



The Hazy Moon

Great Mountain Zen Center
Fall 2009



IN THIS ISSUE:

- ANGO 2009
- WORDS FROM OUR TEACHERS
- WORDS FROM OUR SHUSSO
- NEW ZAZEN & SERVICE SCHEDULE
- GYODO AND GENTO ORDAINED
- CHIP AND BILLY TAKE THE PRECEPTS
- HOKAI GOT MARRIED
- GREAT HEART W/ VOICE DIALOGUE
- DANA OPPORTUNITIES
- THANK YOU

ANGO FALL 2009

Dharma Talk by Gerry Shishin Wick, Roshi

"Dwelling in Ango"

In India at the beginnings of Buddhism, monks used to pilgrimage from place to place to learn from venerable teachers and to practice in hermitages and in sacred places. When the monsoon season arrived they would gather in monastic settings and practice together. *Thus the tradition of Ango started.* Today Ango is a 90-day training period where we emphasize our zazen practice and participation at the Zen Center. *Ango* literally means

"peaceful dwelling." When I reflect upon the meaning of Ango, I recall the story of the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng.

In the year 660 while carrying wood in the marketplace, Hui-neng, the future 6th Patriarch, heard a monk chanting from the Diamond Sutra "Dwelling in no place, raise the Bodhi mind." Hui-neng had a spontaneous deep realization which is quite remarkable given that he was an illiterate wood gatherer trying to survive with his widowed mother.

Dwelling in no place means that nothing is fixed including all of your self images. That is the true meaning of Ango - peacefully dwelling in no place. That is what we call emptiness, no fixed thing, no dwelling place. Not even a square inch of ground upon which to stand. As the *Identity of Relative and Absolute* states, "Seeing the absolute is not yet enlightenment." Seeing emptiness is not yet enlightenment. *It is only in this state of realization of emptiness that your true nature can be revealed in all of its many glorious aspects.* Hui-neng was not satisfied with his awakening and told himself, "I seek the Great Teaching. Why should I stop half way?"

Logic does not reach it because in logic we are manipulating thought objects and trying to give them some reality that we can grab onto. Because we have not developed the confidence and trust in ourselves we continue to look for a flash of insight or sign outside ourselves. After you have exhaustively searched every nook and cranny, you will find what you have been seeking in your own heart. But in order to access the openness of your heart, you have to shed the skin of your old habit-ridden self and enter into the unknown which is the darkness where we cannot distinguish familiar shapes and familiar sounds.

In this unknown realm we cannot rely on any of our old tricks for maintaining separation which is the actual cause of our confusion. When we let go of the small, separate self we can rest in the bosom of true self. *When we fully accept all reality just as it is, the struggle is over.* That acceptance includes compassion for ourselves just as we are. It is a deep surrender of our whole being to the simple truth of all embracing love.



All of us reach stages in our practice where we hit a wall and darkness descends. There is a natural tendency in Zen Centers to want to be the best meditator, the best Zen student. When the luster of that ruse starts to dim, then the darkness of the unknown begins to descend. When you want to give up on the spiritual life but find that all alternatives are devoid of any meaning, the darkness descends. At this point you have no choice and you just have to surrender to the unknown.

As those of you know who have participated in the Great Heart retreats and classes, we all have fixed beliefs that run our lives. A common fixed belief is "I am not good enough" or "I am unlovable." Our behavior is controlled by that belief. When pain or discomfort arises in our life we take comfort in falling back into that belief. It is a negative feedback loop in which we are caught. Again at this point you have no choice and you just have to surrender to the unknown.

I was recently reading St. John of the Cross and he says that this is the beginning of blessedness. He prayed to God, "Take my lofty spiritual concepts and plunge them into darkness and then burn them." *We can pray to take all of our notions of goodness and all of our false beliefs and let them drop away and plunge us into the unknown.*

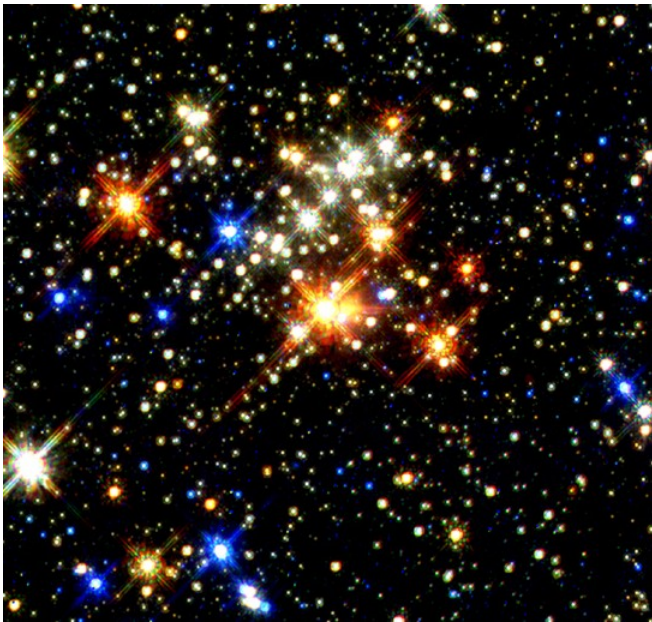
All attempts to regain inspiration in your practice have only reinforced your false images of self. One paradox of the spiritual path is that in striving to transcend the self, we actually build it up. The only

