



# Great Tree Zen Temple

newsletter / spring-summer / 2012

## Five students receive precepts

In the tradition of Dogen Zenji, many practitioners receive 16 Bodhisattva Precepts in a ceremony called Jukai. Ju means to receive and kai means precepts. This spring, five students participated in the ceremony:

Christine Bartleson, Jonathan Chaney, Jayne Harnett Hargrove, Sarah McCarthy, and Ann Tucker. In preparation, they took part in a January retreat with Mrs. Tomoe Katagiri to sew their rakusus (small Buddha robes).



*Okesa is your teacher. Okesa is sewing meditation. Through sewing okesa you will learn about yourself. Sewing will show you exactly about you. So please, practice not only stitching, sewing, but more than sewing. You will learn a lot about the spirit of the practice and experience of the practice.*

– Mrs. Tomoe Katagiri, wife of the late Dainin Katagiri Roshi, on sewing as practice

*The precepts are our intention. When we receive the precepts, we acknowledge our deep wish to be altruistic in our actions... making every effort to remember to practice our intention in our everyday life.*

– Rev. Teijo Munnich



*Whether we like it or not,  
time is constantly freeing us  
from our small territory.*

FROM

*Each Moment Is the Universe*

**Dainin Katagiri**



## GREAT TREE

### Abbes

Rev Teijo Munnich

### Board Members

Katherine Blackburn  
Stephanie Jones-Byrne  
Gary Gray  
Brook Reynolds  
Pete Whelihan

### Temple Administrators

#### Fusu:

Ruthanne Kah

#### Ino:

open

#### Shisui:

Pete Whelihan

#### Tenzo:

open

#### Tsusu:

Rev Chimyo Atkinson

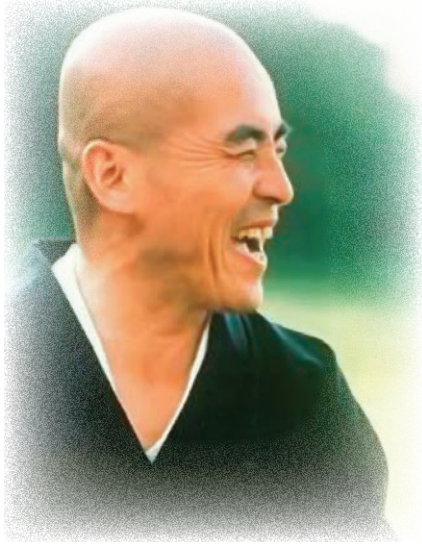


Great Tree Zen Temple  
679 Lower Flat Creek Rd  
Alexander, NC 28701

info@greattreetemple.org  
828-645-2085

## Chalky Dust

– Rev. Teijo Munnich



Whenever Katagiri Roshi used a blackboard, he would get excited and, in his exuberance, break the chalk. I first noticed this in 1977 when a few of us accompanied him to a series of classes in the Minneapolis suburb of Minnetonka. My official job was to tape his lectures, but I was also his self-appointed chalk replacer. Each time he dropped his last small bit and began looking for it in vain, I moved quickly and seamlessly to the front of the room and handed him a new piece of chalk, which he accepted, and just as seamlessly he continued with his talk, expressing himself enthusiastically on the blackboard.

What has always fascinated me about this is that, although he didn't lose his focus on the subject, he didn't remember breaking the chalk. I discovered this one day when I joked with him after class and he looked at me vacantly.

"You know," I said, "every time you give a talk you get so into it that you break chalk."

"I do?" he asked innocently. I thought he was kidding, "Very funny!" I said. "Don't tell me you don't remember. I hand you new chalk at least once at every lecture." He didn't remember.

*"You know," I said,  
"every time you  
give a talk you get  
so into it that you  
break chalk."*

The next time he gave a talk after we had this exchange, the chalk broke as usual. But this time, as soon as it happened, he stopped and smiled at me. I leapt to my feet and handed him a new chalk, smiling to myself as discreetly as possible as I walked back to my place at the tape recorder.

