



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

CHOZEN-JI TURNS 50

2022 will mark Chozen-ji's 50th anniversary since it was founded in 1972. In this special edition of our newsletter, you will find a Letter From The Abbot that reminds us of the foundations of Chozen-ji's training method: zazen, sesshin, and Hojo. For many Chozen-ji students, whether you're new to the Dojo or have been training for decades, this Letter From The Abbot will connect many of the dots of Zen training and help clarify just what is so unique and powerful about Chozen-ji's physical approach to Zen.

Gary Omori Roshi also reflects in a special note on the sincerity and sacrifice it took to establish Chozen-ji, what it was like in the early days at the Dojo, and how Chozen-ji is living up to Tanouye Roshi's vision for it today, including

by continuing to hold vigorous sesshins and through our contributions to the community.

With COVID surging once again, we will not yet resume the New Year's potluck on January 1. However, we will still have ceremonies in-person, including the Chinese Horoscope reading and ringing the Peace Bell 108 times on New Year's Eve. On New Year's Day, we'll have a demonstration of Hojo and a Chinese Horoscope reading. The New Year's Day events will be livestreamed via our website and Facebook. The last of our special golden omamori for the 50th anniversary will also be for sale then.

We will be sharing news about more events, including some special anniversary events, in the coming months. All scheduled classes and zazen sitting resume for 2022 on January 3. We hope to see you at Chozen-ji again soon.

BACK TO BASICS

SAYAMA DAIAN ROSHI, ABBOT

Our 50th anniversary is a fitting moment to reaffirm the basics of shugyo at Chozen-ji. The idea of Chozen-ji started in 1970 when Tanouye Rotaishi asked Omori Rotaishi for five years of his life to bring shugyo to the West. In 1972, they established Chozen-ji and later Tanouye Rotaishi wrote an "An Outline of Chozen-ji Zen Training" in which he laid out the fundamentals of our approach. This outline was included in the Policies and Operational Structure of Daihonzan Chozen-ji, a formal document adopted in 1991 which is as close to a constitution that we have. The outline begins with two foundational statements:

1. "Kiai" is of the utmost importance.
2. Sesshin, Zazen, and Hojo are the core of shugyo (spiritual training).

Kiai can be understood as energy or vitality, psychophysical in nature, but it can also refer to the universal flow of energy called Kozen no Ki in Japanese. Kiai might also be considered the subtlest manifestation of the Tao we can experience. "What is kiai?" is as much a koan as "What is Mu?" Tanouye Rotaishi said, "What is transmitted in the Chozen-ji School is the kiai. Without kiai, everything is a monkey



Zazen during our most recent sesshin.

show. Mind Only is Just Energy. To seek your True Self is to help others seek their own Self Nature.”

As our basic practice, zazen is familiar to many students so let me simply offer another way of looking at it. In zazen, one literally refines breath, posture, and concentration into kiai, increasing it and clarifying it.

The Hojo is a sword form created about 500 years ago. It has four parts expressing the kiai of the four seasons. It is done by two partners. One is Shin (Mind), and the other is Kage (Shadow). They reflect each other in precise movements coordinated with breathing. The Hojo takes about 10 minutes to perform, and after learning the form one can experience action without intention, samadhi in movement. The objective of the Hojo is “to cut off all the habits you have acquired since the day you were born and to return to your original nature.” How you breathe and how you walk are two basic habits the Hojo seeks to transform. Tanouye Rotaishi distinguished the Hojo from all the other martial and fine arts. All students were to train in it and also select a martial or fine art in addition. Since it’s unlikely that all students will learn the actual Hojo, teachers at Chozen-ji must find a way to incorporate its way of breathing and walking into their various disciplines.

All serious students must do sesshin. Sesshin literally means “to collect the mind” and is a six day period of meditation and concentration. This extended period is necessary to collect the mind because ordinarily, our minds are so scattered going from one chore or concern to another. From the beginning to the end, whether eating, doing manual labor, or martial arts, one should approach sesshin as if it is actually one long sitting in zazen.

The objective of sesshin is to “transcend limits that you impose upon yourself.” While this sounds grand, by definition, sesshin makes you want to quit, feeling like you cannot go on. Today we accommodate the real physical limits of a person so even students in their 70’s like Gary Omori Roshi have done it. If you are committed, you can do it. Although sesshin should always be trying, as your training matures, it actually becomes pleasurable. At 79, Honda Roshi is having the time of his life, making soba noodles, hitting the taiko, and playing the shakuhachi, even though getting up and down from the floor is a project. Because of the importance of sesshin, we are committed to holding it twice a year and did so despite the pandemic and the recent huge storm. We followed all distancing, masking, quarantine, and vaccination regulations and had no Covid cases.

