



Eugene Zendo

September 2004

Butsugenji

Buddhe Eye Temple

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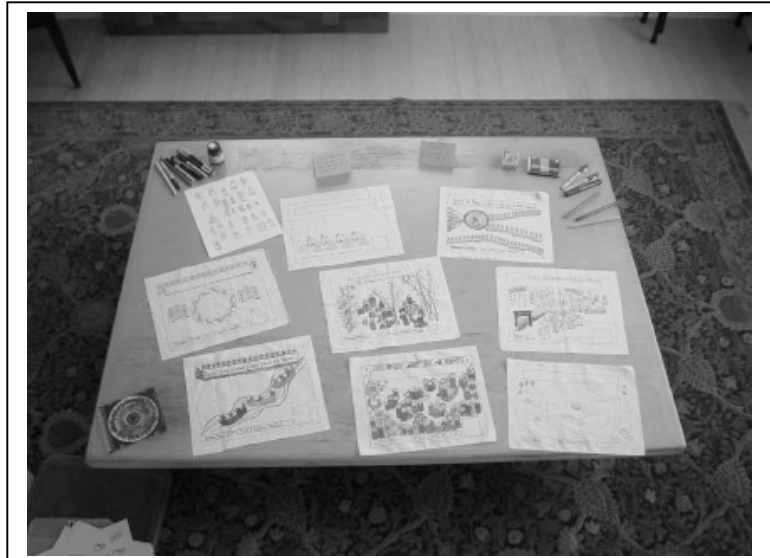
Ango Opening

The fall Ango period is before us again. Ango is a time for committing ourselves to particular practices and engaging study for the 100 day period between Sept 14 and Rohatsu, the commemoration of Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. There are many ways to participate in this time where the sangha supports this increased focused energy. Some people may wish to vow to sit a certain amount of time each week, study a particular text, work with a project, or take on additional responsibilities in the zendo or attend regular gatherings. A sign up sheet for interest in zendo positions will be posted on the bulletin board. There will be two series of classes this fall studying one of Dogen Zenji's most famous writings: *Genjo Koan*. Informal "Open classes" will be discussion oriented and can be attended on a drop-in basis. In depth "Study Group" evenings will be more formal requiring your commitment for attendance and reading and will focus more on the origins of the text. This is open to all, whether you are new to practice or have been sitting for some time. Ejo is available for consultation if you wish to discuss your practice commitments.

Jizos For Peace Project

Many folks in the Eugene Zendo have already begun making Jizo images for the pilgrimage to Hiroshima and Nagasaki that will take place next summer in which Ejo will attend. The peace project was started by Jan Chozen Bays Roshi of Great Vow Monastery with the intention of bringing 270,000 Jizo images there on the 60th anniversary of the bombings of those cities. 270,000 people died as a result of the event. The project's mission is to support people in cultivating and expressing peace in their lives." According to Great Vow, it is their hope "that by participating in the project, people will uncover the qualities of Jizo within themselves, and then manifest those qualities in the world around them." Some of the qualities of Jizo Bodhisattva are compassion, optimism, and courage.

During the summer, we have been gathering informally before evening zendo events to work on the panels. The drawings are done in the spirit of meditation - a mantra is recited during the drawing of the images, which are very simple to draw, trace or stamp, and peace to a particular being is dedicated after each Jizo is drawn. Please join in if you'd like to participate in the project. It's accessible to all - no artistic talent is required and children are also welcome to do a panel. There is an informational DVD for loan if you'd like to learn more, and supplies in the office for making panels or visit the web site www.jizosforpeace.org. The project also needs people to help bring it into the community at large. Anyu is organizing a booth at the Eugene Celebration and there is a sign up sheet in the zendo for those who can help staff the booth.



Loving Kindness Yogathon in October

On Saturday October 2nd, from 7 AM to 7 PM at St. Mary's Catholic Church, meditators from a variety of disciplines will participate in a "Yogathon" to benefit local service organizations: Birth to Three and Healing Harvest. The director of the project, Michele Bulgatz, who is a local yoga instructor, came to talk to the Eugene Zendo to ask for their support and reflected on the positive impact a large group of people meditating at once can have on a community. If you can participate for any length of time, there are pledge forms available in the zendo or visit the following web site for more information: www.heliosnetwork.org

In the practice-enlightenment of the buddha way, meeting one thing is mastering it - doing one practice is practicing completely.

- Eihei Dogen, Genjo Koan, written in mid-autumn 1233

I wrote this while sitting in front of the dome in Hiroshima. It is possibly the most famous symbol of the atomic bomb attacks on Japan. Through the shouts of the tour conductor:
"The bus is here! It's parked over there! Come on, come on..." This broken dome... "Hello... do you speak Japanese?"
"Let me pray for you." "I'm from Okinawa." "Oh, are you writing in English?"
There is barely a minute without direct human contact. Dependent Origination, Cause and Conditions...
War... This place is born of conditions. This is life; this is tragedy. Everyone wants peace. Peace is conditions. A tragedy shouldn't be forgotten.

What can be said?