I now experience the same sort of thing. Every time I give a lecture, people report to me things I do, things I say, things I do not recall doing and saying. Recently someone told me I always rub my eyes when I give a talk. I never noticed it until after she told me. I often am stopped by someone who thanks me for something I told them years

ago that turned their life around. My response: "Are you sure it was me?" They're sure. But I'm not really that wise. Wisdom comes and goes I guess, just like everything else in this impermanent life we are part of. But still, how does that work? I can't say I know how it works, but those experiences do help me to continue in this practice.

My teacher in Hosshiji monastery in Japan, Sekkei Harada Roshi, is now entering the stage of senility and cannot quite remember who I am – he gets me mixed up with someone else. This is a teacher whom I knew pretty well – and who knew me – for the two and a half years I lived at Hosshinji, and who accepted my invitation to visit Minnesota Zen Center for his first visit to the United States. He couldn't quite place me in 2007 when I last visited Hosshinji, and the small talk was confusing and ridiculous. But when I asked him about the Dharma, his face changed, his body straightened, his eyes pierced, and he gave me the best and shortest answer I ever received from him, one that turned me around and lifted my consciousness.

Katagiri Roshi began to get out of his own way more consistently as he moved closer to death, realizing the limits of his life. His unspoken teaching was more powerful even than the words that took him beyond the broken chalk. It was coming from his eyes, his body. He spoke with his entire being as he had never done before. Some found it unnerving. For me, the benefit of my time on the cushion came forth and allowed me to step back, take a breath, and receive the truth of life and death – which is all there is, really.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Zen Master Bho Li

by Barbara Ver Kuilen

–Ren Flaum (age 10), Family Meditation sangha

*The Tale of Zen Master Bho Li* is a good read if you have a long plane flight or a rainy day to fill. It is told in an interesting, albeit strange way. The story is told by a disciple of a Buddhist monk spreading the tale of said monk. It revolves around a man, Bho Li, who as he grows up meets songbirds, a "dangerous granny," and an abbot.

Bho Li starts out as a young boy who loses his family in a tsunami. He then learns to live with animals such as songbirds, lions, monkeys, and snakes of the forest. He meets Soyu Sei, an elderly woman who in Japanese storytelling is known as a "dangerous granny." He lives with her for several years as he becomes a civilized person again. When Bho Li is ready, Soyu Sei takes him to a Zen monastery, Silent Thunder, where he is inducted as a monk



in training, has a series of misadventures, becomes the head abbot and trains several pupils. Everything seems to be going great until a woman requests admission to the monastery. She sits for four days until finally being let in and joining the practicing monks.

Everybody lives peacefully, with only minor troubles, until Bho Li, in his old age, becomes very ill and passes away. His heir, the woman, takes over Silent Thunder as the abbess and sends other advanced pupils to spread the tale across the land.

Overall, I think that *The Tale of Zen Master Bho Li* is an interesting read and has a message geared more toward adults, but it presents itself in such a way that a child can easily enjoy this book. Therefore, I recommend this book for ages 12-15. That's not to say that adults couldn't enjoy this book too, only that for some of its qualities, only a child can truly understand this masterpiece.

– Barbara Ver Kuilen will present her book *The Tale of Zen Master Bho Li* at Malaprops on Thursday May 3rd at 7pm

## Docho Roshi has the weed-whacker...

– Chimyo Atkinson

In his safety helmet with the face guard down, he looks like anyone's 60-ish uncle wielding a noisy power tool on a Saturday morning. We monks are clearing the brush alongside the road that leads to Yokoji and sweeping the cuttings and debris into a cement-lined rain gully. The muck and weeds wash down to the bottom of the hill, where they clog the trench as it levels out. We then dig out the clogs and toss the mess down the bank of a stream on the other side of the same road.