escape is total surrender to the unknown. Surrender means total acceptance of our inadequacies, our limitations, our lack of insight. *Plunge into the darkness of not knowing where all concepts of holiness are obliterated and we have no place to go but into the silence where the true self secretly reveals itself to us.*

In Mirabai Star's translation of St. John of the Cross's *The Dark Night of the Soul* she translates all reference to evil, sin, hell and the devil with terms that reflect a false sense of separation from God. The term *El Diablo* which usually means *the Devil* is translated by Mirabai as "fragmented self" which is the shadow side of our own being so lost in the illusion of separation from God that all it can do is rebel against merging.

In the three pure precepts which are part of the 16 Bodhisattva precepts we receive during jukai, the first pure precept is "Cease doing evil." Whenever we create separation or fragment the self, we are doing evil. Bernie Glassman interprets this precept as *maintain the mind of not knowing*. Knowing creates separation. There is the knower and the thing that is known. Not knowing is most intimate.

Dogen said that the First Pure Precept is "the dwelling place of all the Buddhas, Dharma and precepts. It is the very source of all the Buddhas, Dharma and precepts." What is that dwelling place? It is intimately related to the Diamond Sutra's dwelling in no place?



There is a Muslim declaration "There is no God but God." The first part says, "There is no God." That is the absolute emptiness and out of that absolute emptiness arises God. So there is no God but God. There is a Buddhist expression, "Because the self is no-self, it is called the self." What is the self other than no self? What is God other than no God? What is ceasing to do evil other than the no-place dwelling place of all the Buddhas, Dharma, and precepts -- the very no-source source of all the Buddhas, Dharma and precepts.

The fragmented self is terrified of the unknown and with good reason. The no-self self cannot be revealed with the shadow clinging to its apron strings. The fragmented self does not want to be made whole.

The road to the true self is not for the weak of heart and the casual meditator. Those who are just curious will be quickly disappointed. There has to be a deep longing in your heart and fire burning in your gut. You must be willing to plunge into the abyss of the unknown. And you must be willing to surrender control to something larger than your fragmented ego. In fact, it is a state where you have absolutely no control.

Our practice is not about turning away from the pain but learning to rest in it. Our practice is about being fully present in the darkness within the light, in the emptiness of our own souls. Rather than distracting ourselves from the darkness at the core of our being, we learn to sit with it, rest in it, pay attention to it and open our hearts to it.

It is the source of our long lost home. ▲

Shuso's Inspiration for Ango

Dear Sangha,

Our Ango at Great Mountain Zen Center begins on September 20th and concludes on December 12th. Please join me in increasing your commitment to your sitting practice during Ango, so that together we may realize the depth of this amazing life we share.

Roshi and Sensei have asked me to be Shuso (Head Trainee) for this Ango, and I am happy and humbled to do so. I feel a responsibility to help support the entire sangha's practice during this time. For me, that means to be present every moment with each person and with our group as a whole. I feel many of our members (and perhaps the Center as a whole) are in the midst of powerful transitions right now. Practicing together will help these transitions occur fully, with clarity and heart.



At a recent dharma discussion, several things spoken by sangha members resonated deeply for me. One said that his aspiration in practice was to constantly recognize and honor a deep longing within himself; another said that his commitment during Ango was to appreciate the efforts of all his dharma brothers and sisters throughout Ango, as they gave him support throughout space and time. I am looking forward to this season that I may honor those instincts which I share -- that we are not separate. That everything we do, even when alone, affects all of us. That there is a beautiful harmony always, sometimes just outside my hearing, which is the voice of a great heart that sustains us all.

Each of us has our own capacity for practice. But as with everything else, it is not fixed. When things got rocky in the ZCLA sangha, Maezumi Roshi would say, "increase your capacity." When I heard that, I realized that the only thing keeping me from practice was myself. Whatever your capacity may be, I thank you in advance for participating. It is a joy to have dharma brothers and sisters on this path!

