



Great Tree Zen Temple

newsletter / winter-spring / 2013

Bell Pause at Plum Village

—Village des Pruniers—

— Reverend Teijo Munnich

Sitting in the dining room of New Hamlet at Plum Village, I was in the midst of a lively conversation when the clock rang its quarter-hour chime. It was an informal meal, so people had come at their own pace and were at different stages in their meal—some were finishing up, others had just sat down, a few were filling their plates. When the clock chimed, all activity stopped—people walking froze in place, those dishing up food held serving utensils in mid-air, those eating stopped chewing. All conversation ceased—the only noise in the room was my voice as I finished my sentence, unaware for a moment of the significance of the sound. By the time it sank in the bell had finished and all movement was starting up again. I paused and took a breath anyway. Sister Eleni leaned over and said gently, “Teijo, when a bell rings at Plum Village, we pause and take a few breaths.”



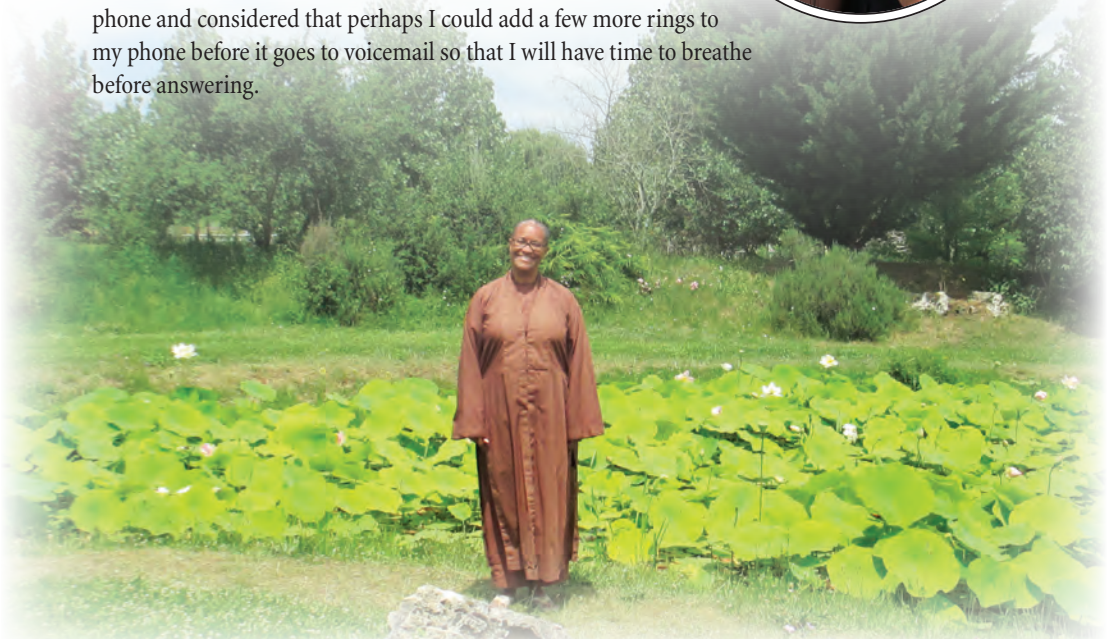
What Time is It?...

It's Now

I learned how to tie my scarf in the style of the Plum Village nuns

I knew that! I had been to retreats with Thich Nhat Hanh where the “mindfulness bell” was rung and we all stopped. I even learned a little verse to say to myself as the bell sound continued: “Listen, listen. This wonderful sound brings me back to the present moment.” But in retreats it had been much more formal—a specific bell that you knew was the mindfulness bell, and you were alerted to it by a soft clunk just before the ring. I wasn’t used to responding to the quarter-hour sound of a clock.

At Plum Village any bell that rings becomes a mindfulness bell. When the phone rings in the office, no one moves for at least five rings. “Aren’t they ever going to answer it?” I found myself thinking impatiently the first few times I experienced this. I noted that I am perhaps a bit too tied to answering my phone and considered that perhaps I could add a few more rings to my phone before it goes to voicemail so that I will have time to breathe before answering.



Sister Peace in front of a lotus pond— lotus ponds in all hamlets were in full bloom during my visit

*The passing year
—irritating—
things are also
flowing water*

Chiyo-ni



GREAT TREE

Our mission is to create a community, based on teachings of Dogen Zenji in the Soto Zen tradition, which serves all whose journey brings them to Great Tree, and to support a residential practice for women.

We are wholly supported by gifts from our friends, membership, volunteers and sangha.



Abbess

Rev Teijo Munnich

Great Tree Zen Temple

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Great Tree is a 501(c)3 religious organization, registered with the State of North Carolina

“Even at Plum Village” I thought to myself one day as the movement in the room came to a halt. The sound of any bell elicits a stillness that permeates the atmosphere and alerts one to the busyness of the prior moment. When everything stops the first thing you are aware of is the commotion you had not even noticed just seconds before. I was fortunate to be there between retreats, when residents were more relaxed than they would be with a few hundred extra people to take care of, but the mindfulness bell reminded me of how easy it is to get so caught up in all that has to get done that we forget to pause and breathe. Even at Plum Village.