If the other monks find as little logic in this exercise as I do, they aren't saying. I am sweating profusely, and the sweat pools behind the frames of my glasses where they meet my cheeks. Although my pants are rolled up to my shins, the bottoms are still wet. Some of the weeds have thorns that prick my fingers through the cheap cotton work gloves. I am cursing under my breath. Right speech will be a challenge for me throughout this angu, among other things.

As I'm working and griping, a piece of debris hits me in the back of the head. It stings, and I whip my head around with what I'm sure is, to say the least, a look of irritation and a curse on my lips. Docho Roshi is behind me diligently whacking away at the weeds on the other side of the road, blissfully unaware of the debris flying everywhere in his wake.

I don't want to make Docho Roshi into some kind Zen leprechaun magically tossing bits of twigs at the back of my noggin at the precise moment I need a wake-up call. I tend to think rather that there are forces in the universe, including middle-aged men with weed whackers, that are coming together at any given moment to bring us back to reality. Most of the time we are too caught up in our delusions or just plain too lazy to notice. Every once in a while a good pop to the head does the trick.

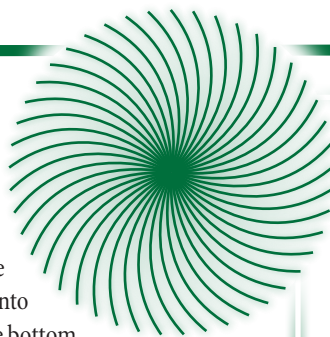
Tongue bitten, I turn back to my place at the muddy trench knowing there is nothing for it but to keep going. A few more handfuls of sopping, stinking greens and suddenly the trench is completely clear. The water is running and sparkling like a silver ribbon. It looks inviting enough to drink. Roshi cuts the motor just at that moment.

The resident nun appears to tell us that the work period is over. Straw brooms, rakes and shovels are tucked under arms and propped over shoulders as we trudge back up the hill. Halfway up Konrok-san is waiting at his tiny pickup truck with jugs of cold tea and salty snacks loaded on the bed. It's decided that there is a nicer place to take a break a bit further up the road, so we all grab some goodies and walk on. We stop at a spigot beside the road where a civilian woman with dyed red hair is filling gallon bottles with water. The water comes from a source about 2,000 meters above the temple, we are told, and is said to be healthful. We all have a taste from the spigot when the woman has filled her bottles. The water is cold with a metallic taste, probably from the pipes. But mainly it's cold and I drink greedily – four cupfuls. I find I don't even want the bitter tea.

We stand around for a few more minutes admiring the fields overgrown with the flowering weeds we have just finished tossing in the stream. No signal is given, but we all begin slowly moving back onto the road and up to the monastery. I'm walking slowly. My legs are still jittery from the work, and my head is light and empty.

Suddenly Docho Roshi is beside me asking questions. They are the same questions he's asked me several times since I arrived at the monastery. Where am I from? Who is my teacher? Who is her teacher? I'm starting to think this is some kind of test. He also asks me about the hurricane in New York and what my family thinks about my practice. I answer breathlessly, trying to keep up with him as we climb the steep stairway to the temple entrance. He leaves me at the top of the stair, where we bow to each other with "arigato gozaimasu." I go back to my room with the other nuns to pull off my wet clothes, wash my grimy face, and lie down on my futon. I think a little about the water poem I'd been working on earlier that week. Then I stop thinking.

*Chimyo Atkinson, a resident of Great Tree, spent three months at Yokoji Temple in Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, this past fall, attending the 2011 Sotoshu International Angu.*



## Great Tree Sister Sanghas

The following groups host Rev. Munnich on a regular basis and conduct their own programming. For their schedules, please be in touch with the designated contact people or visit the organization's website.

