

Sanshin Zen Community Annual Activity Report January-December, 2012

(1) Practice Events at Sanshinji

*** Sesshin and Retreat**

1. Sesshin:

Sesshin is the activity where we focus on zazen only. We sit 14 50-minute periods/day without any other activities except 10 minutes of kinhin between each period and 3 meals followed by a short break. We keep complete silence during the sesshin. We have 5 sesshin a year. In 2012, we had

January 3-day sesshin: January 5-8 (9 participants)

March 5-day sesshin: March 1-5 (11 participants)

June 5-day sesshin: May 30-June 4 (9 participants)

September 5-day sesshin: September 5-10 (11 participants)

Rohatsu sesshin: November 30th to December 8th (10 participants)

On weekend some people in town come to sit with us.

We usually have around 10 people during sesshins. This sesshin format was originally started by Kosho Uchiyama Roshi at Antaiji and is the core practice of Sanshin Zen Community. The explanation about this sesshin practice is described by Uchiyama Roshi in his book *Opening the Hand of Thought*.

2. Genzo-e Retreat:

We have 2 Genzo-e retreats a year at Sanshinji, in May and November. Genzo-e is the most well-attended practice event at Sanshinji. I give two 90-minute lectures a day on a certain chapter of Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo*. We sit 7 periods of zazen. Usually we have 15 to 20 participants. Twenty is the largest number we can accommodate comfortably because of the limitation of kitchen and zendo space.

May Genzo-e: (May 2nd-7th; 20 participants) we studied *Shobogenzo Raihaitokuzui* (Getting The Marrow by Doing Obeisance).

November Genzo-e: (November 7th-12th; 18 participants) we studied *Shobogenzo Inmo* (*Thusness*). We had people from Colombia, Scotland, Iceland, Japan. In the local participants there were people from China and India. It was really an international gathering.

My lectures from the past Genzo-e are available for purchase from Sanshin Administration. They include:

Daigo (Great Realization),

Ikka no Myoju (One Bright Jewel),

Zenki & Shoji (Total Function & Life-and-death),

Bendowa (*Wholehearted Practice of the Way*) (1), (2), (3),

3. Precepts Retreat (Zenkaï-e):

We have a 5-day Precepts Retreat once a year in July at the end of the 3-month practice period. I give lectures on the Precepts and we have the Precepts ceremony (jukai-e) on the last day of the retreat. Each year we have several people who sew rakusu and receive the Precepts. In 2012, Precepts retreat was from July 4th to 9th. 4 people received the Precepts. We had 15 participants.

4. One-day Retreat & Sangha Work Day:

This year we changed the format of the 5-day community retreat to a one-day retreat and sangha work day. Two 1 day retreats were held on Saturday, April 7th and October 6th. This type of retreat is focused on offering guidance to beginners. We had zazen instruction, a few periods of zazen, walking meditation, two dharma talks, and Yoga practice. These two retreats were well attended with 15 people each.

On Sundays after one-day retreats, we had sangha work-days. About 10 people sat 1 period from 8 am, and worked together at various tasks taking care of the temple and grounds from 9 am to 5 pm. The day ended with another 1 period of zazen.

***Daily and weekly practice at Sanshinji:**

Sunday

9:10-10:00 am Zazen / zazen instruction (in the office)
10:00-11:00 Dharma talk
11:00-12:00 Tea

We usually have 15-20 people. When I am out of town, experienced practitioners take turn to give a dharma talk.

Monday through Friday Mornings

5:10-6:00 am zazen
6:00-6:10 kinhin
6:10-7:00 Zazen
7:00-7:20 Morning Service
7:20-7:40 Soji (temple cleaning)

We usually have about 5 people.

Tuesday Evenings

6:00-6:40 pm Zazen

Wednesday Evening

6:00-6:40 pm Zazen
7:00-8:30 Dharma Study Group

In 2012, we studied zazen manuals (zazengi). We studied the oldest zazen manual made in China and Dogen's first version of *Fukanzazengi*. In this way, we can compare Chinese zazengi and

Dogen's zazen and develop our understanding of the characteristics of Dogen's zazen, which is what we are practicing today at Sanshinji. We usually have 7-10 people attending.