Returning to the basics of shugyo along with the building of the new residences at 3570 Kalihi Street will set us up well for the next 50 years. Our mission during that time should

be to provide a place for future generations of leaders to do what Tanouye Rotaishi called “deep immersion.” Tanouye Rotaishi believed in “the presence of deep, spiritual beings, for the depth necessary for counseling and guidance in crucial and dangerous times, for ways that people might find their way back to humanity.” He said:

“For centuries, for millennia, the spiritual paths of the world have depended on deep immersion. Communities and cultures would support people stepping away from their occupations and their lives and immerse themselves in deep training. It would be three years just to enter, and at least ten years to mature into the faith, into the Way.... Societies would support this....”

“It is impossible in modern times for anyone to stop their jobs and their lives for a few months, let alone a few years. In the meantime, we seem to be hurtling to our own demise, our own destruction in ways that are all about our separation from our own humanity. Fewer people with less depth to deal with more crises and chaos. Will this generation be able to turn the tide?”

Given the widespread dysfunction we see today in the face of unprecedented, existential threats, such deep immersion is more important now than ever. We must develop a new model of deep immersion where people can train for extended periods and still work and be with family in this connected world. Cristina Moon calls this the model for the “Millennial monk.”

I am deeply grateful to all of you who donated to make the building of the 3570 residences and the exploration of this new model possible. We will be breaking ground for construction in 2022. We hope that this new Way of deep immersion will lead to a new generation of leaders who can turn the tide.

Happy New Year.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN VICTORY

CRISTINA MOON

Thanks to the generosity of dozens of donors, we have successfully raised the funds needed to break ground on our development of new housing across the street at 3570 Kalihi Street. We are still welcoming contributions, which will allow us to expand our budget for things like appliances and landscaping later on in the development.

This new housing will support Chozen-ji's continuing training and contributions to the community for many years to come. We are especially grateful to several major donors: the Island Insurance Foundation, the Omidyar Ohana, the Kataly Foundation, Colbert Matsumoto, Richard Lim, Michael Hodge and Cristina Moon, HPM, Clyde Kaneshiro, Neal and Susan Kunimura, Vernon Char, the Atherton Foundation, Cathy Kawano-Ching, Rosie Abriam, the Far Flung Sangha, Bill and Reyna Kaneko, the Central Pacific Bank Foundation, Dean Nakamura, and Howard and Lynn Arimoto.



3570 Kalihi Street outlined in red.

Mahalo to everyone who contributed to our capital campaign to construct new housing at 3570 Kalihi Street:

Island Insurance Foundation
 Colbert Matsumoto
 Kataly Foundation
 Omidyar Ohana Fund
 HPM
 Michael Hodge & Cristina Moon
 Richard Lim
 Clyde Kaneshiro
 Atherton Foundation
 Vernon Char
 Neal & Susan Kunimura
 Cathy Kawano-Ching
 Rosie Abriam
 Far Flung Sangha
 Bill Kaneko
 CPB Foundation
 Dean Nakamura
 Howard & Lynn Arimoto
 Clayton Wong
 Ray & Sonya Miyashiro
 Mike & Yumiko Sayama
 Dwight Yoshimura
 April & Li Nishimura
 Seiko Machida
 Mike Tokunaga
 Collins Tomei & Nick Alamia
 Kylee Mar

Sanford Murata
 Biwen Li & Carl He
 Bob Chinn
 Robert Gardner
 Brenda Wong
 Alan Riezman
 Jillson Fleener
 Seth Colby
 Chosei Zen
 Winford Ideue
 Martin Rabbett
 Karen Nakasone
 Scott Kiel & Anita Taylor
 Burt Lum
 Roxane Fujiwara
 Noland Chambliss
 Kenneth Kushner
 Gary Yee
 Hiroko Dewitz
 Bennett Fung
 Owen Nishioka
 JoAnn Mattson
 Marvin Mitani
 Marcel Chan
 Jean Sun Shaw
 Carolyn Riederer Annerud
 Renee Evans
 Gordon Lum

Vily Sarbinska
 Ann Kobayashi
 Daniel White
 Sandra Kunimoto
 Joshua Morse
 Jessica Pulliam
 Jesse Halverson
 Robert Gardner
 Jocelyn Fujii
 Cathy Wood
 Bin Chen
 Eric Siwy
 Janice Shon
 Keita Fukumoto
 Helen Nakano
 Warren Sato
 Gilbert Chun
 Robert Nouchi
 Dick Teshima
 Jerry Fukida
 Kenny and Chizuko Endo
 Maite Petersen
 Lila Frisbie
 Kelsey Amos
 Mercedes Munoz
 Sally Chang
 Brooke Loughridge

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SINCERITY

GARY OMORI ROSHI

The year 2022 marks the 50th year since our Founders Omori Sogen and Tanouye Tenshin established Chozen-ji back in 1972. Today we have a beautiful Daihonzan to do shugyo in at the back of Kalihi Valley.