One might imagine a place of total mindfulness all the time when thinking of the home of Thich Nhat Hanh, the great teacher of mindfulness. There is definitely an awareness there of both paying attention to each moment and recognizing unmindful moments. The teaching is ever present in the embodiment of different people at different times, and I noticed myself considering my actions from this perspective a lot of the time.

Plum Village is somewhat primitive, but quite lovely. Some of the buildings in the New Hamlet have been built using old rock walls that were standing when the land was purchased. Life is simple and basic. Computers are confined to the office, and most of the time the nuns were outside working on the grounds or playing. Everyone seems to have a sense of doing their part to keep the grounds clean and beautiful. Things are planted in every nook and cranny so that everywhere you go there is something growing. There are also greenhouses for growing food.

In New Hamlet there are several mulberry trees, and they were laden with fruit. Every time I walked the paths near these trees, I saw several nuns with their heads and arms buried in the trees picking and eating mulberries. Usually there were bowls of mulberries left out for general consumption. Mulberry picking was a form of play, as was the volleyball game that took place every night after dinner just outside my window. Three walk-on cats lounged around just waiting to be held or petted. A kitten had recently been rescued, and watching him was the source of much joy and laughter.

I spent most of my time in New Hamlet, but I was able to visit the other hamlets on a few occasions. One day after a lecture, Thich Nhat Hanh led us

in walking meditation through the Lower Hamlet. A common characteristic of all of the hamlets is that they have bamboo groves and lotus ponds. While I was visiting, all of the lotus ponds were in bloom—what a beautiful sight! I returned with the aspiration to make a lotus pond at Great Tree.

One afternoon I wandered into the bookstore at New Hamlet and found a lovely little watch. I'd been looking for a watch because when I travel, the need to know what time it is becomes much more pressing. When I was traveling to Sainte-Foy-la-Grande from Bordeaux, for example, I was nervous about not recognizing the pronunciation of the name when it was called. Then it occurred to me that if I looked on my ticket to see what time the train would arrive, I wouldn't have to worry. But for this, one needs a watch! Having just had the harrowing experience of fearing I would miss my stop in the French countryside because of my limited language skills, I bought the watch at first sight. And even though I couldn't actually read the numbers on it, I could see the hands, and since I know how the numbers are positioned on a clock face, I wasn't concerned. What the watch face did have at the positions of three, six, nine and twelve were what appeared to be little squiggles; in the center was a larger, darker squiggle. When I got back to my room and put on my glasses, I discovered that the large word

in the middle, written in the very recognizable handwriting of Thich Nhat Hanh, was “It’s.” Then I realized that the other squiggles were all the word “now.” So if anyone asks me what time it is I can simply say, “It’s now.”

When Sister Peace saw that I had gotten the watch, she told me about a skit they did in which someone kept asking “What time is it?” and the response was “It’s now.” It seemed to be one of those things where you had to be there to really appreciate it, because when she described it she was laughing the entire time. But in spite of the beautiful awareness that the reminder “It’s now” brings, I think the skit might have been an attempt to point to the difficulty of really appreciating the nowness in which we actually live, the reality of this present moment. Later I saw the prototype for the watch, a clock that was much easier to read, and I took a photo of it. These clocks are not available for sale, so I’m lucky I have the watch.

This morning when I was working in the kitchen I accidentally hit the side of an aluminum bowl with a spoon and it rang. I stopped and took a breath, then words from a Plum Village song came to me:

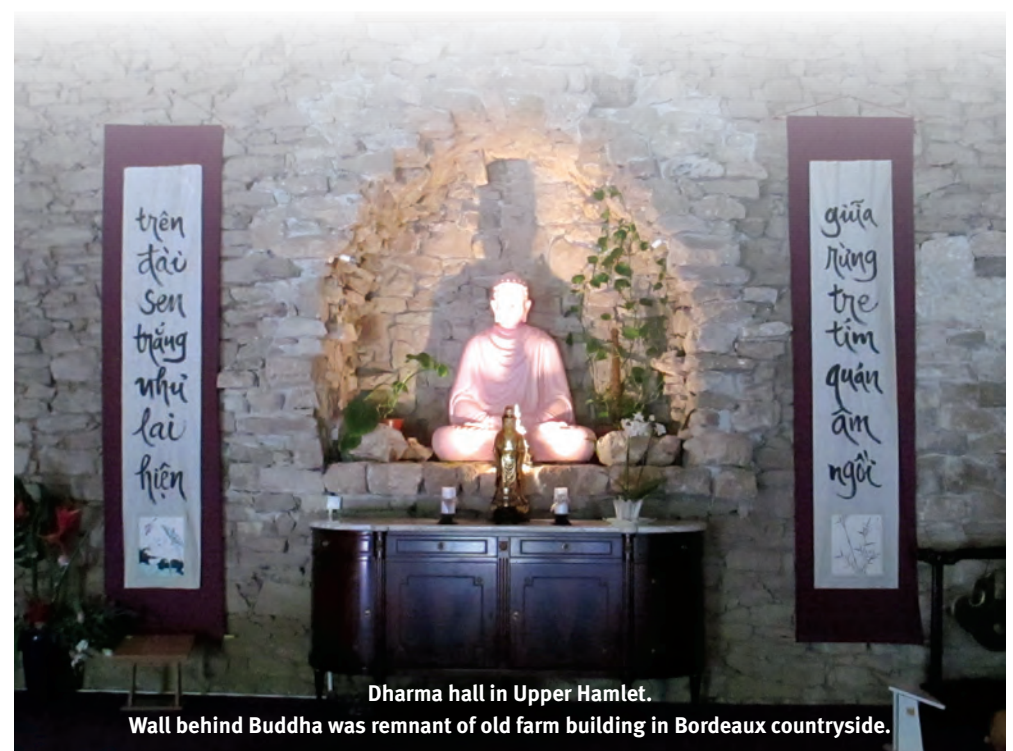


*I have arrived. I am home.
In the here and in the now.
I am solid. I am free.
In the Ultimate I dwell.*

The moment is here, the home is life itself.
The Ultimate is all beings. It’s now!