Thursday Evening

7:00-7:40pm Zazen

7:40-7:50 Kinhin

7:50-8:30 Question and Answer.

When I am in town, people ask me questions. When I am out of town, people have discussion periods. An average of about 5 people attend.

Saturday: Day off

Also, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year Eve, and January 1-3 are days off each year.

*** 3-month summer practice period**

We have 3-month summer practice period each year from the beginning of April until the beginning of July. During this period, we usually have the *shuso* as the exemplar and leader of the practice. In 2011 and 2012, we did not have the *shuso*. When we have a *shuso*, the person gives dharma talk on Sunday mornings during the practice period. In 2012, Jokei, Shodo, Michael, Phil, Keith, Ritoku, Tony, and Alicyn gave a dharma talk.

During the practice period, we have Genzo-e in May, Sesshin in June and Precepts Retreat (Zenkai-e) in July. These practice events are designed to focus on Precepts, Meditation and Wisdom which are three basic studies in Buddhist traditions.

Month Off:

February and August are months off. We have morning zazen from Monday to Friday. On Sundays, we sit two periods from 9 to 11 am. There is no Sunday Dharma talk or Wednesday Dharma Study Group. In February, we have Nirvana Day sesshin. This sesshin is one which does not provide meals. People can come to sit anytime and leave anytime. We make sure at least one person is sitting in the Zendo.

Annual Events:

We celebrate the Buddha's Birthday, Enlightenment Day, and Parinirvana Day on the nearest Sunday of April 8th, December 8th and February 15th. On these occasions, we have a potluck lunch after zazen, dharma talk and the ceremony. We usually have 15-20 people including some children.

(2) Shohaku's teaching activities outside Bloomington in 2012

February 4-11: I visited Austin Zen Center in Austin, TX to lead 7-day Genzo-e. We studied *Shobogenzo Hachidainingaku* (Eight Aspects of Great Being's Awakening). About 20 people participated. About 50 people came for the Dharma talk on Sunday morning.

February 18-20: I visited Ryumonji, Iowa to attend their shuso ceremony as jokeshi. My disciple Eido was the shuso.

March 23-30: I visited Rome, Italy on the occasion of the publication of an Italian translation of *Realizing Genjokoan*. I gave a public talk at the University of Rome and at the Italian Buddhist Union. I stayed at Anshin Zen Center lead by my disciples Gyoetsu Epifania and Doryu Cappeli. I gave one dharma talk and participated in their scheduled zazen sessions.

June 23-25: I visited Ryumonji Monastery in Iowa again to attend their *shuso* ceremony as the *jokeshi* (the witness of the ceremony). I gave a talk on the koan, "Medicine and Disease Subdue Each Other," on which the *shuso* led discussion during the ceremony.

July 13-16: I visited Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, NM to attend their Dogen Zenji symposium as one of the six speakers including Taigen Leighton and Kaz Tanahashi.

July 25-August 5: I visited California.

I had a 5-day Genzo-e at GGF from July 29th to August 3rd. We studied *Shobogenzo Yuibutsuyobutsu* (Only a Buddha together with a Buddha).

On August 4th, I had a one-day workshop on Ryokan's waka poems at Berkeley Zen Center.

August 8-22: I was invited by Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office to visit three Zen Centers in France, Holland and Italy to attend their *shuso* ceremony as the *jokeshi* (witness).

September 15-18: I visited Milwaukee Zen Center where my disciple Hoko Karnegis is the interim resident priest.

October 11-15: Stillpoint Retreat in Pittsburgh, PA. I talked on the 6th and 7th section of Dogen Zenji's *Gakudo Yojinshu* (Points to Watch in Studying the Way). About 20 people participated.

My teaching schedule at other centers is managed by the program committee.

(3) Temple officers

Michael Shoaf continues to be the work leader. I take Ino's job except during sesshin/retreats.