### Charlotte Zen Meditation Society

[www.meetup.com/Charlotte-Zen-Meditation-Society/](http://www.meetup.com/Charlotte-Zen-Meditation-Society/)  
Harmony House, 726 East Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28203

### Green Mountain Zendo

5014 Sunset Bluff Drive, Huntsville, AL 35803  
Jim Gordon: [kawajimg@gmail.com](mailto:kawajimg@gmail.com) 256-426-3344

### Spartanburg Zen Sangha

Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg  
210 Henry Place, Spartanburg, SC 29304  
David Hōki Stack: [d.r.stack@charter.net](mailto:d.r.stack@charter.net) 1-954-214-2157

### Winged Wisdom, Savannah GA

Contact Susan Lamb at [sblamb@aol.com](mailto:sblamb@aol.com)

### Zen Center of Asheville (ZCA)

Zazen instruction changed to 1st Wednesdays at 6 pm  
The All-Day Sit continues on 3rd Saturdays.  
*Both held only if there are sign-ups. (email–tel–msg)*

Zazen schedule: Mon-Fri: 6 am–40 minute period.  
Saturday has a 2nd 40 minute sit after a 10 minute kinhin followed by the Heart Sutra chant. On 2nd-4th Sat. there is also an 8 am sit and Heart Sutra chant.

#### Teijo's ZCA Wednesday lecture dates:

May 9 & 23 / June 6 & 20 / July 11 & 25 / Sept 12 & 26 / Oct 17 & 31 / Nov 14 & 28.  
*(see [www.zcasheville.org](http://www.zcasheville.org) for list of other speakers.)*

May 2 guest speaker: Dale Ver Kuilen will speak at ZCA Wednesday 7pm and Barbara Ver Kuilen will present her book *The Tale of Zen Master Bho Li* at Malaprops on Thursday May 3rd 7pm. See review elsewhere in this newsletter.

Dale and Barbara co-facilitate the Midwest Soto Zen Community in Madison WI <http://www.mszo.org/index.html>



## 2012 Event Schedule

**Arrival:** Please arrive for check-in by 4pm; orientation and preparation begins at 5pm.



### Introducing: *A Season of Words*

#### A MONTHLY GATHERING FOR POETS AND WRITERS

**DATES:** APRIL 15 / MAY 13 / JUNE 10 / FALL TBA / **TIME:** 2 PM TO 4 PM

**O**n April 15, Great Tree will offer the first in a series of monthly gatherings for writers seeking to make space in their lives to practice their craft amidst the beauty of the changing seasons here at Great Tree. This is not a class or a critique session, but a chance to come write and share with others. The sessions are based on the traditional ginko, or haiku walk (gin, singing, praising; ko, walking). However, writers will not be limited to any particular form—poetry, fiction, journaling—whatever suits the individual. The sessions will begin with 30 minutes of zazen as part of the creative process.

If you are interested in participating, please RSVP at [info@greentreetemple.org](mailto:info@greentreetemple.org). You may join us at any time. Suggested dana is \$5 per gathering.

**APRIL 15** A Season of Words

**MAY 4-9** Sesshin

**MAY 13** A Season of Words

**MAY 25-28** Beginner's Mind Retreat at *Southern Dharma Retreat Center*

1661 West Road, Hot Springs, NC 28743 / 828-622-7112

Email: [southerndharma@earthlink.net](mailto:southerndharma@earthlink.net) / [www.southerndharma.org](http://www.southerndharma.org)



### Pajapati's Path *Women in Buddhism*

**A 3-WEEK MEDITATION RETREAT FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (MEN & WOMEN)**

**DATE:** MAY 30 – JUNE 21 — A one-week silent meditation retreat is included in the course.

**T**his three-week experiential course offers students an opportunity to live in an intentional community of mindfulness while exploring the teachings of key women Buddhists throughout history: Pajapati (the first woman ordained by the Buddha), poet nuns of east Asia, as well as contemporary teachers. Students work, study, and meditate together in a retreat setting guided by Reverend Teijo Munnich—co-designer of the course with Dr. Katherine Meacham, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of General Studies at Mars Hill. (*Three academic credits at either the 200 or 400 level are available through Mars Hill College's Religion and Philosophy Department.*)