Sister Elini



Dharma hall in Upper Hamlet.

Wall behind Buddha was remnant of old farm building in Bordeaux countryside.

Reverend Teijo Munnich's vow, given at Great Tree's 7th Anniversary Celebration, September 2012

I make prostration and respectfully speak to all Awakened Beings, bodhisattvas, sages, heavenly beings, human beings, eight kinds of dragons, good women and men in the ten directions. I would like to build a practice place for future generations.

In the Sutra of Bodhisattva Precepts (Bonmokyō, The Sutra of Indra's Net), we read, "You should always teach all living beings, build hermitages and construct stupas in the fields, mountains or forests. Build those things in every place of spiritual practice. These are the dwelling places of all Awakened Beings. If we build temples constantly remembering our intention of aspiring to Truth, great virtue will be transmitted to this country and it will be beneficial to all. Let us not forget this spirit."

Since I, Teijo, returned to this country from Hosshinji in Obama, Japan, I have been holding my deep aspiration to establish a practice temple. Although I kept this intention in my heart for many years, I did not have a way to support the practice. Finally now, we have attained a good place. We have a location for gathering to practice together – Daijuji, Great Tree Temple – in Alexander North Carolina. We wish to establish this temple of Great Tree where practitioners can participate in the practice and deepen their understanding. I would like to encourage women, men and children in the ten directions to join the practice in order to form a good affinity with the Truth of Life.

In the meditation hall, Manjusri – bodhisattva of wisdom – is enshrined. In the living room, Kwan Yin sits with compassionate eyes.

Though it might be possible to build Great Tree Temple with a donation from one patron, I would like to encourage many people in the ten directions to make a donation in order to allow many people to form a good relationship with Buddha Dharma. This is the excellent tradition from India and China.

Dogen Zenji said, "Do not worry about the small number in this Sangha. [To Ejo] Do not mind that you are a beginner. At Fenyang there were only six or seven people; at Yaoshan there were less than ten. Nevertheless, all of them practiced the Way of the buddhas and ancestors. They called this 'The flourishing of the monastery.' This Way is inherent in each of us; still, our gaining the Way depends upon the help of co-practitioners. Though each person is brilliant, still our practicing the Way needs the power of other people [in the Sangha]. Therefore, unifying your mind and concentrating your aspiration, practice and seek the way together. A jewel becomes a vessel by polishing it; a human being becomes benevolent and wise by refining [those qualities]. What jewel glitters from its inception? Who is brilliant from the outset? You must polish and refine. So, do not demean yourselves, and do not relax in your practice of the Way."

I write this appeal with deep sincerity.



Eleven Flowers Open **BOOK REVIEW**

Receiving the Marrow: Teachings on Dogen by Soto Zen Women Priests

edited by Eido Frances Carney, Temple Ground Press

–Review by Judith Toy, True Door of Peace, Cloud Cottage Community of Mindful Living, author of *Murder as a Call to Love: A True Story of Transformation and Forgiveness*

Our first Soto ancestor, Dogen Zenji (1200-1253 CE), recommended that we “disport” ourselves happily in *samadhi*. To disport means to play. So when we are deep in concentration and the edges between ourselves and all else are beautifully blurred, there we can play in the vastness of “what is.” What a wonderful insight from Rev. Teijo Munnich in this book’s lead essay, “Dancing the Dharma Bendowa.” Once Teijo was a dancer; here she dances the Dharma. Bendowa is a talk or discourse on how to practice the way with great heart. So it is with a sense of ease, then, that she compares Dogen’s “disporting oneself in samadhi” to the playful attitude and deep awareness one can achieve through dance: “the complete dance of life in each moment.”



From the Zen trenches of the third millennium, here is the collected work of 11 contemporary Soto female priests, 11 seasoned teachers. It is “the first such collection by women Soto Zen teachers in the West,” said Rev. Shohaku Okumura, author and translator of Dogen texts. Equally important in this groundbreaking work, certain of Dogen’s fascicles represented here have never before been translated in print. So *Receiving the Marrow* is a unique offering to Buddhist world literature and scholarship. Essayists with the divine touch of feminine poets proclaim the essence of Dogen’s teachings variously as a dance, a flower, a song, our body, the face of the moon, a mirror, a jewel, and a mountain. The title refers to Dogen’s *Raihai Tokuzui*, or “Receiving the Marrow and Bowing,” one of the strongest statements in all of Asian Buddhist history supporting the spiritual equality and capacity of women. Dogen, like the Buddha, was well ahead of his time on gender issues.

