriers that we imagine separate ourselves from each other. Over the past year, having personally abandoned the demand for our group to interact

in a particular way, I started to listen again to the calls for meaningful sangha relationship that have emerged naturally in our transition.

From the perspective of the Japanese model, our way of talking is often dismissed as furthering the delusion from which we suffer. A fair criticism just to keep us honest, but I have seen it work both ways. Avoiding communication can just be another device to let go of. We can leap clear of expressing/ not expressing by *taking up* the sangha in the context in which it lives - *this* world, with its own mythology, perceptions, and landscape. *Knowing* that practice is immeasurable and really occurs in the deep waters of what is beyond grasping, the koan begins with *we can and must speak*. When we gather to reflect on our practice in ritual, we actually have the opportunity to leave our safe and comfortable world where we think we know what's what and who's who and open to the fact that our differences aren't so substantial after all and that what we've feared most about revealing to others, isn't a big deal, but really is the key to our freedom. Until we deeply practice with all beings, well, it's like my dharma sister Jiko often says, "It's easy to be enlightened in a cave." Just try making an important decision with that difficult person sitting next to you. May we, with all beings, steeped in a muddy world, share in the harvest from that rich field. - *Gassho, Seido*

Seido will help facilitate an open sangha gathering from 7 ñ 8 PM before Fusatsu on Thursday evenings. All are welcome. Please bring your lives as they are, your insights and questions. We will try different practice discussion formats, including some questions posed to the group to focus discussion, but most important is that we allow for a respectful and supportive place for people to present what is happening for them right now and just see what emerges. Seido is on retreat in January, but she is interested in your experiences as a new or old member and your perceptions concerning the needs of the sangha.

SPRING ANGO 2004

This Schedule Could Change....

Tuesday Evenings:

Feb 3 Ango Opening Dharma Talk

Feb 10 Double Sit/ Sanzen

Feb 17 Dharma Talk

Feb 24 Double Sit/ Sanzen

Mar 2 Dharma Talk

Mar 9 Kyogen visits from DRZC

Mar 16 Double Sit/ Sanzen

Mar 23 Mondo

Mar 30 Double Sit/ Sanzen

April 6 Dharma Talk

April 13 Double Sit/ Sanzen

April 20 Dharma Talk/ Opening Sesshin

April 27 Double Sit/ Sanzen

May 4 Dharma Talk

May 11 Ango Closing

Monday Evening Introductions to Zazen:

Jan 12, Feb 9, Mar 8, April 12, May 12

Thursday Evenings:

Feb 5 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu

Feb 12 Class/ Discussion #1 Bendowa

Feb 19 Class/ Discussion #2 Bendowa

Feb 26 Class/ Discussion #3 Bendowa

Mar 4 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu

Mar 11 Class/ Discussion #4 Bendowa

Mar 18 Class/ Discussion #5 Bendowa

Mar 25 Class/ Discussion #6 Bendowa

April 1 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu

April 8 Class/ Discussion #7 Bendowa

April 15 Class/ Discussion #8 Bendowa

April 22 Five Day Ango Sesshin

April 29 Movie Nite! Spirited Away

May 6 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu

Retreats:

Feb 21 Saturday All Day/ Theme: Chanting

Mar 20 Saturday All Day/ Theme: Oryoki

April 20-25 Tue - Sun/ Ango Sesshin

About the Eugene Zendo Web Site: www.eugenezendo.org

The Eugene Zendo is a Soto Zen Practice community open to everyone. The Buddhist teachings of compassion and wisdom are fostered amidst Sangha so that we can express these naturally in our daily life. The temple is entirely supported by donations from its members. There is no fee for any event, although donations are gladly accepted. Activities center around zazen (silent meditation) which is the foundation of our practice. Gatherings may also include service, chanting, dharma talks and study & discussion. If you are new to Zen practice, you may want to attend our periodic introduction class or just drop by 1/2 hour early before our Tuesday evening gathering to receive an orientation or contact our resident priest for more information:

Ejo McMullen 541- 302-4576 ejo@eugenezendo.org

Zendo Address: 2190 Garfield Eugene, OR 97405

Newsletter Items: Seido Martin hortonorganics@earthlink.net 925-3019

Web guy & contact to receive this newsletter: Gensei Morris gensei@efn.org 302-4576

EZ January 2004

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>*If Double Sit Evenings are difficult, you may come and join us for only the one of the 40 minute periods. Please leave or enter during Kinhin. You may also enter morning zazen any time before 7 AM Service (the best time is during kinhin 6:10 - 6:20AM), and depart either after service or temple cleaning (Soji).</p>			<p>NEW YEAR'S EVE Open Zendo 4 PM - Midnight <i>Tea/ Snacks</i> <i>Company</i></p>	<p>1 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Standard AM 1:30 PM New Year's Day Ceremony</p>	<p>2 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>6 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Regular Schedule 7:30-9:30 PM Service/ Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>7 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>8 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Regular Schedule 7 - 8:30 PM Fusatsu Ceremony</p>	<p>9 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast 7-9 PM Intro to Zazen</p>	<p>13 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Regular Schedule 6 PM: Zendo Mtg! 7:30-9:30 PM Zazen/ Service Double Sit with Sanzen</p>	<p>14 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>15 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>16 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>19 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>20 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Regular Schedule 7:30-9:30 PM Service/ Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>21 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>22 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>23 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast Dogen's Birthday</p>	<p>27 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Regular Schedule 7:30-9:30 PM Double Sit w/ Sanzen</p>	<p>28 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>29 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>30 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>31</p>