



Another New Year seems to be knocking on the front door and waiting patiently for our attention. I often feel at this time of year that it is hard to believe another year has come and gone. But I also feel the intricacy of life experience over the year, and it is equally hard to believe that so much living could fit between two January Firsts!

Our lives have a way of coming into relief over the New Year, like a light shining from the side, that reveals who we are in long intricate shadows cast across our hearts and minds. It is good to pause and reflect, to indulge the movement towards assessing our situation. It is difficult to unravel all the details of life when the story of even one day is infinitely complex. With all the projects, commitments, and happenstance, it is a tribute to the strength of our minds that we can keep it together in any sort of story at all. When we look back at this past year and ask, "Why did things unfold this way?" we are likely to end up in a tailspin, with our life whirling below and an uneasy feeling in our stomach. In spite of the confusion that comes from trying to understand the tendrils of life, keep your heart there. It knows something about who we are and what we are up to.

Have you noticed how many simple traditions grow out of a natural life rhythm? I think the tradition of making New Year's Resolutions grows out of this inclination to reflect over the past year. There is a lot of good that can come from that reflection, when we face habits squarely and resolve to change the way we do business, but we so quickly try to leave uneasiness behind. Whether we are able to keep our resolutions or not, a basic sense of uneasiness doesn't go away. In spite of failure or success, keep your heart there in the midst of regrets, hopes, and dreams. It has a longing for something beyond the self-improvement project, so let it guide you. When you try to clean up the uneasiness, your heart can't show you the next step.

The practice of Zazen is forming the Buddha Mudra with our whole life, not a single thing can be left out. This is a very strict teaching, a very strict way to take up our own life, very seriously, as the Buddha's Wisdom. I want to encourage everyone to take up this Buddha Mudra by actually sitting Zazen, wholeheartedly. I don't want you to take it up as a tool to soothe difficulty or round out the edges of your life. Without difficulty, there is nothing to life. "Wholeheartedly" means not to split the whole heart into good and bad, right and wrong, easy and difficult. It is not that we don't have the experience of good and bad, right and wrong, easy and difficult. Just don't try to take one side without the other. Set up straight all the feelings, ideas, and lumps of flesh, and let your heart open to the way things are. Here is the ever-present Dharma Gate. Please walk through into a New Year.

Ejo

NEW YEAR'S DAY CELEBRATION

Come and join in the celebration of the New Year. We will start with a traditional New Year's ceremony at 2:00 p.m., followed by a delicious feast of Japanese New Year's mochi!

Everyone is welcome. Please bring family and friends!

This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor welcome and entertain them all!...

The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

o **Rumi**

Whenever a community distinguishes some of its members from others, it becomes fertile ground for conflicting feelings that can be difficult to welcome. Without their acknowledgement, they tend to drive us in unseen ways. We miss the opportunity to clarify our lives and make things digestible too quickly by adopting truths that aren't yet our own or that we think we should feel. The teacher student relationship is an ancient archetype that we carry as humans – a mystery - right here is a journey you can only do alone but cannot accomplish alone and here is a guide. This is the road of investigation.

One of the more difficult experiences to accept is envy, despite its healthy appearance in any spiritual community especially during ordinations. It is natural, after all, in a practice where we are looking for something that's gone missing and in the process continually question who we fundamentally think we are. It can appear that that other person stepping up to the plate looks like they got it, or soon will get it! My own envies have ranged from petty to grand. I can remember spending a whole day at one retreat in envy of the woman's robes who did kinhin in front of me. Wasn't I supposed to be contemplating the salvation of humanity? OK sure, but couldn't I just have nice robes while doing it? It has taken many years to come to love the dharma gate so clearly delivered in these situations. After some time of cringing, I try to fully meet its message because I know from trial and error, what I really want is in the center of that fire. This is the beauty of intimate community practice over time. According to Aido, her teacher says envy shows us what we're not yet able to accept in ourselves. I like that.

Taken up with all its complications, the establishment of the teacher/ student relationship here has the potential to be a great gift to all equally without exception. But only if everyone takes it up as a koan, not just two people and that's something they're doing and we're doing something else. If comparisons arise, this is a marvelous ground for investigation for all. In an unorthodox way, what I'm suggesting is that we undergo illicit selfish practice and ask the obvious – what does this mean for me? And take time to listen to all the answers – light and dark. What is it after all that we want outside ourselves or see in others? Do we hold back from taking another step in this practice? What are the expectations that we have put upon ourselves in practice? What are the obstacles? What is the heart of this practice? What was my original question that I came to clarify? Bring it to a teacher, bring it to the river, your lover, a bird. Each person will have a different answer and the potential is to move in a completely authentic way.