We don't have a full time tenzo so we have tenzo team. Some local people and some participants prepare meals. We stopped having oryoki meal in the zendo. During sesshin/retreat we eat in the Dorm buffet style. When we have many people such as in Genzo-e we divide the people into two groups and eat at the Dorm and at the Zendo. I ask Seigen, Jokei, or other priests who attend the sesshin/retreat to do Ino's job. Since we don't have priests who can serve as temple officers throughout the year, this is how we have to handle the sesshin/retreats.

(4) Sanshin Priests

1. Daiki Steve Kelly:

Daiki received shukke-tokudo on 4/13/1997. Currently I don't have contact with him.

2. Chiko Corona:

Chiko originally received shukke-tokudo on 9/23/1990 by the late Rev. Kenko Yamashita. Because her original teacher passed away, she became my disciple on 8/31/2004. She received dharma transmission from me on 9/15/2004. She participated in a 1-month training at Zuioji monastery, Japan and qualified as Dendo-kyoshi. She did *zuisse* in the same year. In 2009, she was qualified as nito-kyoshi (2nd rank teacher) from Sotoshu. Chiko lived in Bloomington for 2 years. Because of her health she returned to California.

3. Shotai de la Rosa:

Shotai started to practice in her country, Colombia, then practiced at Zen centers in Spain, Italy, and also at Tassajara and SFZC City Center for all together more than 20 years. She received shukke-tokudo in Italy. She was *shuso* at Tassajara and tenzo at the City center. She received shukke-tokudo again from me on 7/5/2004. She practiced as *shuso* again at Sanshinji and did a *shuso* ceremony in 2005, and received dharma transmission on 12/31/2005. Since March 2006, she practiced at Aichi Senmon Nisodo (the women's monastery in Nagoya, Japan) for one year. She did *zuisse* in January 2007. She received the title of *nito-kyoshi* from Sotoshu. She moved to Florida in July 2009 and found her own temple Daishinji in Hialeah. She closed the temple in November 2012, and returned to Bloomington. She made Spanish translation of *Heart of Zen* published Sotoshu shumicho with Densho Quintero and published from their centers. The book is offered for free distribution but donations to Sanshin are appreciated. She has been working on Spanish translation of *Eihei Koroku* (Dogen's Extensive Record) from English.

4. Shodo Spring:

Shodo practiced at MZMC with Katagiri Roshi and me for many years. She also practiced at Green Gulch and Tassajara with Rev. Tenshin Reb Anderson. She received shukke-tokudo from me on 4/30/2005. She lived in Bloomington until July 2010. After that, she served as the resident priest at Anchorage Zen Center, Anchorage, Alaska for several months. In February 2011, she moved back to Northfield, Minnesota and purchased a property where she plans to practice. She practiced at Tassajara Zen Mountain Monastery from September 2011 to March 2012. She received Dharma transmission from me in September 2012. She visited Eiheiiji and Sojiji in Japan to do the *zuisse* ceremony in November with Hoko. She has been editing my lectures on *Shobogenzo Sansuikyo* (Mountains Water Sutra).

5. Koshin Cherin-Yamashita:

Koshin had been practicing for about 15 years at several Zen Centers and received shukke-tokudo from me on 4/30/2005. From March to December 2006, she practiced at Hosshinji monastery, Japan with Harada Sekkei Roshi. She married in 2008 and currently lives in Kyoto, Japan. She plans to stay at Sanshinji for 3 months during summer practice period in 2013 and do *shuso* practice.

6. Hoko Jan Karnegis:

She practiced at MZMC and Hokyoji, and a few places in Japan, for many years. She received shukke-tokudo from me on 4/30/2005. She did *shuso* ceremony at Kogetsu-an in Shiga, Japan in 2005. She completed the master course program in Buddhist Study. Hoko went to Japan in October 2010 to practice at Toshoji monastery in Okayama until May 2011. She also practiced at Shogoji in Kumamoto during their International Ango. She received Dharma transmission from

me in August, 2012 and did Zui-se in November with Shodo. Currently she serves as the resident priest at Milwaukee Zen Center.