To get to this point, many personal sacrifices were made by Tanouye Rotaishi and his students. Tanouye Rotaishi cashed in his State retirement and life insurance policy to fund the building of the Dojo. He always spoke of the principle of majime or sincerity and described it as unwavering commitment. He expected this of students. You had to give it your all and could not quit. The shame of quitting after being recommended by your martial arts teacher would be unbearable. Tanouye Rotaishi's example led about ten of the earliest members to take a second mortgage on their homes to secure the land for the Dojo.



Martial arts class at Farrington High School.



Omori Sogen and Kanemaru Sotetsu at the Kokea Street Dojo.

Before 3565 Kailhi Street, the training was first at the Kukui Plaza, then Farrington High, and then Kokea Street. Those who trained in those earlier years would form Tanouye Rotaishi's cadre of teachers who would mete out an intense form of Zen and martial arts training.

I began training 45 years ago in 1977. The teachers were strict, disciplined and definitely had that strong positive energy, or kiai. During both regular training and sesshin, they would push us to our physical and mental limits, having us swing the bokuto 1,000 times and carry each other on our backs doing the Hojo walk. These teachers tested our sincerity and in the process developed our character. There were many times, especially during sesshin, when I would ask myself what I was doing here. So, when Sayama Roshi told me to do sesshin this past July, I thought, "You're nuts. No way can I do it." But he insisted saying that he would have regret if I didn't do it. So, eventually I agreed, and while accommodations were made for me given my age and physical condition, I can attest that I was still pushed to transcend my self-imposed limitations. Without any prompting, I signed up for this year's winter sesshin. There is nothing more valuable for me to do with the time I have left.

One night in the early days of my training, Tanouye Rotaishi pulled me out of the class and took me up the hill that was being prepared to put up the enso. He told me to notice that this area had this blue light which seemed to be emanating from the earth and around us. He stretched out his arms and the light shone brightly on him. He then told me, "This is Kozen no Ki or the light of the universe. Now we know that we are doing the right thing and moving in the right direction."

When I started, everyone was martial artists, many of high rank and most of the students were in their twenties or thirties. It was a unique group pulled together by Tanouye Rotaishi's genius in the martial arts. Today a group much more diverse in age, physical condition, careers, and background are training. I teach a class on Practical Zen for Seniors. There's a new kitchen, and new residences are being developed across the street. About 30 people have been coming up to help on workdays during the COVID pandemic and the grounds look great. Recently we had a great Art Show. Over 50 years, Chozen-ji has naturally changed, but the light still shines, and I am so happy with the way things are going.

There are so many people working so hard to make Chozen-ji thrive that I cannot name them all, but I feel I must acknowledge some: Archbishop Richard Lim, Colbert Matsumoto, Abbot Sayama Daian, Riji President Michael Kangen,

Wayne Honda, Norma Wong, Cristina Moon, Dick Teshima, Yumiko Sayama, and all the live-ins and volunteers.

Also just like in the old days, the Dojo is serving as a meeting place for the community to find common ground and support initiatives for the betterment of Hawaii, like the construction of a 20-acre farm village with the houseless community, Puuhonua O Waianae.

For me training at Chozen-ji develops the ability to be happy irrespective of what is occurring in the world. Being happy creates the positive energy to help us reach our ultimate goal of Daihonzan Chozen-ji as written by Tanouye Rotai-shi, “Banse no Tame ni Taihei o Hiraku.” (Open the way for peace for generations.) May we continue to train and benefit others in the spirit of our predecessors who gave us so much.



Recent work day at the Dojo.



SESSHIN UPDATE

The 2021 winter Rohatsu sesshin kept up the momentum from recent sesshins. It also featured dramatic weather right from the beginning. Torrential downpours led to 12 hours with no electricity forcing the group to do okyo and zazen by flashlights and candlelight. The rain turned into strong winds and clear skies by the end.

The crowd included 15 people, with one new student and several doing their second or third sesshin. In addition to the long hours of zazen, the group did intensive Hojo practice in the afternoons. Jackson Sayama was the jiki with assistance from Christine Cordero. Yumiko Sayama and Cristina Moon were the tenzos with help from Geraldine Abergas and Makana Tavepholjalern.

Next summer’s sesshin will be held July 4-10. Please let us know ASAP if you are hoping to attend.



2021 CHOZEN-JI ART SHOW

Chozen-ji's 2021 Annual Zen Art Show was a successful first in many ways. It was the first year that the Art Show was held as a hybrid of online and in-person sales, with online reservations accepted for in-person attendance. It was also the first year that a new cohort of relatively new and young Dojo members took responsibility for many of the logistics, marketing, and preparations. Pulling off an in-person Art Show in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was a true community accomplishment.