When I look up at this shattered dome I see blue sky. I see the blue sky of Nan King, and the blue sky of Ho Chi Min, the blue sky of Eugene is just like this. Looking through the twisted metal and brick there are the faces of all our human tragedy. The cicadas sing it ceaselessly until the cool winds of autumn.

It was a great honor to be able to go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki this summer with Chozen and her student Genmyo to help prepare for the pilgrimage there next summer. I didn't know what to expect other than it would be very hot. We did a lot of sweating.

The Jizo's for Peace project that we have begun to help with is a strong call for clarity of mind. I don't see this as peace work in the sense of trying to sway "politics" or "the world out there" with the force of human conviction. Although we were seen in many different ways depending on who was seeing us during our trip this summer, the message of making these Jizo-samas and offering them in these places is clear and simple. It is a message of unburdened life, compassion and finding the true mind of peace. It moves inward at the same time it moves outward, and it has the power to call to practice. This kind of project is more like an exploration than like trying to get to some predetermined destination, and I hope everyone in our sangha will take some time to explore this practice together. - *Ejo*

Sangha Reflections

The Hundred Foot Pole

As a student of Zen Buddhism, it is my ideal to rise from bed each morning and sit zazen. On the morning of June 12, 2004, I awoke but did not rise. I remained in bed in a state of reverie. I contemplated a question I had heard a month earlier: "How do you step off the top of a 100ft pole?" I imagined myself on this pole in the zazen posture. It was frightening and my mind raced to discover a means of escape. My racing thoughts only increased my vertigo. I realized the wisest action was no action. I sat still as if my life depended on it. Bang! I awoke. Since this "awakening" my experience of myself as an entity has been notably diminished. This diminution did not occur in a progressive manner. It was sudden and explosive. What sometimes feels progressive is my return to normalcy. I sometimes fear I am slipping imperceptibly back into my "pre-awakened" state. As we shall see, this fear is delusional. Unbeknownst to me, the "question" I was contemplating at the time of my "awakening" was a koan. It originates from a saying of the ninth century Chan master, Chang Sha: "Step from the top of a 100ft pole and your body becomes the ten directions". This saying was condensed into a question, which became part of the formal collection of "public cases" known as the Mumokan or Gateless Barrier. This collection, and its effects have been analyzed for over a thousand years. All attempts to intellectualize them have failed. In a spirit of humble gratitude, I offer yet another failure:

Life atop a 100ft. pole is radically simple. The tip of the pole is our single circumstance. We can imagine getting off the pole. But if we move half an inch in any direction we will plummet to our death. Inasmuch as any existence independent of the pole requires our death, it would be a nonexistent existence, (i.e. delusional). Realizing this, "our bodies become the ten directions". Visualize the ten directions as lines. The convergence of lines creates a point. This point is our body or self. It is not the location of the self. It IS the self. Any existence of the point independent of the lines is nonsensical. Outside of our circumstances, we do not exist.

The power of the koan is its ability to force this realization through its simulation of a physical environment capable of provoking instantaneous, experiential certainty. In our day-to-day lives our circumstances are so numerous and ever-changing that it is nearly impossible for us to realize our true nature. We continually hope or fear that life might be better or worse under different circumstances. Attachment to these hopes and fears, not the circumstances themselves, is the cause of our suffering. Relief from this suffering can only come through the realization that these hopes and fears are rooted solely in the delusional belief that we exist independent of the circumstances that create us. Failing to recognize the identity of self and circumstance, we unconsciously seek to destroy the source of our being.

Obviously, this is a conundrum. And my only qualification to comment on it derives from an unwillingness to get out of bed. So I'll give you the most sagacious advice I can think of: Ask Ejo!

- *Jim Marr*

Fall Ango Schedule 2004

Tuesday Evenings

Sept 14 Ango Opening Ceremony
Sept 21 Dharma Talk
Sept 28 Double Sit/ Sanzen
Oct 5 Dharma Talk
Oct 12 Kyogen Sensei Dharma Talk
Oct 19 Single Sit/ Sanzen/ Discussion
Oct 26 Double Sit/ Sanzen
Nov 2 Dharma Talk
Nov 9 Single Sit/ Sanzen/ Discussion
Nov 16 Dharma Talk
Nov 23 Double Sit/ Sanzen
Nov 30 Dharma Talk
Dec 7 Double Sit
Dec 14 Dharma Talk
Dec 21st Mondo/ Ango Closing

Thursday Evenings

Sept 16 Open Class
Sept 23 In Depth Study Group
Sept 30 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu
Oct 7 Open Class
Oct 14 In Depth Study Group
Oct 21 Open Class
Oct 28 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu
Nov 4 In Depth Study Group
Nov 11 Open Class
Nov 18 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu
Nov 25 Off for Thanksgiving
Dec 2 In Depth Study Group
Dec 9 Rohatsu
Dec 16 Sangha Circle/ Fusatsu

Special Events & Retreats

Sept 25 Sat
Chanting Workshop
Oct 16 Sat
One day Retreat
finishing in *Segaki*
Nov 5 - 7 Fri - Sun
Weekend Sesshin
December 5 - 12
Rohatsu Retreat at
Great Vow Monastery
w/ DRZC & ZCO

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