**MAY 30 – JUNE 21** Pajapati's Path – *Women in Buddhism*

— Fee: \$2300 (additional charges for credit)

see also: [facebook.com/ Great Tree Zen Temple Summer Internship](https://www.facebook.com/GreatTreeZenTempleSummerInternship)

**JUNE 1-6** Sesshin

**JUNE 10** A Season of Words

**JULY 6-8** Sesshin

**JULY 13-15** Young People's Retreat (ages 13 and up)

*Begins Friday at 5 pm and ends Sunday at noon.* The retreat includes Dharma teachings, study and discussion of Buddhism, meditation, and instruction in temple practices. — Fee: \$60 per child/\$20 for each additional child

**JULY 23-25** Children's Retreat (ages 7 and up)

*Begins Monday at 3:30 pm and ends Wednesday at 3:30 pm.* Children 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, playful practice time. — Fee: \$60 per child/\$20 for each additional child

**AUG 3-5** Zen Mind, Writing Mind Led by Peggy Tabor Millin

*Starts at 5 pm Friday and 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," said Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Explore the meaning of this thought as you take down the fences around your definition of "writing" and discover 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 cultivated beginner's mind and simply befriended the words? We will write and read in a circle in the morning, and you will have afternoon time to explore writing on your own. Silence, solitude, community, and practice (both meditation and writing) 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: \$175 nonmembers/\$150 members

**SEPT 1** All-Day Sitting 9 am – 3:30 pm

Mindful morning and active afternoon. The day will include yoga, an arts-related activity, lunch, discussion, and a short work period. We will end the day with tea together. Space is limited, so please RSVP no later than Friday, Aug. 27. Limited to 14. — Fee: Dana (\$40 suggested)

**SEPT 2** Great Tree Anniversary Celebration

Great Tree sangha members will prepare an anniversary brunch to celebrate Great Tree's seventh anniversary! Happy birthday, Great Tree! Please RSVP to [info@greentreetemple.org](mailto:info@greentreetemple.org) or 828-645-2085. Carpool if possible, or ask about off-site parking shuttle. — Fee: Dana

**SEPT 28 – OCT 3** Sesshin

**OCT 11-14** Anattasati Magga Retreat

Designed in the formal Soto Zen tradition of Shasta Abbey, this retreat offers the rare opportunity to "let the world take care of itself" while you absorb the silence and stillness of retreat. The daily schedule includes morning, midday, evening, and mealtime services; silent, seated and walking meditations; working meditation; Dharma classes; and study periods. Except for Dharma lectures, this retreat will be in silence. There will be no preannounced Dharma topic. Instead, effort will be put into becoming easy and familiar with how we conduct our retreats and how we move throughout the monastic schedule, letting the self quiet, settle, and feel deeply supported by each day of practice. For registration and details, write to [info@anattasatimagga.org](mailto:info@anattasatimagga.org).

**Nov 2-7** Sesshin

**Nov 30 – Dec 5** Rohatsu Sesshin

**Dec 11** Annual Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony & Craft Sale

Most events begin with a light meal on the first evening and end at noon the last day. *Contact us for directions: 828-645-2085 – info@greattreetemple.org*

## Registration for Great Tree Events

TO LEARN MORE OR REGISTER ON-LINE, VISIT [WWW.GREATTREEMPLE.ORG](http://WWW.GREATTREEMPLE.ORG)

**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@greattreetemple.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 communications 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.

## Ongoing Practice Opportunities

### Practice Periods

**2012:** March 25 – May 22 / Sept. 25 – Dec. 17

### 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.**

April 3, 2012 – May 22, 2012      NO MEETING ON THESE SESSHIN DATES:  
Sept. 25, 2012 – Dec. 18, 2012      May 8, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, or Dec. 4, 2012

### 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 at Great Tree. Everyone is welcome!

<b>2012:</b>	April 15	July 15	Oct. 21
<b>3rd Sun of month</b>	May 20	Aug. 19	Nov. 18
	June 17	Sept. 16	Dec. 16

### 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. If you would like to be put on the Family Meditation email list, contact Paige Gilchrist at pmgilchrist@gmail.com.