7. Densho Quintero:

Densho started to practice in Colombia more than 20 years ago. He practiced in France and Spain. He received shukke-tokudo from the former abbot of Antaiji, Rev. Shinyu Miyaura in 2001. Because of Rev. Miyaura's death, he became my disciple on 9/2/2005. Densho had *shuso* ceremony at Busshinji temple in Sao Paulo, Brazil in December 2007. He participated the 3-month Sotoshu Ango in France from September to December 2008. He received dharma transmission from me in March 2009. He visited Eiheiji and Sojiji to do zui-se in October 2009. He participated in the 3-month Sotoshu Ango again at Yokoji, CA in 2010.

He practiced at Myokoji monastery in 2011 to 2012. He is qualified as *nito-kyoshi* from Sotoshu Shumuchō. Densho has been working to establish a Soto Zen temple in Bogota, Colombia for many years. He translated Uchiyama Roshi's *Opening the Hand of Thought* into Spanish. The book was published by a publisher in Spain. Currently he is working on a Spanish translation of *Realizing Genjokoan*.

8. Shoji Mahler:

She practiced with Rev. Daien Bennage and received shukke-tokudo from her in 1999. She became my disciple on 12/14/2005. She practiced at Aichi Senmon Nisodo (women's monastery in Nagoya, Japan) from October 2001 to March 2002. She lives in France and visited Bloomington twice a year, once for the 3-month practice period and again from the November Genzo-e to the Rohatsu sesshin every year for 5 years. In 2008, she practiced as the *shuso*, and received Dharma transmission from me in the fall 2009. She founded her own temple, Zendo L'Eau Vive in Alés, France. She did zui-se in September 2011. She is qualified as *nito-kyoshi* from sotoshu shumuchō. She translated *Opening the Hand of Thought* into French and is currently looking for a publisher. She is now translating *Realizing Genjokoan*.

9. Shoryu Bradley:

Shoryu started to practice at Austin Zen Center. He practiced at Tassajara for a few years and received shukke-tokudo from the teacher at Austin ZC, Rev. Seirin Barbara Kohn. He moved to Bloomington in 2004 and practiced at Sanshinji for 5 years. He changed his teacher and became my disciple on 1/15/2006. Shoryu did *shuso* practice during practice period in 2006. Having fulfilled 5-year practice at Sanshinji, he moved to Virginia in January 2009. He participated the 3-month Sotoshu Ango at Yokoji in CA in 2009 and another one at Shogoji, Kumamoto, Japan from December 2010 until February 2011. He did zui-se in September 2011. He is qualified as *nito-kyoshi* from Sotoshu shumuchō. He purchased a property to found a practice center Gyobutsuji in Arkansas.

10. Eido Reinhart:

Eido practiced at MZMC for many years. She received shukke-tokudo from the teacher of MZMC, Rev. Tim Burkett. She became my disciple on 1/15/2006. She did *shuso* practice at Ryumonji in Iowa in February 2012.

11. Ritoku Robinson:

Ritoku practiced at ZCLA as a resident practitioner with Maezumi Roshi. He started to come to Sanshinji right after I moved to Bloomington in 2003. He received shukke-tokudo on 12/17/2006. He is a professor of philosophy at Indiana University, Indianapolis. When I am out of town and we need a speaker for Sunday morning dharma talk, he often volunteers and gives a talk. He occasionally invites me to his class to talk on Dogen Zenji and Soto Zen.

12. Kando Dorsey

Kando started to practice at Stillpoint Sangha in Pittsburgh and moved to Bloomington in 2005. He received shukke-tokudo on 12/17/2006. Kando completed shuso practice in 2009. He stopped practicing at Sanshinji in the winter 2010.

13. Koun Levy

Koun has been practicing more than ten years with me at various places. She served as a board member of Sanshin ZC as treasurer for several years. She received shukke-tokudo September 21, 2008. She regularly come to Bloomington during summer practice period, and November Genzo-e or Rohatsu sesshin. She lives in Florida and practice with Kaikyo.

