



December 2007 **Butsu Genji Buddha Eye Temple**

Volume 7 Issue 12

### Some lessons in sorrow

I was adopted. I've spoken to my birth mother over the telephone. I've met my birth sister and she and I have a close relationship, which is wonderful. Yet my mother does not want to meet me nor have any relationship with me. My sister tells me it is simply too painful for her and that she cannot even bring me up without our mother changing the subject. Why am I telling you this? It has to do with sorrow. Most of the time, I feel no sorrow over these facts of my life. Yet, sometimes something can happen to open us up to our deepest sorrows, and I think it is a gift when that happens. Such a thing happened the other night when I had a dream about my birth mother from which I awakened. The dream was that I had my arms draped casually around my mom's shoulders as I stood behind her, and my head rested against her head. Her hands, which she had placed on my arms, looked like my hands down to the same fingernails. I loved the smell of her. There was ease and closeness between us, and I felt at home. I thought, "it's so much more than "this person has my hands," it's more like "this person is my home, where I belong." At first, I felt nothing, but then there came an immense, crushing sadness which made it hard to breathe. After fully being with this immense sorrow and feeling it die down, I prayed it would not slip away entirely as it typically does. I recognized this sorrow as profound and meaningful. I prayed for this piercing sadness to be with me and to teach me as often as it could. There are so many lessons that can be learned from sorrow. I do not pretend to know all of them, but I've come to understand some. It is in this very ache and yearning for connection that we are united with each other. Sorrow causes our hearts to soften and see fewer divisions between self and other. The softness created by immense sorrow increases our willingness to see things as they are and allow in more pain, and more compassion. Sorrow also drives us into many false refuges. This is not a bad thing, for as the false refuge is seen as false, it opens a way for a truer refuge. For many years, I looked to ease my pain through romantic love. I thought that having someone else to love and to return love would surely solve this problem of sorrow. But that refuge crumbled again and again, and sorrow remained. It makes me very sad to realize that there truly is no person on this earth who can be my "home." But, eventually, all false refuges start to collapse and there is no place to hide. The true refuge seems to be in everything, everywhere, nothing left out. We are taught this, but words are one thing, experience is another. This is daunting, overwhelming. And, sometimes it is just too hard to face. I still seek comfort from the safety of my bed, under the covers peering out at the television. I continue to seek some relief from the pain, but more and more I simply recognize that I need a break, rather than thinking I've found any true refuge. More and more I sit with my sorrow and am thankful for all it has to teach. May we all find the true refuge.

—Seiku

**Dana**, the first of the Buddhist Paramitas (perfections), 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 training events. However, we do have expenses and rely on the support of visitors and Sangha members to help us transmit Dharma to all beings.