<b>2012:</b>	April 29	July 29	Oct. 28
<b>Last Sun of month</b>	May 27	Aug–skip	Nov. 25
	June 24	Sept. 30	

## Join in Great Tree **CRAFT** Gatherings!

Great Tree's annual art and craft sale, held every December in conjunction with our Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony, is the temple's major fundraiser of the year. This year, we're organizing to take the 2012 art and craft sale to new heights with a wonderful array of handmade items, all created during sangha gatherings.

With just a few deadlines and a lot of fun along the way, we will have a roomful of beautiful offerings for the public by curtain time.

At each Craft Gathering, we will have projects and materials ready to go and folks who will teach the ropes. We need many sets of hands to take part. Crafters of all levels—including beginners—welcome. Come gather with us, spend time in sangha community, and help handcraft the future of Great Tree Zen Temple.

For dates and details about upcoming Gatherings, contact: info@greattreetemple.org or 828-645-2085.



## Great Tree Financial Report

### Where We Stand: March 2012

– Ruthanne Kah

This year, while we are experiencing the unprecedented warmth of an early spring and renewed energy, we are also undergoing a sea change at Great Tree.

Membership, attendance and participation continue to grow in a modest fashion.

However, pledges and donations are 14% below what they were last year at this time. Practice fees remain stable and are increasingly important to sustaining Great Tree.

Great Tree has experienced some increase in outflow, the result of unexpected operational costs for things like printing, postage and communications. We rely on email and website communications, but cannot entirely give up snail mail. Some friends and members do not use email or have access to computers. The newsletter and other mailings remain an important component of outreach for them. Printed materials, the website and email updates all work together to keep the sangha informed and provide the opportunity to register for programs.

Facility upkeep, general, kitchen and administrative expenses have all shown some small increases, many unavoidable. For instance, treatment of the zendo for carpenter bees, plumbing repairs, and purchase of a lawn mower to replace one that was on loan and broken down were all necessary but unexpected. Thankfully, owing to the warmer winter, heating expenses have been reduced.

Some increases are the result of general economic trends, but the net increase in expenses amounts to 23% compared to last year at this time. While these figures are small, they have a large impact on cash flow. Not only does the sangha support our two residents, Teijo and Chimyo, but Great Tree has consistent attendance of about 45 people per month who come one or more times to practice, study or visit. We have added a new Sunday Sangha program and Teen Retreat to the schedule.

Our cash reserve is critically low because of having to draw on it to offset the additional costs. The Board of Directors is working along with Teijo to address this challenge. Among ideas on the table are: selling the tractor, arranging for a new mortgage to reduce the monthly outflow, and seeking sources to underwrite larger projects, such as repairing the driveway and road. Our annual budget is modest, but small incremental contributions make a huge difference to operational stability and ease for Great Tree. All contributions, no matter the size, help Great Tree continue to flourish.

## Great Tree Site Plan Committee – Spring Update – Jan Jinen Howard

The purpose of this Committee is to propose a site plan for the property based on the priority of needs, both present and future, and grounded in the mission of Great Tree. The committee began meeting in January 2011 and meets 2-3 times a month. It includes representatives from the Great Tree leadership, board, and sangha. The members are Rev. Teijo Munnich, Rev. Chimyo Atkinson, Tami Flaum, Brook Genryu Reynolds, and Jan Jinen Howard.

The development of a site plan is a multifaceted process that will unfold in phases based on the most pressing needs and availability of funds. This process requires that numerous factors be considered and addressed in a step-by-step manner. The first step was to enlist the services of an architect. With the approval of the temple's board, architect Alice Dodson of Weaverville was retained to serve in this capacity. Her expertise in this type of project has become evident through our meetings with her and the preliminary drawings she has provided. She will assist in providing a project outline, master plan, and list of materials necessary for each phase of the project. Ms. Dodson is offering her services at a substantially reduced rate, for which we offer deep bows of appreciation.