In 1978, at a writer’s conference in Manhattan, a well-known publisher proclaimed over the microphone to hundreds of eager attendees sitting in plush red theater seats, “No more books about women. They are passe; the trend is over.” Referring to the Dharma, editor Eido Frances Carney says in her introduction, “Indeed, there are few examples of women’s teaching in print today.” She reports that this particular collection, writings on Dogen’s lengthy and masterful life’s work, the *Shobogenzo*, was summarily dismissed by prominent Buddhist publishers. Publishers can be so wrong.

This book is a rare gem, “a gesture of gratitude to Dogen for his spiritual truth” from American women monastics who follow deeply and persistently the tradition he founded. It includes a biography of Dogen and a glossary. More about Dogen’s sense of play comes from Jan Chozen Bays, author and co-abbot of Great Vow Monastery in the White Plum Lineage. In her essay “Udumbara Flower,” she writes, “Dogen Zenji is at home in this world of apparent opposites. He is a mountain goat at play in the mountain range of paradox, happily leaping from peak to peak.”

A Note from the Nisodo

– Chimyo Atkinson

a rare breeze
weaves its hot fingers
through the branches
of the ginkgo outside
my window;
crows complain loudly,
then fly screaming off
into the distance
cicadas whirl
into a frenzy
of blazing sound.
The heat is wrapped tight in Nagoya
I am all wound up and sweating
watching the swaying ginkgo tree
sipping warm “iced tea”
and dreaming of other abominations

I plunge my hands, hot with mosquito venom, deep into a bucket of cold water I am filling from the spigot outside the tea house. The sun bakes my shoulders as I stoop there, but the water is still a relief from the relentless heat. I have been in Nagoya at the Nisodo (a women’s training monastery) for 10 days now. Watering the garden is one of the first tasks I’ve been trusted to do at the monastery.

I’m in a sort of extended *tangaryo*, which is a trial period for monks just entering a monastery. They have put me in a room on the second floor away from all the other monks. I’m told that traditionally this limbo period lasts about seven days, but because August is a vacation period at the Nisodo, the guest manager will not return until the end of the month. Meanwhile, I have a large tatami room to myself, of which I am allowed to use only a corner. Later, when the ango (training period) starts, I will be assigned to a smaller room with six to eight roommates. I’m going to enjoy this bit of privacy while it lasts.

The schedule during this “vacation” period begins with the wake-up bell at 5 a.m. (Next month we will get up at 4 a.m.) On a normal day we get up, dress in *samue* (informal clothing for monks and nuns consisting of jacket and pants), and begin cleaning. My assigned task is to clean the upstairs toilet and hallway, after which I’m expected to help others who have not finished their jobs. Most of the time it takes me so long to finish the hall floor, wiping it with a wet rag on hands and knees, that everyone else is long gone. Around 7 a.m., the tenzo does a rolldown on the *kaishaku* (meal clappers) to announce that breakfast is being served.

It is at breakfast—and meals in general—that I leave my comfort zone. *Oryoki* (formal meal practice) has always been a challenge for me. Although I have pretty much come to terms with it, I still have a bit of resistance to the practice. The *oryoki* style at the Nisodo, however, is so radically different from what I’ve learned over the years at Great Tree and at the international angos I’ve attended that I am completely thrown for a loop. Beginner’s mind has eluded me for the past 10 days. Meals leave me feeling confused and embarrassed—not to mention in pain, because we are also required to sit in *seiza* (kneeling posture) throughout the meals.

Although normal days begin with cleaning, for three days we have begun with a *zazen* period and morning service because three of Aoyama Roshi’s students are preparing for their *denpo* (Dharma transmission) ceremony. Usually, this ceremony is done by the teacher and her students in private, but for her own reasons, Aoyama Roshi has invited everyone to watch. During the three days before the ceremony, the students were preparing their own *kechimyakus* and other transmission documents alone in the tea house. They were required to wear their full robes—*koromo*, *kimono*, *bessu*, and *okesa*—throughout the day in 40-degree C (104 degrees F) heat. Although they had no assigned duties during their preparation period, they looked tired and drained when they showed up for meals or when we passed them in the halls.

The ceremony was explained to us in a short lecture given by Aoyama Roshi the day before it took place. The lecture was in Japanese, and I wasn’t able to get much out of it, but she explained some of the symbols written on the *denpo* documents and demonstrated how they are stamped and folded. The next day we watched as each student did several series of prostrations and received their documents. The ritual included both the student and Aoyama Roshi holding lit torches up to the documents as if they were reading them at night in secret, although it was mid-morning and they were surrounded by a flock of curious monks. The most touching part of the ceremony came when master and student faced each other, *zafus* overlapping, and bowed together.

Yesterday I was allowed to leave the monastery to register my residency card at City Hall and apply for national health insurance. A French nun accompanied me, and along the way we did a bit of shopping for essentials like detergent, pencils, and instant coffee. She told me about her temple back in France and her own journey to monkhood. I’m always surprised to find that, no matter where they’re from, many of the Western monks I’ve met at angos have similar stories. I had a sense of kinship with this French woman right away. We shared a pizza and salad at a café near the subway station before heading back to the Nisodo.

