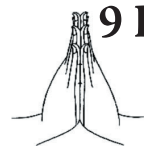


## 9 Bows of Gratitude



- ♦ Jill, Howard and one anonymous person for kitchen towels.
- ♦ John for tea.
- ♦ Zak for tiling the entranceway.
- ♦ Anonymous for a second dump run.



## Board Notes

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, January 6th at 5:00 PM.

- ♦ The Board met and had a long discussion about advertising and our presence in the community. We discussed taking out ads in Tricycle, Shambhala Sun and Buddhadharma magazines. Also, we discussed advertising in the Register-Guard and Eugene Weekly. The feeling was to concentrate on local, and less expensive, ways to make ourselves available to the community.
- ♦ The board has also been developing a system of rotating membership on a 3 year cycles. A few of the board members have been on nearly 5 years. We're trying to change this pattern.

## Begging Bowl

- ♦ Aluminum Saw Horses
- ♦ Crocuses
- ♦ Digging Fork
- ♦ Cooking Pot with steamer and double-boiler inserts.
- ♦ Inexpensive sandals/slippers for use at the side door of the zendo. "Sanzen shoes"



January 2009

Butsugenji - Buddha Eye Temple

Volume 9 Issue 1

### Announcements

- ♦ Fusatsu will occur on Saturday, January 10th at 7 PM.
- ♦ Calligraphy Classes on Wednesday afternoon at 4 PM are ongoing. If you're interested, please speak with So-en.
- ♦ Board Position - Kogen and Thelma have both volunteered to to assume positions on the board of directors. Issei and Anyu, after nearly 5 years, will be stepping down. The Board of Directors is developing a rotating system of membership on a 3 year cycle. This will give long-time members a break and a chance for other people to become involved. As the system is finalized, we'll have more information. Please consider if you would like to help in the future.
- ♦ "Human Faces of Islam" Slide Show has been postponed until a later date.
- ♦ Dharma Talk Audio Files Online: <http://www.eugenezendo.org/mp3/>
- ♦ Heart Sutra Classes will be starting in January and continue through the beginning of the Spring practice period. They'll be on Tuesday night as part of our regular program.
- ♦ Spring Ango will begin on February 8th. There is an insert with more information enclosed. The Practice Commitment and Ango Student sign-up sheets are available on our website or directly from the zendo.

## New Year's Celebration

Eugene Zendo - Butsugenji  
1 PM on Thursday, January 1st, 2009

We'll be having our annual New Year's Day Celebration again. There will be a short ceremony followed by food and socializing. The zendo will be providing a traditional soup called ozoni made with rice cake and vegetables, soba noodles in broth and a sweet bean paste and mochi soup called zenzai. Please bring a favorite beverage or dessert to share.

This is a really great time to bring friends and family who otherwise don't come to the zendo. This is very much a celebration and it's wonderful to have to have children and as many non-zen type people as we can get. It's an excellent chance to build Sangha in a wider way. Navel-gazing not required.

If you are planning on coming, please let Gensei know with a general idea of how many people you will bring. This will facilitate the planning greatly.

### Home-leaving Sunday

On Sunday January 18th, as part of our normal Sunday program, there will be a special blessing ceremony for Issei as she leaves Eugene. She'll be doing volunteer work in Africa for six months. Ejo will give a dharma talk beforehand.

Later in the day, Gensei will be receiving Home-leaver Ordination (Shukke Tokudo) at 3 PM. This ceremony will mark the end of his year of postulancy and his transition to being a novice monk in the Soto line of Zen Buddhism.

### About the Eugene Zendo - Butsugenji

The Eugene Zendo is a Soto Zen Buddhist temple open to everyone. We are located in a residential neighborhood in West Eugene, Oregon. Activities center around zazen (seated meditation) and include ceremony, chanting, dharma study, discussion and social events.

If you are new to Zen Buddhism, an introductory class is offered at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning before our regular Sunday meeting. For more information, please contact us at:

541-302-4576      butsugenji@eugenezendo.org      Website: <http://www.eugenezendo.org>

Submissions to the newsletter can be sent to [butsugenji@eugenezendo.org](mailto:butsugenji@eugenezendo.org)  
The deadline for submissions is the 15th of every month.

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Eugene Zendo  
2190 Garfield  
Eugene, OR 97405

Dana, the first of the Buddhist Paramitas, is the voluntary giving of material, energy or wisdom to others. There are no dues or fees for attendance at the Eugene Zendo's scheduled events. However, we do have expenses and rely on the support of visitors and Sangha Members to help us transmit the Dharma to all beings.

We appreciate your continued generosity.

## Leaving Home

Dongshan asked a monk, “What’s the most painful thing in this world?”

The monk said, “Hell is the most painful.”

Dongshan said, “Not so. Wearing this robe without clarifying the great matter is the most painful.”

On Sunday, January 18th, 2009, I will receive home-leaver ordination from Ejo. This “home-leaving” refers to the earliest Buddhist monastic communities in India, composed of individuals who had given up their place in India’s caste society and lived as alms mendicants in the forest. As tradition evolves across time and cultures, the particular form of this home-leaving has changed. In our present circumstances, cultural and otherwise, what does it mean to become a Buddhist monk? Not only to me but also to other people who are studying Buddha-dharma but aren’t interested in, willing or able to do it in that way. So, I wanted to say something about that and, at least, give you a sense of how I understand it. Whether anyone agrees with me is another issue.