Our current building has served us well and will remain an integral part of the site plan. The board has granted approval to obtain a topographical survey, which is needed before any improvements can be undertaken. The first priority is to address the parking and road access issues. We will obtain three estimates from graders, including an environmental grader, to assess what is feasible, environmentally responsible and cost-effective.

In light of construction costs and our commitment to fiscal responsibility, the second proposed priority is to build a new zendo and reconfigure the use of our current building, rather than first building a separate residential center. This will provide increased housing for residents and retreat attendees, needed storage area, and room for growth. This phase will include making the current building ADA-compliant and addressing land-use needs such as landscaping, camping areas, walking paths, etc. The long-term proposal is to build a separate residential center as the need arises.

The support of Great Tree's sangha and members is deeply appreciated and essential to our mission and growth. It is thanks to your commitment and support of practice that we are at this juncture. The committee does not act on its own. All proposed expenditures are submitted to the board for approval before implementation. We are committed to providing regular updates as developments unfold and are excited at the prospect of addressing our most pressing needs, such as parking and road access.

## Board Update

– Stephanie Jones-Byrne

Great Tree's board of directors has met monthly, and our current focus is development to support the improvement and expansion of road access and parking. Thanks to the Site Plan Committee, we have an outline to first improve the existing road, then add a more easily accessible road, and eventually have it paved. The end result will be a Great Tree that is more accessible and self-sustaining. We will be providing the sangha with opportunities to support this project.

The board has also discussed plans for our annual anniversary celebration, a brunch on Sunday, September 2. In addition to wonderful food and good company, this year's gathering is slated to include board member introductions and a brief meeting to facilitate elections and a "State of Great Tree" report. We invite all sangha members and friends to attend. Stay tuned for details.

If you would like to help with planning or fundraising, or want to learn more about membership on the board or a committee, please contact Great Tree by phone or email.



## Myojo's Bread Recipe

– Chimyo Atkinson

I had the pleasure of spending a day with sangha member and Great Tree Temple officer Myojo Sara Wexler a few weeks ago. I'd asked her for her bread recipe, and instead of just handing me a list of ingredients, she invited me to her home so that she could show me exactly how it's done. Here's what I learned:

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup of honey  
4 cups of hot water  
3 packets of active dry yeast  
6 or more cups of flour  
(or as much as is needed - see below)



**STEP ONE:** Arrive at a friend's house, have a seat at her table and a cup of tea or coffee, and a pleasant chat. Once you've briefed each other on the current status of your life, family, and spiritual practice, get to work. Mix the honey, hot water (tap water is okay), and yeast, and allow to sit until bubbles form. Add 3-4 cups of flour—any kind will do—until it forms a loose, pancake-like batter. Cover and let rise for at least one hour, during which you and your companion may have a lunch at the Mexican restaurant down the street and afterwards cruise the local craft gallery.

**STEP TWO:** By the time you return from your outing, the mixture will have doubled in volume. Mix in oil (optional) and/or other extras such as sunflower seeds, nuts, dried fruit, herbs, or whatever you like. Add additional flour until the mixture is too stiff to stir, then empty the bowl onto the kneading surface (Myojo uses a beautiful slab of black marble). Knead the dough, adding as much flour as necessary until it is no longer sticky. Form the dough into a ball and place in a greased bowl, rolling it around until the surface of the ball is coated with the oil. Cover with a clean, damp dish towel and allow to rise for at least two hours. This is just enough time for you and your companion to visit a local festival, strolling leisurely among the vendors, enjoying the atmosphere and a little jazz under the entertainment tent.

**STEP THREE:** When you get back from the festival separate the dough into three parts and shape them into oiled loaf pans. Cover again and allow to rise another two hours. This gives your friend just enough time for a quick nap while you catch a couple of Oprah reruns. Once the loaves have risen, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake loaves for 30 minutes. The loaves will shrink from the sides of the pan indicating they are done. Allow the loaves to cool in the pan for 20 minutes before removing, during which you and your friend can take the dog for a short walk.