*We appreciate your continued generosity.*

## The Upright Cauldron

*Dharma Talk from November 2006 Sesshin*

No matter how you see yourself: ugly, stupid, selfish, petty, incompetent, unreliable, weak, unconcentrated, scatter-brained, arrogant, this upright cauldron of Zazen is practicing Buddha. Don't worry about who you think you are. This practice of Zazen is Buddha practice for all beings. "Intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and the sharp-witted." "Zazen is suitable for all people, whether their capabilities be superior, mediocre, or inferior." We naturally think that to be intelligent, disciplined or confident puts us in a better position to study the Buddha Way. This is simply the prejudiced view of a human being. In fact, what we think of as advantages can often turn out to be our biggest obstacles. Likewise, we naturally think that a "hundred ugliness or a thousand stupidities" can stand between us and Buddha Wisdom. You have come to practice here at Butsugenji for a couple days. Maybe you feel confident in your Zazen, or perhaps you are just trying this out, looking to see what this is all about. Maybe you feel that you are studying the Buddha Way or maybe you feel like that is impractical, at least for someone like yourself. Maybe you want to get your head screwed on right and you are hoping this meditation can help and then maybe you can get on with the work of understanding enlightenment. These are all ideas about practice, about Zazen. We all carry them to some extent but they are really just ideas. Regardless of what you think about practice, you are here now, doing it! It's miraculous how this occurs. A confused human mind of a thousand stupidities picks up an idea to try and understand. A mind gives rise to the thought of enlightenment, with no idea what that really is. We cover up this most simple intention with layers and layers of ideas and interpretations, insights and stories, yet circumstances bloom so that we can explore through practice what it is we dream of, and learn to open our eyes. Our ideas, interpretations and stories can't stand in the way when we continue to take up this Buddha Seal with our whole body and mind. In Buddha Dharma the road truly rises to meet your feet. This upright cauldron accepts all life and cooks up Buddhas. Even though we make some special effort to meet for a couple days to train like this together, don't think that this way relies on arranging things in order to practice. The wise masters from ancient times to the present have spread their compassion unsparingly. The whole universe breathes through a pot, a bucket, a chunk of dirt. When are we not surrounded by these things? When we pick up one thing, we penetrate one thing and all the Buddhas of the heavens, earth and beyond unfold the great Samadhi. How could we think that our grasping and rejecting could affect this at all! This straightforward teaching is truly perfectly apparent. So I invite you, urge you, to take up the Buddha Seal now, in this moment, despite any ideas. You won't long remember what I have said today but you can orient to practice. Sit like an empty cauldron, an iron pot that can't be moved. And as you meet

one thing see it with the whole eye. Don't cut it into good and bad, this and that. Throw it in whole, with peel and core and dirt and all.

—Ejo

### Evening sit Saturday December 8

On the evening of December 8, the date on which we commemorate the Buddha's enlightenment, I will sit at the Zendo. You are welcome for all or part of the evening. The schedule will be as follows. Please enter and leave during the natural breaks.

7:30 - 8:10 Zazen

8:10 - 8:20 Kinhin

8:20 - 9:00 Zazen

9:00 - 9:10 Kinhin

9:10 - 9:30 Break

9:30 - 10:10 Zazen

10:10 - 10:20 Kinhin

10:20 - 11:00 Zazen

11:00 - 11:10 Kinhin

11:10 - 11:45 Zazen

11:45 - 12:00 Service

—Soen

### Membership meeting recap

About 30 people gathered in the yurt for the Eugene Zendo membership meeting on Sunday, November 4. Following a delicious lunch, we had an enjoyable and productive meeting. Here is a brief recap of the afternoon's events.

Issei provided an update on our financial health. As of the time of the meeting, we had \$1,969 in the building fund, \$500 in savings, and \$2,700 in the general fund.

Next we discussed how best to care for the Zendo building and grounds. We agreed on monthly work parties, which will take place generally the second Sunday of each month from 12-3. Check your newsletter calendar each month for any changes (e.g. December's work party will be the 3d Sunday due to Rohatsu). Everyone is welcome to attend all or part of the work parties.

We then broke into groups to discuss fundraising ideas. Everyone came up with great ideas, which were turned over to a newly formed fundraising committee. The committee will take the ideas and organize them and determine the feasibility of each one. If you are not on the committee, don't despair, because there are plenty of opportunities for everyone to be involved!