Under the theme, "The Joy of Art," the Art Show sought to show "how the joy of art can be found everywhere," as Abbot Sayama Daian Roshi described in his introduction for the show:

"Art is a way to help us enjoy life. From the Zen perspective, Art illuminates the natural balance and order in the Universe. Art puts us into samadhi. Art is a vibration exemplifying Kozen no Ki (the flow of energy in the Universe) and helps us resonate with this energy. At Chozen-ji during a good sitting on Saturday morning, when the body is immovable and the mind clear, there is a shimmering tranquility in the morning light and stillness of the Dojo. This experience is deeply pleasurable and beautiful, and I think, the essence of joy."

What visitors first saw as they entered the Art Show was a huge arrangement of flowers set by the Kado class under Tommy Fujikawa and Norma Wong Roshi's guidance. At the center of the array was a huge bonsai tree from Sayama Roshi's personal collection, which had been transported to the Dojo in the back of a SUV by Li Nishimura and Kangen Roshi, the planter resting in the spare wheel bed of the car so that it could fit inside the car.

Opening night was reserved for Dojo members, who were treated to a rousing performance by Chizuko and Kenny Endo of the Taiko Center of the Pacific.



Calligraphy by Michael Kangen Roshi and Norma Wong Roshi included works on shikishi and wood. Several large scrolls mounted on silk were also sold.

Ceramics included decorative ware like flower vessels, pots, chawan, lidded containers, sake bottles, and cups fired in the wood-fired kiln earlier in the year. Also for sale were functional ware like bowls, platters, cups, and plates fired in the gas kiln. Works were made by Daijo Kaneshiro Sensei, Robert Nouchi, Cristina Moon, Geraldine Abergas, Christine Cordero, and others.

"Art can be enjoyed in many ways at many levels," Sayama Roshi wrote to orient visitors to how they could approach not just the usual arts and crafts show, but a showcase of Zen Art. "The arrangement of cushions, a calligraphy, flowers in a vase, a cup of tea, or the scent of incense can enhance the kiai of the moment and foster joy. Art can be practiced in all activities and is accessible by all.

"We hope our 2021 Art Show shows how the joy of art can be found everywhere."



JOIN US ON NEW YEAR'S EVE & NEW YEAR'S DAY

With the COVID pandemic abating, we will have in-person New Year's ceremonies at Chozen-ji, but without our usual potluck on New Year's Day.

December 31, 10PM-1AM: Ceremony, soba, Chinese horoscope, & ringing the Peace Bell
January 1, 10AM: Ceremony, Chinese horoscope

All attendees are required to be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and masks will be required while indoors.

The ceremony on New Year's Day will also be livestreamed via Zoom. Please visit www.chozen-ji.org/ny2022 for links to view the livestream on New Year's Day via Zoom and on our Facebook page.



SUPPORT ZEN TRAINING AT CHOZEN-JI



Zen training at Chozen-ji is offered freely and without fees. With only one part-time paid staff, we depend on donations from the community to sustain all of the operations and activities detailed in this newsletter, and more. Donate online at www.chozen-ji.org/donate or by check:

Daihonzan Chozen-ji
3565 Kalihi Street
Honolulu, HI 96819

We are also looking to purchase a truck for the Dojo. If you know of one that is available or have one to donate, please send an email to info@chozen-ji.org.

2022 EVENTS CALENDAR

The following is just a partial listing of events. Please check our website for additional events and class schedule.

Dec 13-Jan 2 Winter Break

Dec 31 New Year's Eve

Jan 1 New Year's

Jan 3 Regular class schedule resumes

Jan 13 Tanouye Roshi Memorial

Feb 20 Dojo Work Day

Apr 24 Dojo Work Day

Jun 26 Dojo Work Day

Jul 4-10 Summer Sesshin (Dojo Closed)



2022 CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Zazen - 5:30am	Zazen - 5:30am	Zazen - 5:30am	Zazen - 5:30am	Zazen - 5:30am
Practical Zen for seniors 9:00-10:30am				
Zazen - 6:00pm	Zazen - 6:00pm Intro to Zazen for beginners - 6:00pm	Zazen - 6:00pm	Zazen - 6:00pm Intro to Zazen for beginners - 6:00pm	Zazen - 6:00pm
Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm
Okyo - 7:30pm	Hojo/Kendo - 7:30pm		Okyo - 7:30pm	Hojo/Kendo - 7:30pm

Saturday	Sunday
Zazen - 8:00am	Zazen - 8:00am Intro to Zazen for beginners - 8:00am
Aikido - 8:45am	
Hitsuzendo (calligraphy) - 8:45am	Chado (Way of Tea) - 8:45am
Kado (Way of the Flower) - 8:45am	Okyo - 8:45am
Ceramics - 8:45am	
Karate - 4:30pm	