According to Myojo, the bread will turn out differently every time, like jazz. Enjoy!

## Fun at the Mother and Child Retreat, March 2012



### Tree Elegant

In winter, the naked trees  
display their inner beauty  
their leaf-free expressions:  
their rooted trunks rising straight or curving  
their thrust-up arms  
jagged elbows  
delicate fingers  
sometimes interlaced  
with other tree limbs  
or woven with long drooping vines and  
whipping by the highway  
when you look to the side  
and especially elegant  
at twilight  
silhouetted against  
the bluest sky  
—a still  
pirouette.

Randal Pride

Great Tree Zen Women's Temple  
679 Lower Flat Creek Rd  
Alexander, NC 28701

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## Help Us Grow!

If you would like to make a donation, volunteer, register for an event, or get information, please contact us at:

Great Tree Zen Temple  
679 Lower Flat Creek Road  
Alexander, NC 28701

828-645-2085  
[info@greattretemple.org](mailto:info@greattretemple.org)  
[www.greattretemple.org](http://www.greattretemple.org)

Your support is greatly appreciated.  
Without you, Great Tree will not grow!

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

### REMEMBRANCES

Part of Great Tree's practice is to honor the memory of loved ones who have passed on. And, in the spirit of compassion, our services also include recognition of those who are suffering illness or hardship as well as those who wish to commemorate special events.

To find out more about having a loved one remembered or celebrated and/or to make a gift in someone's memory or honor, visit:

<http://www.greattretemple.org/resources/memorials-honoraria/>



### Great Tree Store T-Shirts, Mugs, Shoyeido Incense and more!

Sugar pink and forest green T-shirts in 100% cotton. Locally printed in Asheville and designed by sangha members, the tree is the work of Priscilla Yokote and the Great Tree calligraphy is by Teijo.



Dark forest green with calligraphy design, regular cut, in sizes from small to xx-large.

Sugar pink in women's cut in sizes from extra small to xx-large. Plum tree on the back.

The smaller sizes will fit children age 10 and up and younger children as a nightshirt. We also have "youth medium" size, which works as an adult extra small.

**T-SHIRTS: \$20.00 EACH**

**INCENSE: \$20.00 EACH** Shoyeido Corp. incense in two aromas. Each box has 35 sticks made from natural materials with no animal ingredients or testing or synthetics. We sell these quickly and if we run out, we'll be glad to order some for you when we restock.

**MUGS: \$15.00 EACH** Designed by Brook Reynolds, these white ceramic mugs make great tea, chai or coffee mugs.

### Giving through volunteer work-dana

There are many wonderful opportunities to create community through volunteering at Great Tree. We are asking individuals, families, and friends to consider what they enjoy doing and share their talents with Great Tree. The suggestion is to commit to a time once a month for a period of six months when you, your family, or a team of two or more would like to come and fill a specific ongoing need related to indoor or outdoor maintenance. There are also specific projects that arise where your assistance would be of great help. It is often more fun and definitely community-building when we do work practice together.

Areas where help is needed are: grounds maintenance (garden, yard, chopping wood, weeding), indoor temple cleaning, indoor maintenance, computer and IT support, special projects (mailings, event preparation, etc.), sewing and mending, seasonal canning, general repairs, and special needs (electrician, plumber, carpenter, and others as they arise). Please consider how you may be able to help and let us know by writing to [info@greattretemple.org](mailto:info@greattretemple.org), Attn.: Volunteer Coordinator. In your email include your name, contact information, volunteer preference, and special skills or talents. We will then contact you to set up the particulars. Initial and ongoing direction and support will be provided to each volunteer as needed. You will be told what type of work is needed when you arrive. There are many options available: weekly, monthly, quarterly, special events or special needs to fit everyone's busy lifestyles.

We look forward to hearing from you and sharing in this practice together.