One view that I’ve encountered goes something like this: a priest/monk is someone who has been practicing for a quite a while. Ordination is a way to “deepen my practice”. Ordination is an indication of maturity or attainment in practice and that ordination is a promotion to some kind of leadership role. Eventually, this person will probably, possibly, end up in some kind of teaching position. This approach seems to be surprisingly common. I strongly disagree with it.

Instead, I would like to suggest that monastic ordination is a way to enter the stream of the 2500-year monastic tradition initiated by Shakyamuni Buddha in India. This is a way of relying on the Buddha’s teachings through the unfolding of a particular lifestyle as defined by a particular teaching tradition. There is reference in the ordination ceremony at one point to “changing my form”. That is being molded by the tradition, and especially by the teacher you are ordaining with, into a living vehicle of that tradition. Calling it a “lifestyle” might seem a little trivial (Extreme Makeover: Monastic Edition) but I think it’s important that we recognize that there is no metaphysical transformation occurring. I am a monk in the same way that someone else is a doctor or another person a parent.

I want to emphasize that what I’m doing is making a choice about how I’m going to live my life. It’s not a question of advancement, depth or shallowness. In Shobogenzo Bendowa, Dogen Zenji says that we shouldn’t discuss depth or shallowness of the teachings but only whether practice is authentic. Itabashi Zenji, the abbot of the monastery Ejo trained at, once said, “Sincerely offering one stick of incense is the whole of the Buddha-dharma.” What’s authentic? What’s sincere? This question is the basis of everything we’re doing when we sit up straight in the zendo. Just being there doesn’t get it done. Just wearing robes doesn’t get it done. Plainly, there plenty of people in robes wasting their lives. Passing time as a monk isn’t sufficient in and of itself. But, what sort of life can we imagine where that’s not something we have to face?

Can we accept that a monastic life is another equally valid way for a person to clarify a human life? Robes, bowing, ceremony, formalities, etc. can all seem very foreign and extraneous. What’s that got to do with real life, after all? Not to mention some of the traditional elements of monasticism that are a little more out there such as celibacy, poverty and restrictions on how we relate to food and sleep. These kinds of things can challenge our beliefs and assumptions about what is normal or natural for a human being. In an earlier version of this essay, I really delved into that, making a defense for those sorts of things. I’ve since decided that I don’t need to do that. Those sorts of practices are well established and clearly taught by the Buddha.

The real value in people taking up the practice of the Buddha-dharma in this sort of way is that it let’s other people *not* take it up that way. That may seem counter-intuitive, especially in a time and place that tends to associate equality and being treated in a fair way with everyone being the same, but I really believe it’s true. If we can avoid making the mistake of taking any one thing as the “true” thing, whether it be a monastic lifestyle or a contemporary American one, then we can allow all things to take their place. The single mother doesn’t have to practice like a monk in order to engage the Dharma. It makes no sense to expect that. A slight tangent but... I think the thing that is most unsettling about the ongoing development of American Buddhism is that in our temples and practice halls there *aren’t* people who *don’t* sit zazen.

In the end, I don’t know what my leaving home means to anybody else. Really, you’ll have to decide that for yourselves. For me, this is the continuation of what I said at my postulancy ceremony. I want to live an authentic life and know what’s truly valuable. Being a monk is my vehicle for clarifying that. I only hope that I’m up to the task.

*I take refuge in Buddha. I take refuge in Dharma. I take refuge in Sangha.*

Gassho,  
Gensei

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Morning Schedule 5:10 am - Zazen 5:50 am - Kimhin 6:00 am - Zazen 6:40 am - Service 7:10 am - Cleaning 7:30 am - Breakfast		<b>1</b> New Year’s Day Celebration 1 PM	<b>2</b> Morning Schedule	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 8:00 am Intro to Zazen 9:00 am Service /Zazen Dharma Talk	<b>5</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>6</b> Morning Schedule <b>Board Meeting 5 PM</b> 7:00 pm Service/Zazen Heart Sutra Class	<b>7</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>8</b> Morning Schedule	<b>9</b> Morning Schedule	<b>10</b> Fusatsu 7 PM
<b>11</b> 8:00 am Intro to Zazen 9:00 am Service /Zazen Dharma Talk	<b>12</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>13</b> Morning Schedule 7:00 pm Service/Zazen Heart Sutra Class	<b>14</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>15</b> Morning Schedule	<b>16</b> Morning Schedule	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 8:00 am Intro to Zazen 9:00 am Service /Zazen <b>Issei’s Blessing and Talk</b> <b>Gensei’s Home-leaving Ceremony @ 3 PM</b>	<b>19</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>20</b> Morning Schedule 7:00 pm Service/Zazen Heart Sutra Class	<b>21</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>22</b> Morning Schedule	<b>23</b> Morning Schedule	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 8:00 am Intro to Zazen 9:00 am Service /Zazen Dharma Talk	<b>26</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>27</b> Morning Schedule 7:00 pm Service/Zazen Heart Sutra Class	<b>28</b> Morning Schedule 7:30 - 8:15 PM Evening Zazen	<b>29</b> Morning Schedule	<b>30</b> Morning Schedule	<b>31</b>