



WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Chozen-ji's Winter Newsletter features a number of updates that reflect just how vibrant and busy the Dojo is today. Read on for a shortened version of the teisho that Sayama Roshi gave to a packed Dai Sesshin in December that culminated in the ordination of four new priests.

There is also news on our major fundraising and community events this year, and an update on the development of new housing across the street at 3570 Kalihi Street. With the costs of food, fuel, and goods rising, we continue to rely on donations from the community to be able to

provide Zen training at no cost to students.

Visit [www.chozen-ji.org/2022](http://www.chozen-ji.org/2022) to make a tax-deductible donation before the end of 2022 to help us continue to offer Zen training freely and without fees in the new year.

Finally, please be sure to join us for our New Year's ceremonies on New Year's Eve at midnight and New Year's Day in person and also online at 10AM.

Sincerely - Daihonzan Chozen-ji

## KEN TO ZEN: TEISHO AT WINTER SESSHIN

SAYAMA DAIAN ROSHI, ABBOT

This past sesshin, I gave teisho from Omori Roshi's book *Ken to Zen (The Sword and Zen)* using a draft Teshima Sensei, our Kendo teacher, and I have been working on for several years.

At the opening tea which formally starts sesshin, I suggested that we consider sesshin not only as one long period of zazen but also as one long Kendo shiai, a 6-day continuous match which requires full concentration moment by moment. In sesshin, we are doing shiai with the forms, with pain and sleepiness, with each other, and with ourselves for 6 days. Beginners can feel like they're being attacked by ten men, particularly at meals. At sesshin, we are collecting the mind to transcend self-imposed limitations. By definition, people feel that they can't do it and want to quit, but when they persevere, they develop spiritual strength. This time, all 21 participants made it through to the closing tea.

In Ken To Zen, Omori Roshi begins by defining both Kendo and Zen as ways of life/death determination. In the past, swordsmen fought with real swords to the death. Transcending life and death is the goal of both Kendo and Zen. The swordsmen he highlights in *Ken To Zen* all trained with an intensity and unwavering commitment that is hard for us to even imagine. In Yamaoka Tesshu's Dojo the best students took the vow to train unto death by undertaking the Tachikiri, which at its highest level consisted of 200 shiai a day for seven days.



The crowd from December's Dai-sesshin.

Throughout Ken To Zen, Omori Roshi describes several sword masters. The first is Itto Ittosai, whose ultimate teaching was Muso Ken, The Dream Sword. Ittosai lived in the 16th century and after 21 days of meditation at the Hachimangu Shrine in Kamakura, he did not experience any divine inspiration. As he was descending the steps of the shrine, he sensed a slight movement of a dark shadow. “Immediately, as if to scratch an itch in his sleep, his hands moved without thought, drew the sword, and cut down the shadow.” It occurred “in a heart/mind-hand unity speed that did not allow a hair’s breadth of a gap between them.” Ittosai systematized this experience and named it Muso Ken.

Omori Roshi compares this to his teacher Yamada Jirokichi’s action when walking with his own teacher Sakakibara Kenkichi one day up a hill in heavy snow. Sakakibara Sensei’s geta (wooden clog) strap suddenly snapped and, as he was about to fall backwards, Yamada Jirokichi extended an arm to support his teacher’s huge body and with his other hand put his own geta on Sakakibara’s foot. This was recognized as the ultimate of Ken, and Yamada Sensei was allowed to succeed as the 15th generation master of Jikishin Kage Ryu.



Tanouye Roshi once told me that he once thought of creating a school of Kendo with the saying “Ki ga Kan o ateba Myo no oto ga deru.” (When Ki strikes Intuition, a Wondrous sound emerges.) This saying is Tanouye’s Roshi’s way of “explaining” Ittosai’s and Yamada’s experiences. Ki can refer to the subtlest manifestation of the Tao or more simply as a psychophysical energy which can be cultivated by refining breath, posture, and concentration in zazen and developing the hara. Kan senses Ki and is a perceptive intuition which transcends both the physical senses and the dualistic processing of the intellect. Myo is mysterious wonder, the synchronous action of the Universe.