Haiku at the Children’s Retreat

by Satya McCarthy-Rotella, 8 years old

I like the children’s retreat because there are all kids there. It’s easier to concentrate in meditation when you are with other people. One of the things we did was write haiku. Teijo is really good at explaining how to do the poems. The first one we did was a “What am I?” haiku describing an animal. For the next haiku, Teijo read us a book about Basho, a famous poet in Japan, and then we wrote about a part in the book. For the last poem, Teijo told us to go outside and look at nature and write a haiku about what we saw.

Teijo helped us when we needed it and helped us to sound out the syllables. My favorite one I wrote was:

Fluffy and floppy
hopping freely in the yard
Cute twitching noses



Can you guess what animal this is?

Ordinary Sounds

The ordinary sounds of quiet...

The creak of wooden floors,
Worn smooth and cool,
From the feet of barefoot women

The clink of pan on stove, food to fire,
Bowl to table and back again,
From the hands of barefoot women

The swish of long skirts, cotton-on-cotton
Swinging, cotton-on-skin,
From the hips of barefoot women

Sirens all, with songs of their own,
Spun with skeins of bitter and sweet,
From the hearts of barefoot women

...making extraordinary,
the sounds of quiet.

– Kimberli Mazzella
Participant in the Zen Mind, Writing Mind
retreat, August 2012

Great Tree Schedule of Events for 2013

DECEMBER 2012

DEC. 15: Annual Buddha's Enlightenment Celebration and Craft Sale

NOTE DATE CHANGE—11 am-4 pm (Ceremony-2 pm): held at Urban Dharma

DEC. 26-31: End of Year Sesshin *NOTE DATE CHANGE*

FEE: Non-members \$300; Members \$260

DEC. 31: New Year's Eve

2 pm-5 pm: Temple cleaning

7 pm-midnight: Ringing in the New Year, led by Rev. Teijo Munnich

Come join us on New Year's Eve for sitting and walking meditation, chanting and ringing 108 bells to clear ourselves of delusions. Stay afterwards for a little celebrating if you like. If you plan to attend, please let us know by email at info@greattree.org or by phone at 828-645-2085 so we can send you a more detailed schedule.

FEBRUARY 2013

FEB. 1-3: Sesshin

FEB. 9-10: Mother-Child Retreat

Begins Saturday at 9 am and ends Sunday at noon.

An opportunity for mothers to strengthen their spiritual practice in a sharing environment with their children. Activities will be done together to create an environment where children naturally learn from the example of their mother and others. There will be opportunities for mothers to share without children and children to share without mothers. All ages are welcome. Please notify Great Tree in advance if you wish to arrive Friday evening.

FEE: \$150 for mother and one child; \$25 for each additional child.

FEB. 16 & FEB. 23: Meditation & Body Awareness

led by Meredith McIntosh

9 am-12 noon

These two Saturday morning sessions will focus on the importance of balance and ease of both mind and body as it relates to the practice of meditation in the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition—the simple practice of sitting quietly. Instruction will be based on the work of movement educator F. M. Alexander. It will include some gentle hands-on guidance, zazen, and discussion opportunities. It is offered for both experienced and beginning practitioners. You're encouraged to come to both sessions but can also come for just one.

Meredith McIntosh is a long-time student of Tengen Harada Roshi at Bukkokuji in Japan. She is a certified Alexander Technique teacher and massage therapist. Both her self-study and teaching are rooted in the common ground between Zen practice and awareness of body-mind and movement in daily activities.

FEE: \$45 (discounted to \$80 if you take both sessions)

MARCH

MARCH 1-3: Sesshin

MARCH 8-10: Retreat led by Judith Toy

This weekend retreat, "Dance of Emotions: Recognizing, Embracing, and Looking Deeply into the Nature of Our Feelings," will be led by Judith Toy and members of Cloud Cottage Sangha in the Plum Village tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. The weekend is conducted in silence, with opportunities for sitting, walking, and working meditation as well as time for personal reflection and mindful movement. Eating meditation will include vegan meals taken oryoki-style (the practice of the bowls). Dharma talks and private interviews will be offered by the teacher. Teachings will be based on verses on the nature of consciousness. Recommended reading is Thich Nhat Hanh's *Transformation at the Base: Fifty Verses on the Nature of Consciousness*.

Judith Toy is the author of *Murder as a Call to Love: A True Story of Transformation and Forgiveness* (www.murderasacalltolove.com). She is a mindfulness teacher and co-founder of Cloud Cottage Sangha in Black Mountain, NC. In 1997 she was ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh as a core member of his monastic order. She and her husband, Philip Toy, have founded three sanghas in the U.S., including one in a medium security prison. She has taught mindfulness in the U.S., Ireland, Scotland, Romania, and, slated for January 2013, Vietnam.

FEE: \$175 Note: We are seeking a cook for this retreat. Cooking duties are performed in exchange for tuition.

MARCH 16: Introduction to Zen Meditation

9 am-noon

This class will offer instruction in zazen (sitting meditation) from the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition. This simple practice of sitting quietly is sometimes described as "just sitting." The morning will include instruction in the basic form, zazen and kinhin (walking meditation), and opportunity for questions and discussion.

FEE: Suggested dana, \$40

APRIL

APRIL 5-10: Sesshin

MAY

MAY 3-8: Sesshin

MAY 24-27: Beginner's Mind Retreat at SDRC

For details and to register, go to www.southerndharma.org

JUNE

JUNE 5-29: Women in Buddhism, Pajapati's Path

This three-week residential intensive course offers an opportunity for practice and study at Great Tree with the option of college credit through Mars Hill College. The course has been designed by Rev. Munnich and Dr. Katherine Meacham, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of General Studies at Mars Hill College.