14. Kaikyo Robby

Kaikyo has been practicing more than 20 years. She received shukke-tokudo in Deshimaru's lineage in France. She received shukke-tokudo from me on September, 21, 2008. She completed shuso practice in 2010 summer practice period. She lives in Florida near Koun lives. She plan to practice at Aichi Senmon Nisodo from March 2013. She has been working on a Spanish translation of *Soto Zen: an introduction to zazen* and *Wholehearted Way*.

15. Jokei Whitehead

Jokei practiced at Tassajara and SFZC City Center for many years. She moved to Bloomington to practice at Sanshinji in 2009. She received shukke-tokudo in February 2011. She has been working on translation and editing *The Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo* since September 2011. She also worked on reviewing the draft of *Realizing Genjokoan*, *Living by Vow*, and *Sansuikyo*.

16. Gyoetsu Epifania

17. Doryu Cappeli

Gyoetsu and Doryu have been practicing for many eyars. They received shukke-tokudo from a French Zen teacher. They became my disciples in May 2011. They live in Rome, Italy. They visit Bloomington three times a year. They made arrangements for Italian translation of *Realizing Genjokoan* and *Living By Vow*.

18. Muso Biggs

Muso has been practicing many years at various places including SFZC, ZCLA, Zen Mountain Center Yokoji etc. He was ordained by Rev. Tenshin Fletcher at Zen Mountain Center in CA. He became my disciple in August 2011. He founded Red Wood City Zendo at his home. He currently serve as a board member of Sanshin ZC.

These 18 disciples are all sincere and capable people. My hope is that they continue to practice and contribute in their unique way to the development of Soto Zen Buddhism in the West.

Seigen Hertkemyer is not my disciple but he has been practicing at Sanshinji for 4 years. He is a stable and determined practitioner. He comes to sit 5 mornings from 5 to 7 am and is Doan on Tuesday evenings. He participates in most of the sesshin/retreats. I really appreciate his presence at Sanshinji.

In March 2013, Michael Shoaf and Brian Roesler will receive priest ordination. Michael has been living in Bloomington for many years. I am glad that we will have priest from the local community. His presence as a priest must be very valuable for Sanshinji to take a root in Bloomington. Brian lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. He practiced with me for 3 years and did many sesshin/retreats while I taught at MZMC. He has been working on making my Genzo-e lectures available through Internet.

(5) Dogen Institute

My book, *Realizing Genjokoan* was published from Wisdom Publications in June 2010. And *Living By Vow* was published in 2012. This is a collection of my lectures at MZMC from 1993-1996. I heard that at many Zen centers and groups, they use these books as study materials. After reading these books quite a few people became interested in Sanshinji practice.

My translation of Uchiyama Roshi's Genjokoan commentary was published in December 2011. The title is *Dogen's Genjokoan: Three Commentaries* (Counterpoint, Berkeley). Rev. Michael Wenger and Rev. Mel Weitsman worked on this book project for many years to put Nishiari Zenji's commentary and Suzuki Roshi's teisho on Genjokoan together with Uchiyama Roshi's. I recommend this book to all people who aspire to study and practice Dogen Zenji's teachings. My *Realizing Genjokoan* can be an introduction to this book.

Jokei and I have been working on creating a new translation of *The Zen Teaching of "Homeless" Kodo* with my comments. In December, we completed the first draft of the main body of the book. I need to write a short biography of Sawaki Roshi and introduction. Jokei continues to work on making the final draft ready to send to the publisher possibly by the spring of 2013. Usually it takes about a year from the time we send the material to the publisher until actual publication. Hopefully this book will be published in 2014.

Shodo has been working on *Sansuikyo* (Mountains and Waters Sutra) material. Our hope is to complete the manuscript and ready to be sent to the publisher within 2013.

Few other book projects are also in progress. David Thompson has been working on editing the material of *Zazenshin* (Acupuncture Needle of Zazen). Jean Serkik, sewing teacher of Berkeley ZC, has been working on *Kesakudoku* (The Virtue of Kesa). Andrea Thach is editing *Bendowa*. My lectures on the Precepts was edited by Hoko Karnegis but I don't have time to review it yet. I also want to translate a few more books written by Uchiyama Roshi.