In our Canon Omori Roshi used the expressions of Miyamoto Musashi and Yagyū Munenori describing the ultimate of Ken to describe the ultimate of Zen:

Miyamoto Musashi called it Iwo no mi (body of a huge boulder – going through life rolling and turning like a huge boulder); Yagyū Sekishusai named it Marobashi no michi (a bridge round like a ball – being in accord with the myriad changes of life). Besides this actual realization, there is nothing else.

Comparing the realizations of all of these great masters, Omori Roshi describes how Ittosai, Jirokichi, Musashi, Yagyū, and Tanouye Roshi all experienced the ultimate in Ken and Zen. Whatever the description, Omori Roshi says it is the same moon over the mountain, but our perceptions and descriptions are not necessarily the same. Omori Roshi uses Zen Master Takuan’s teaching of the Immovable Mind to reconcile Musashi’s body of a huge boulder and Yagyū’s bridge round like a ball. Takuan taught that the Mind is immovable because it does not stop with whatever object it encounters; moment by moment it is fully present. It flows like a ball in a swiftly moving stream. When there are attachments, however, it stops, and ignorance and affective disturbance results.

Takuan uses the example of “ten men, ten successive and successful encounters” to illustrate the working of the immovable, non-stopping heart/mind. Each opponent represents situations which challenge us in daily life. Sesshin creates situations which force moment by moment concentration. We may handle the first one well but if we attach to it or get stuck on subsequent ones, eventually we will lose it. If, however, we remain immovable and fully present, each encounter is the only encounter, and we can have ten successive and successful encounters. Tanouye Roshi said, “Here’s the secret of life.” Sesshin helps participants collect the heart/mind and forge a sword of samadhi that can cut through the attachments and spaciness of daily life.

# SESSHIN AND ORDINATION

Our recent sesshin was well attended with 20+ folks coming together to train for the week. For four of the students, this sesshin culminated with an ordination after 3+ years of intensive training. The new priests are:

- Geraldine Abergas (Shogen Koyu - Deep Spirit, Healing Light)
- Christine Cordero (Myokan Jito - Wondrous Intuition, Blade of Compassion)
- Li Nishimura (Douzan Zenjin - Guiding Mountain for All People)
- Nick Alamia (Raigen Kyoshin - Deep Thunder, Pure Sound)

The ordination on Sunday morning brought together the wider Chozen-ji community to celebrate these four dedicated new priests.



# KYUDO UPDATE

Chad Kamei

Kyudo at Chozen-ji is beginning to re-blossom through the hard work of the teachers and students. This year was busy with rebuilding the azuchi by replacing the dirt, sifting in sawdust, and leveling to the correct angles. Great care was also taken to refinish the Kyudo dojo floor and paint the interior.

We now have seven students training, using the kyudo hassetsu as established by Kyudo sensei Jackson Morisawa. Kyudo classes continue to be held on Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings including 45 minutes of zazen.

This past February, Kushner Roshi from Daikozen-ji held a Kyudo intensive with our beginners and the teachers. We will be welcoming him and his students back this February to train alongside all our students.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 we held our first Kyudo Day with Hawaii Kyudo Kai. Cleverly held on 9/10 (kyu-do), this event is a modern activity that groups around the world have been observing to celebrate the spirit of kyudo. We showcased our unique kata and demonstrated how our Zen training enhances both our kyudo and our lives.

To end the year, the Kyudo class will be doing a 108 arrow shoot. Similar to the Joya no Kane, our distinct celebration is to welcome the new year and to cleanse the 108 worldly desires to start the new year fresh and clean.

The Kyudo class is flourishing as we continue to train intensively and sincerely into 2023.



Rebuilding the azuchi.



Dedicated Kyudo students being led by Li.



Kyudo Day group shooting.



Kyudo Day gathering with Hawaii Kyudo Kai.

## 3570 KALIHI STREET PROJECT UPDATE

After stalling at DPP for many months, the project is finally moving through the permitting process. We are hopeful to receive our permits and break ground in the first half of 2023. Construction is estimated to take roughly nine months so we should have the residences ready for occupancy sometime late 2023 or early 2024. This will usher in a new era of Chozen-ji being able to accommodate more people living here and increased capacity for short term residential programs. Thanks again to everyone who has contributed to the project over the last couple years.