FEE: \$1,600, with additional charges for credit (arranged through Mars Hill College); \$50 nonrefundable application fee. Payment plan available with early registration.

JUNE 7-12: Sesshin

JULY

JULY 5-7: Sesshin

JULY 12-14: Teen Retreat

Begins Friday at 5 pm and ends Sunday at 4 pm

This retreat for ages 14 and up includes Dharma teachings, Buddhism study and discussion, meditation, and instruction in temple practices.

FEE: \$70 per child; \$120 for two children; more than two, please inquire.

JULY 22-24: Children's Retreat

Begins Monday at 4 pm; ends Wednesday at 4 pm

Children 7 years and older are invited to participate in a modified retreat schedule under the guidance of Great Tree Sangha adults. Includes Dharma teaching and discussion on some aspect of Buddhism. It will include meditation, chanting, study, discussion, and work. Activities may include arts and crafts such as clay play and origami, outdoor fun, quiet time to practice silence, and music. A kid-friendly practice time.

FEE: \$70 per child; \$120 for two children; more than two, please inquire



Registration for all events is held from 4 pm to 5 pm unless otherwise noted. Orientation begins at 5 pm; dinner is at 6 pm.

AUGUST

AUG. 2-4: Zen Mind, Writing Mind, led by Peggy Tabor Millin

Starts at 5 pm Friday; ends at noon Sunday

Free your creative spirit in a weekend of creative writing within a safe and supportive circle of women. “To control your cow, give it a wide pasture,” was a saying of Zen master Shunryu Suzuki, and you can explore its meaning in this Zen writing workshop for women. Take down the fences around your definition of writing and explore what it means to you. In writing, most of us are bound up by shoulds learned from teachers, parents, and our own self-doubt. What if we had beginner’s mind and simply befriended the words? We will write and read in circle in the morning. You will have afternoon time to explore writing on your own. Silence, solitude, community, and practice (both meditation and writing practice) are the four pillars of the writer’s life. You need not be a writer, and no meditation experience is required to attend or write. Come with an open mind and empty notebook, and leave with an open heart and a notebook full of inspiration.

FEE: Non-members \$175; members \$150

AUG. 31: Practice Day

Mindful Morning and Active Afternoon

9 am-noon: Meditation, dharma talk, discussion

12:30-1:30 pm: Lunch

1:30-4 pm: Work practice, yoga. We will end the day with tea together at 4 pm.

Space is limited to 14, so please RSVP no later than Monday, Aug. 26.

FEE: Suggested dana, \$40

SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 2: Great Tree Anniversary Celebration

Great Tree sangha members will prepare an anniversary brunch to celebrate Great Tree’s eighth anniversary! Happy Birthday, Great Tree! Please RSVP to info@greattreetemple.org or by phone to 828-645-2085. Carpool if possible, or ask about off-site parking-shuttle option.

FEE: Dana

OCTOBER

OCT. 4-9: Sesshin

OCT. 10-13: Anattasati Magga Retreat, led by Nancy Spence

Anattasati Magga means “Let the world take care of itself.” This three-day retreat will offer participants the rare opportunity to absorb Great Tree’s silence and stillness, with no formal Dharma topic. The daily schedule includes sitting, walking and working meditation, Dharma classes and study periods, and meals, all in silence except for lectures. Nancy Spence is the teacher and guide of Anattasati Magga, a Soto Zen sangha for the laity. In 1977 Spence received Zen training at Vichara Bodhiyana in California. She leads monthly Buddhist services, offers individual spiritual guidance, and leads meditation retreats in both North Carolina and California. She holds a master’s degree in psychology and has a private counseling practice. She is the author of *Back to Basics: An Awareness Primer* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: An Adaptation for Reading Aloud to the Dead*.

FEE: \$225

NOVEMBER

NOV. 1-6: Sesshin

NOV. 29 – DEC. 4: Rohatsu Sesshin

DECEMBER

DEC. 7: Annual Buddha’s Enlightenment Celebration and Craft Sale

DEC. 26-31: End of the Year Sesshin

FEE: Non-members \$300; Members \$260

DEC. 31: New Year’s Eve

2 pm-5 pm: Temple cleaning

7 pm-midnight: Ringing in the New Year, led by Rev. Teijo Munnich

Come join us on New Year’s Eve for sitting and walking meditation, chanting and ringing 108 bells to clear ourselves of delusions. Stay afterwards for a little celebrating if you like. If you plan to attend, please let us know by email at info@greattreetemple.org or by phone at 828-645-2085 so we can send you a more detailed schedule.

Ongoing Practice Opportunities

Family Meditation ~ All Welcome: 10 :30 am – Noon

Family meditation is open to all ages and includes a short period of meditation and Dharma teaching. After that, we may do an improvisational play, make origami boats, do some walking (and running and playing) meditation outside, or play board games in front of the fire. We end with a potluck snack. Parents, children, and anyone interested welcome. Family Meditation is usually held on the last Sunday of the month. If you would like to be put on the Family Meditation email list, contact Paige Gilchrist at pmgilchrist@gmail.com.