Several people work on translating my books into other languages:

Densho translated *Opening the Hand of Thought* into Spanish and it was published. He translated Heart of Zen with Shotai. He is translating Realizing Genjokoan.

Shotai translated Heart of Zen with Densho, and is working on Dogen's Extensive Record.

Shoju translated *Opening the Hand of Thought* into French and is now looking for a publisher.

She is translating *Realizing Genjokoan*.

Gyoetsu and Doryu made arrangements for a translation of *Realizing Genjokoan* and it is published. Their friend is now translating *Living By Vow*.

Rev. Meiyo Vargas, a disciple of my friend Rev. Dosho Saikawa, the director of Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office, is translating *Realizing Genjokoan* into German.

Transcription:

People at Monterey Bay Zen Center have been transcribing my lectures on *Shobogenzo Daigo* (great Realization).

Joe McGibbon (his Korean monk name is Kyung bon) recently asked me if he can transcribe my lectures on *Awakening of Faith* I gave at Wednesday Dharma Study Group for two years. I gave him the permission.

(6) Sanshin Board

We have board retreat in Bloomington twice a year. Rest of the year, the Board has telephone conference every two month. I deeply appreciate their commitment to the development of the administrative aspect of Sanshin ZC.

Currently we have 8 board members:

Shohaku Okumura: abbot, ex officio

Michael Shoaf: President

Don Orr: Board Chair

Mark Pfaff: Secretary

Henry Coffey: Treasurer

David Thompson: Dogen Institute

Muso Jim Biggs: Development Committee

Rus Skiba: Member at large

Office Manager

Since fall of 2008, Debra Artino has been working as the office manager.

(7) Committees

We have 4 committees approved by the Board:

Development Committee: making connection with larger community and work on fundraising

Technology Committee: recording, storing, producing CD & DVD

Practice Committee: taking care of practice events at Sanhinji

Program Committee: managing the schedule for abbot's teaching at other centers

(8) Conclusion:

In June 2013, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of Sanshinji. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all people who have been practicing and supporting this small temple for

just sitting and studying Dogen Zenji's teachings. Without all people's efforts and help, Sanshinji cannot continue to serve as a practice center.

For the past nine years, we had ten sesshin/retreats a year. Sittings five mornings a week from 5-7 am followed by a morning service and temple cleaning. This is unusually vigorous practice schedule for such a small sangha.

Nearly 20 people became my disciples and seven people received dharma transmission. Some of them have their own practice center and serve as teachers.

Five books were published:

Dogen's Extensive Record: 2004

Opening the Hand of Thought: 2004

Realizing Genjokoan: 2010

Dogen's Genjokoan: Three commentaries: 2011

Living By Vow: 2012

56 people received the precepts and became the Buddha's students.

I have been teaching 4 Genzo-e a year (2 at Sanshinji and 2 at other centers). Hundreds of people studied various fascicle of Dogen's Shobogenzo with me.

I am so grateful that Sanshinji has been able to be active as a study and practice center because of numberless people's support and help.

Now I am 64 years old. I have been thinking of my plan for the future. Hopefully I will be creative and productive until 75 years old. I hope I will be able to retire in 2023. I have 11 more years. That is not a long time at all.

We need to begin to think of the long-range plan for Sanshin-ji's future after my retirement or death. Sanshinji is the gift from the buddhas and ancestors, and many Japanese and American donors. I hope Sanshinji continues to be active as a Soto Zen practice center for many years to come. My goal for the next 11 years is to create the situation that Sanshinji can continue to serve as a practice center in Indiana. We need more people who consider Sanshinji as their spiritual home. It is necessary to develop and strengthen the local sangha.

Because of aging, I need to gradually reduce my practice and teaching activities and put more focus on Dogen Institute activities, that is making books etc. I think I am able to continue my current activities one more year until the end of 2013. After that I need to reduce teaching activities. At practice committee, we started to discuss what should be done to make this transition smooth and gradual.

Gassho,

Prepared and presented by;
Shohaku Okumura

Abbot