# December 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>December 30</b>	<b>December 31</b>	<b>What is ...</b>	<b>* Daily (Mon-Fri mornings)</b>			<b>1</b>
8:00 am–Beginning instruction 9:00 am–Sunday program 11:00 am–Tea	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<b>Zazen:</b> Seated meditation <b>Kinhin:</b> Walking Zazen <b>Soji:</b> Temple cleaning <b>Fusatsu:</b> Atonement ceremony <b>Sunday program:</b> Service, Zazen, Dharma talk	5:10 Dawn Zazen 5:50 Kinhin 6:00 Zazen 6:40 Morning Service 7:10 Soji 7:30 Breakfast/ Cleanup	* You may join the daily morning program for all or part. Please arrive a few minutes early and join naturally at transition times. During Soji, please choose a cleaning task from the list in the front room and continue with it until the breakfast bell rings. If you have questions, please ask the person making breakfast.  * * You may attend any or all events on Fusatsu evenings.		
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
8:00 am–Beginning instruction 9:00 am–Sunday program 11:00 am–Tea <b>House blessing at Yo_’s</b>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>  7:00 pm– Service/Zazen <b>-Double sit-</b> 9:20 pm- Closing	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>  <b>No Ango student meeting</b>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<b>Buddha’s Enlightenment Evening sit 7:30 pm – midnight</b> <i>See info page 2</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
8:00 am–Beginning instruction 9:00 am–Sunday program+Dharma school 11:00 am–Tea	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i> <b>Board meeting 5:30 pm</b> 7:00 pm– Service/Zazen 8:00 pm– Class and discussion topic TBA 9:20 pm- Closing	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>  <b>Ango Students</b> 7:00 pm – Zazen 7:30 pm – Ango student activities	<i>Morning schedule</i>	
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
8:00 am–Beginning instruction 9:00 am–Sunday program+ <b>Ango Closing</b> 11:00 am–Tea <b>Work party 12-3</b>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i> 7:00 pm– Service/Zazen 8:00 pm– Class and discussion topic TBA 9:20 pm- Closing	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>  <b>* * Fusatsu</b> 7:00 pm Zazen 7:30 Atonement 8:00 Fusatsu	<i>Morning schedule</i>	
<b>23 Full moon</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
8:00 am–Beginning instruction 9:00 am–Sunday program+Dharma school 11:00 am–Tea	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<b>Christmas Holiday</b>  <b>Zendo closed</b>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	<i>Morning schedule</i>	



### **9 Bows of Gratitude**

- ◆ **Emyo and Carmelita** for providing altar flowers.
- ◆ **Everyone who was at the November work party:** Alpha, Wayne, Luke, Leah, Carl, Angela, Zak, Issei, Anyu, Seiku, and Howard.

### **Announcements**

- ◆ **The next work party is Sunday December 16 from 12-3.** A light lunch will be available beforehand.
- ◆ **Sunday, December 2nd** Yo\_ will have a house blessing-warming at noon. She will provide details as the time draws near.

### **Board notes**

- ◆ Reconciliation Council will present their proposal at the next Board meeting.
- ◆ The Board approved changing the phone and internet service from Qwest to Comcast. We also agreed to a budget and spending review at the January meeting.
- ◆ Board briefly discussed the membership meeting, specifically the formation of the new fundraising committee. Committee members are: Thelma, Tenkan, Myobun, Issei, Anyu, Wayne, and Carmelita.
- ◆ There was some discussion on how we can improve Zendo communication; Carmelita will discuss with Gensei and Anyu (Gensei will handle returning phone calls, and Anyu will continue to maintain the Zendo mailing list).

The next Board meeting is Tuesday December 11 at 5:30 at the Zendo.

### **Fundraising committee update**

The newly formed fundraising committee (Thelma, Tenkan, Myobun, Issei, Anyu, Wayne, and Carmelita) met on November 19. We took all the ideas from the membership meeting, and narrowed them down to a shorter list of possibilities. We have two projects that are happening right now: Aido will head up an ongoing coffee fundraiser, and Soen, Anyu, and Seiku are working on a quilt to auction. Contact anyone on the fundraising committee if you are interested in either of these projects.

### **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 and 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. For more information, please contact our resident priest:

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

You may also visit us on the Web at [www.eugenezendo.org](http://www.eugenezendo.org)

The newsletter is mailed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Deadline for publication is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please submit newsletter items to Anyu at [debraanyu@gmail.com](mailto:debraanyu@gmail.com)

To receive this newsletter in the mail, please sign up at the Zendo, or send a note to Anyu at [debraanyu@gmail.com](mailto:debraanyu@gmail.com)

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