2013:	Jan 27	April 28	July 28 – <i>Sangha Picnic</i>	
	Feb 24	May 26	off in Aug	Oct 27
	Mar 31	June 30	Sept 29	Nov 24

Practice Periods 2013: March 25 – May 20 / Sept. 25 – Dec. 14

Tuesday Meditation and Study Group: 3:30–5:30 pm

This ongoing, informal discussion group centers on a specific text. It is fine to come just for zazen without being part of the discussion. However, please let us know by phone or email if you plan to attend: info@greattreetemple.org. You can also receive weekly reminders and schedule updates along with the suggested reading. — **Fee:** Dana.

Fall-Winter 2012: Sept. 18-Dec. 18

(no meeting Oct. 2, Nov. 6, or Dec. 4 due to sesshin)

Spring 2013: Jan. 15-May 21

(no meeting April 9 or May 7 due to sesshin)

Fall-Winter 2013: Sept. 17-Dec. 17

(no meeting Oct. 8, Nov. 5, or Dec. 3 due to sesshin)

Thursday Morning Sangha: 6 am–11 am each Thursday morning

Meditation, chanting, breakfast, communal work. Come for any part and stay for as much as you wish.

Sunday Sangha ~ All Welcome: 10 – 11:30 am (Informal Tea 11:30 – Noon)

Sangha is community. Sangha Sundays are an opportunity to build community, share the Dharma, and practice together. Sangha Sundays are usually on the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated. Everyone is welcome!

2012:	2013:	Jan 20	April 21	July 21	Oct 20
Nov 18		Feb 17	May 19	off in Aug	Nov 17
off in Dec		Mar 17	June 16	Sept 15	Dec 15

Great Tree Saturday Work Days for 2012-2013: 9:30 am – 4 pm

Come anytime for as long as you can, let us know if you’ll be here for lunch

2012: Nov 17 / **2013:** April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, Oct 19, Nov 16

REGISTRATION FOR GREAT TREE EVENTS

TO LEARN MORE OR REGISTER ON-LINE, VISIT WWW.GREATTREEMPLE.ORG

TIP: PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR REGISTRATIONS INSTEAD OF CUTTING OUT.

ARRIVAL: Most events begin with a light meal on the first evening and end at noon on the last day. Please arrive to check in by 4pm; orientation and preparation begins at 5pm. Contact us if you need directions: 828-645-2085 info@greattreemple.org

FEES: If you are sending a deposit only, please include your check or money order for 1/2 the event fee (for events over \$100.) Make check payable to Great Tree Zen Temple and mail it to Great Tree Zen Temple, 679 Lower Flat Creek Rd, Alexander NC 28701, attn. Registration. Please indicate the event on the memo line. This secures your reservation. Registration closes when the event fills or 3 days prior to the event: forms and payment in full must be complete 7 days prior. We do not have credit card processing on site. Please indicate the event on the memo line of your check.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If you need to cancel, we request that you do so in a timely fashion, so we can contact people on the waiting list. We must receive your cancellation no later than 7 (seven) days prior to the event. There is a \$25 cancellation fee for events after 7 days. If Great Tree cancels (this is rare), the entire amount will be reimbursed, if you have prepaid in full.

DATES TO ATTEND: _____

EVENT NAME: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (s): _____

E-mail: _____

Full Fee or Deposit enclosed: _____

Are you a member? Yes No *Members have received verification from Great Tree by mail or email in the last 90 days and may opt to apply member's fees.*

Diet / Allergies / Needs: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Their Phone: _____

Physician / Phone / Insurance etc. if applicable: _____

Great Tree sesshins (Zen retreats) are, as much as possible, *silent*.

Men and women are both invited to attend and stay at the temple for the duration of a retreat. Sesshins consist of zazen (sitting meditation), kinhin (walking meditation), work periods, and oryoki meals. Meals are vegan. Participants are expected to share cooking and cleaning up duties. If you can only attend part of a sesshin, you are still welcome. Please let us know the dates you will attend on the registration form. We ask, as much as possible, that people all start the sesshin together.

COST: 2 NIGHTS (weekend): \$150 FOR MEMBERS, \$175 NON-MEMBERS

3 NIGHTS: \$175 FOR MEMBERS, \$225 NON-MEMBERS

5 NIGHTS: \$250 FOR MEMBERS, \$300 NON-MEMBERS

We ask you to bring your own sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, toiletries, and other necessities. We do not wear shoes in the temple, so please bring indoor slippers if you need them. Also, please bring clothes and shoes for work period. If you are a sensitive sleeper, please bring earplugs, as accommodations are dormitory style.

December's Annual Art, Craft & Bake Sale & Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, Dec 15, 11 AM-4 PM (NOTE DATE CHANGE!)

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony 2 pm

Location: Urban Dharma, 29 Page Ave., Downtown Asheville



All types of arts and crafts, as well as baked treats, canned goods, and other food items will be sold to raise money for Great Tree. Donations needed and welcome! Also consider donating spa items or services, and items such as note cards, origami, or mugs. Start your projects now! Or solicit donations from local artists. We will begin collecting donations in mid-November. Please send an email to: info@greattreemple.org if you have questions, want to volunteer to help during the event, or plan to contribute something to the sale. Gassho!

Teen Retreat – Avery Hind

“Congratulations, you are now truly sons and daughters of the Buddha.”