The initiation of lay discipleship in contemporary times is both problematic and perfect in its expression – after all, what is changed or required or agreed to? What really is happening? I think we should be very nosy. Contrary to appearance, discipleship does not convey status or achievement that is a limited projection, it represents a "willingness" which is expressed but not confined to a person, time or place. It is free, much in the way the universe is "willing" moment after moment if our eyes are clear.

Our culture has lost most of the power of these ritual rights of passage – this enactment of a truth that cannot be explained intellectually but is better understood by the motion of our bodies. Our contemporary rituals focus more on the prize, often lacking the symbolic expression common to transformation - sacrifice and risk, we leave one comfortable world and enter another. Who knows really that the baby will live a full life after the baptism or that the marriage will survive or a soul pass on to heaven? In lay discipleship, the Kyosaku of Life and the unsettled nature of one's own heart create the completely reliable conditions to embody that sacrifice and risk.

Myobun and Yushin are showing us all what is possible in our lives. We need to honor them for that, but it cannot be exactly copied, we take it up fully as a mirror to our own delusion. Their freedom is our freedom but it must be accomplished in these human hearts and to struggle with it and not accept easy explanations about what this should mean. To go back to our own way seeking mind - this door is open to all of us completely 24-7. I hope we all take this opportunity to be kind to whatever guests arrive at our door, to share them with one another and grow and struggle with the truth of this human life that demands great sacrifice and a great risk. May we all be grateful for whoever comes and walk hand in hand through this birth and death, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying.

Seido

EZ JANUARY 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>M - F A.M. Schedule 5:10 a.m. Zazen 5:50 a.m. Kinhin 6:00 a.m. Zazen 6:30 a.m. Service 6:50 a.m. Soji 7:10 a.m. Breakfast</p>	<p>1 No A.M. Zazen 2:00 p.m. New Year's Ceremony & Celebration</p>	<p>2 Regular A.M. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Service/Zazen Double Sit</p>	<p>3 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>4 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>5 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Intro to Zazen 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Service/Zazen Lay Ordination Ceremony</p>	<p>8 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>9 Regular A.M. 5:15 - 7:00 P.M. Board Meeting 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Service/Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>10 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>11 Regular A.M. 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Zazen 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. Atonement 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. Fusatsu</p>	<p>12 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>13 Death & Dying Work- shop See flier.</p>
<p>14 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Intro to Zazen 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Service/Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>15 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>16 Regular A.M. 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Open Zendo Mtg 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Service/Zazen Double Sit</p>	<p>17 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>18 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>19 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>20 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fund-raiser Dance Party See p. 4 for information</p>
<p>21 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Intro to Zazen 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Service/Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>22 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>23 Regular A.M. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Service/Zazen DharmaTalk</p>	<p>24 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>25 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast 2:00 p.m. Kanzeon Sangha Meets</p>	<p>26 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Intro to Zazen 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Service/Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>29 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>30 Regular A.M. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Service/Zazen Double Sit</p>	<p>31 5:10 - 7:30 a.m. Zazen/Service Soji/Breakfast</p>	<p>If Double Sit Evenings are difficult, you may come and join us for either of the 40 min. periods. Please leave or enter during Kinhin. You may enter or depart from the AM schedule as needed at appropriate transitions. You may also attend any or all of the events on Fusatsu evenings.</p>		



ZENDO NOTES

Mark your calendars!

Spring Ango will begin on February 6, 2007,
and extend until May 15.

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As noted in the calendar, a **Lay Ordination ceremony** will take place on Sunday, January 7, after morning service and zazen. Refreshments will be provided after the ceremony. Everyone is invited.

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Fundraiser!

On Saturday, January 27, from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m., we will have a fundraising dance at Maude Kerns Art Center. Bring all your friends! Food & refreshments! \$10 suggested donation. Fliers for distribution available at the Zendo.

The world is white - a world of snow and ice.
The taste of tiny ice crystals on the tongue -
A hint of wood smoke in the air,
And only the sound of sandals breaking through the crusty snow -
The feel of cold wet snow on bare toes.
The mind slowing down and reaching for winter solitude.
Glen

Please return the dana card in your donation envelope.
We will recycle/re-use them. Gassho.

About the Eugene Zendo

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. 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, an introductory class is offered at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning before our regular Sunday service. Or you may contact our resident priest for more information.

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

Website: www.eugenezendo.org

Send newsletter items to Tina at: dandt@efn.org

To receive this newsletter, please send your name & address to the Zendo or sign up in the lobby.

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