## DOJO FACILITIES UPDATE

We have made significant progress on the buildings and grounds this year. We finally repaved the parking lot to get rid of all the potholes and be better suited to handle the heavy Kalihi Valley winter rains. Currently, we are in the process to finally replace the gate on Kalihi Street. Other recent work completed by students includes rebuilding the stone wall on the drainage ditch, stabilizing the stream bank, spreading new gravel and replacing aging toilets with more water-efficient models. As always, we appreciate everyone's efforts, whether it be helping hands or financial support for upkeep.



## 2022 CHOZEN-JI ART SHOW

Chozen-ji held a special 50th Anniversary Art Show November 4-6 featuring displays of historic photographs and master artworks made at the Dojo over the years. With calligraphy, ceramics, books, and omamori sold online and in person, the Art Show was a big fundraising success. Mahalo to all of the teachers and students who made it possible by staffing and setting up the show, and by making art works throughout the year.



## SAKE DINNER

We had our first Sake Dinner fundraiser since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic on October 4 at the Prince Waikiki Hotel. The dinner raised significant funds for Dojo operations, was attended by 120 guests, and featured premium sakes from Christopher and Tassho Pearce at World of Sake. Mahalos to Colbert Matsumoto, Richard Lim, April Nishimura, Michael Kangen, and emcee Cristina Moon for all of their planning and to all of the students who volunteered that night to make the event a success.

## OMAMORI

A small number of 2023 Omamori are still available for sale in our online store and in person. These protective amulets have an image of Chozen-ji's guardian deity, Marishiten, inside, and are blessed by Chozen-ji priests.



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

We will be holding all of our New Year's ceremonies at Chozen-ji this year, including our usual potluck on New Year's Day.

December 31, 10:30PM-12:30AM: Ceremony, soba, Chinese horoscope, & ringing the Peace Bell

January 1, 10AM: Ceremony, Chinese horoscope, potluck

The ceremony on New Year's Day will also be livestreamed via Zoom. Please visit [www.chozen-ji.org/new-years](http://www.chozen-ji.org/new-years) for links to view the livestream on New Year's Day via Zoom and on our Facebook page.



## SUPPORT ZEN TRAINING AT CHOZEN-JI



As the COVID-19 global pandemic winds down, we are seeing a robust return to Zen training from local and live-in students.

Despite the rising costs of electricity, gas, food, and goods, we continue to offer Zen training at Chozen-ji freely and without fees. We are grateful to be able to do so because of donations from the community.

Please consider making a tax deductible donation before December 31, 2022 to continue to sustain our operations and activities.

You can make a one-time or recurring monthly donation online at [www.chozen-ji.org/2022](http://www.chozen-ji.org/2022) or mail a check to:

Daihonzan Chozen-ji  
3565 Kalihi Street  
Honolulu, HI 96819

Mahalo.  
Daihonzan Chozen-ji

# 2023 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

- Dec 31 New Year's Eve - 10:30pm-12:30am
- Jan 1 New Year's Day ceremony and potluck - 10:00am
- Jan 2 Regular class schedule resumes
- Jan 13 Tanouye Roshi Memorial
- Feb 6-10 Intensive Kyudo Training w/ Kushner Roshi
- Feb 26 Dojo Work Day
- Apr 23 Dojo Work Day
- Jun 26 Dojo Work Day
- Jun 15-18 Summer Sesshin (Dojo Closed)
- Jun 25 Dojo Work Day
- Jul 3-9 Summer Dai-Sesshin (Dojo Closed)



## 2023 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	Zazen - 6:00pm Intro to Zazen for beginners - 6:00pm
Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm	Zazen - 6:45pm
Okyo - 7:30pm	Hojo/Kendo - 7:30pm	Intro Boxing - 7:30pm	Okyo - 7:30pm	Hojo/Kendo - 7:30pm
Ceramics - 6:45pm			Kyudo - 6:45pm	

Saturday	Sunday
Zazen - 8:00am	Zazen - 8:00am Intro to Zazen for beginners - 8:00am
Aikido - 8:45am	Kyudo - 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	