There was a smattering of applause and murmurs of congratulations.

“We did it!” cried Lina Yokote, my companion during the retreat. We had just finished Great Tree's teen retreat. The whole of the retreat had been working up to this moment, when we, four teens, would receive the Precepts.

My retreat-mates—Drew Hargrove, Garrett Ruley, and Lina Yokote—and I had spent three days under the watchful eye of Teijo Munnich, learning about Buddhism and doing the tasks that monks and nuns in a monastery would normally do.

Each day we would get up, meditate, and then perform our respective duties. Lina and I were *doans*, the ones who took care of the temple. We learned how to trim candles, sift incense ash, and take proper care of the altars.

Additionally, each afternoon we would spend an hour learning about the Precepts. The Precepts are a set of rules that Buddhists should live by. When you take them, you vow to do your very best to live by them.

At first I was overwhelmed by the complexity of Buddhism and the Precepts. There are so many ins and outs that it is hard to keep it all straight. But then I realized that it all comes down to one thing: impermanence. Buddhism says that everything is impermanent. If you think about this, it is true. Nothing lasts forever; therefore it all comes down to the present moment.

I highly recommend taking the Precepts, and I highly recommend the teen retreat to any teen with a strong spiritual side and a desire to learn more about Buddhism.



State of Great Tree...*Ebb & Flow* – Ruthanne Kah—with deep appreciation

INFLOW: As you can see there was a small increase in *Donations* over the two-year period, while practice fees declined. Pledges, which are part of this figure, are stable but less than our goal of \$2,000 monthly to meet our mortgage payment.

Indirect Contributions are those Great Tree collected for the Japanese Soto Zen Association following the earthquake in Japan, combined with funds collected to support Chimyo's ongoing education and residency.

OUTFLOW: We dispensed the Indirect Contributions as *dana* (generosity) to the Japanese Earthquake Fund, and directly to Chimyo as *dana* and indirectly to her as part of her monthly stipend. As a temple resident, she is a true gift and resource to Great Tree.

Professional Fees reflect the outflow late in 2011 to the architect for the survey she requested and some additional accounting expenses. Our largest operational expense is heat during the winter and throughout the year, and telephones. We have cut back on some discretionary purchases to reduce overhead. Among those items we have reduced print advertising and focused on using the website to increase and broaden communications. However, some Sangha members do not use a computer, and the newsletter is an important way of sharing the annual calendar, schedule and other news with them. Please recycle the newsletter or share it with others.

SUMMARY: This comparison of the most recent fiscal year-end and the prior year helps us understand the state of Great Tree's finances. Near the end of 2010-11, we were engaged in long-term planning, focused not only on developing a comprehensive site plan for the future, but also some short-term goals. In particular, the driveway has been delayed until we can achieve sustainability. We hope to refinance the mortgage to achieve a better rate and a longer term, reducing the impact on cash flow. The board is working to develop some creative ideas for fund-raising.

PRIORITIES: One priority is building our depleted reserve back to two or three months of operational expenses so that we can respond to emergencies or unexpected challenges. The other is to build pledges so that Great Tree's cash flow stabilizes, then prioritize projects like the driveway.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Some Sangha members made donations in response to our request for air conditioners for the upstairs and the zendo, which was a huge help for the few months of very hot weather that occurred soon after we posted the request. *Volunteers help to reduce some expenses for work we would have to outsource, so planned work days are important. Please check the website under Sangha Activities for scheduled work days. *The much-used washing machine is struggling and has been repaired many times. If anyone has one in good condition to donate, it would be much appreciated (the dryer is fine). *There are other volunteer possibilities, such as contributions to the craft sale or assisting with bulk mail. All provide relief for our residents and support community well-being. *If you would like to make a pledge, you can set up a program on the website or contact the office for more information. *If you have other ideas about how you might volunteer or provide donations of materials or goods, please send an email to office@greattreetemple.org



GTZWT Fiscal Year-End Comparison

INCOME	2011-12	2010-11
Donations	27,392.48	26,542.00
Practice Fees	20,433.92	23,840.00
Indirect Contributions	3,452.00	10,935.00
Fundraising-Sales	3,019.25	2,293.00
Interest Income	32.10	335.53
Total	54,329.75	63,945.53
EXPENSES		
Mortgage Interest	15,332.98	16,698.54
Utilities, Operations	7,458.36	6,520.60
Program Expenses	3,154.50	5,454.59
Generosity	1,227.00	8,565.00
Fundraising	531.22	1,380.90
Printing, postage	3,568.55	4,342.93
Office & Admin	6,828.37	7,150.32
Professional Fees	1,677.40	4,793.75
Staff Expense	15,126.09	11,322.44
Total	54,904.47	66,229.07
Net Income	-574.72	-2,283.54

Cranes For Peace!

When you send Great Tree Zen Temple your gift, we will send you a string of cranes made here at Great Tree, with a prayer for your well-being. Or you may request that we send the cranes as a gift from you

to your friends or loved ones with wishes for their well-being and strength. We will include a gift card in your name stating that the cranes are both a gift to them and a gift that was made in their name to Great Tree Zen Temple for the continuing strength of this community of practice.

Simply fill out & mail the enclosed donation card, or use the form on our web page: <http://www.greattreetemple.org/cranes/>



Oryoki at Children's Retreat