Sincerely,
Paul Gyodo Agostinelli

Ango Retreat Schedule

September

- 20 Ango Entering Ceremony (*Ceremony marking the beginning of the Intensified Training Period*)
25-27 Sesshin (*traditional Zen meditation retreat*)

October

- 23-25 Sesshin
4, 11, 18 Great Heart Class (*a mix of the tools of Great Heart Way practice and Voice Dialogue used to facilitate the exposure and release of childhood emotional habit patterns*)

November

- 8 Great Heart Class
14 Zazenkai (*one-day meditation retreat*)



December

- 5-12 Rohatsu Sesshin (*seven-day sesshin marking the end of Ango and commemorating the Buddha's enlightenment*)
12 Dharma Combat/Dialogue (*Gyodo will respond to questions about the Dharma*).
31 New Year's Eve Zazenkai and Fusatsu Ceremony (*this ceremony is one of atonement, bringing in the new year with a clean slate, and celebration*)

Weekly Monastic Schedule - Fall Ango 2009

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday

4:35am	Wake Up
5:00-5:35	Zazen
5:45	Zazen & Kinhin, Service*
7:30	Asana Yoga
9:00	Breakfast
9:30	Samu
12:00pm	Zazen (open sitting & walking, no jikido)*
1:00	Lunch & break
2:30	Samu
5:00	Dharma Study/Exercise
6:00	Dinner
5:15	Zazen & Kinhin (Mondays - Naropa)*
7:00-8:30	Zazen & Kinhin (Tues, Wed, Sat)*
9:00	Lights Out

Thursday

4:35am	Wake Up
5:00-5:35	Zazen
5:45-7:20	Zazen & Kinhin, Service*
7:30	Asana Yoga
9:00	Breakfast
9:30-12pm	Samu

Sunday

4:35am	Wake-up
5:00-7:00	Zazen & Kinhin
8:00	Samu*
9:30	Service, Zazen & Kinhin*
11:15	Dharma Talk*
12:15pm	Lunch & Cleanup*
4:30-6:30	LGBTQ Practice & Discussion Group*

Hossan (relaxed schedule)

Thursday 12pm - Saturday 4:35am



*These events are open to all Sangha Members. If you would like to participate in other parts of the monastic schedule, and you are welcome to, speak with Mui.

**Dokusan on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday mornings, and Wednesday evenings.

Gassho...

Recent Events

Boulder Pride-Fest Block Party

On September 12, GMZC shared a booth with the Boulder Zen Center at the Boulder Pride-Fest Block Party. Kuden, Yuki, and Mui spent the day chatting with Jige Todd Kanshin and Val Killpack (of BZC) about anything and everything under the Zen sun. On occasion, the rain would cease, the temperatures would rise above 40° and someone would venture by the booth to ask a question, take a handout, or share a story.



The Pride-Fest is Boulder Pride's (the local LGBTQ activist non-profit - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer & Questioning) annual pride party that happens on the Pearl Street Mall. The LGBTQ group that meets on Sundays at GMZC has become well known in the Boulder/Denver area, has attracted many visitors, and has a consistent group of 10-15 folks. Many people stopped by the booth sharing their appreciation for GMZC's gift of the space and the coordination of this group. See the weekly zazen schedule below for more information about when this group meets.



Novice Priest Ordination: Gyodo & Gento

On August 30th Paul Gyodo Agostinelli and Carlos Gento Estrella were ordained as novice Zen priests by Shishin Roshi. The zendo was almost full with forty people in attendance. Many who observed the ceremony agreed that this particular ceremony was most inspiring. Shishin Roshi talked about the path of the novice priest and the level of commitment to one's practice, to the teachers, and to the sangha that is involved.

On the previous Sunday, Gyodo facilitated a discussion on the topic of commitment. During this discussion, someone asked Gyodo and Gento what it meant for them to become ordained as novice priests. Gyodo emphasized the aspect of letting go of certain things in his life that were not

supportive of his practice and service to the Zen Center. Gento emphasized the aspect of making the Zen Center his number one priority. Both agreed that more than anything, they were stepping into the unknown even more, willing to meet whatever arose as a result of their commitment and deepened vows.

The reader may be wondering what the difference between a monk/nun and priest/priestess, or a priest and a lay person are. Good question. Across the West, there are a variety of Zen Centers that have adopted the Japanese Zen teachings and married them to the West's lifestyle in different ways. In general though,



a *monk* or *nun* is someone who lives in a monastery or temple, or who has lived in these places for some period of time and now lives in a different venue but continues to live by his/her renunciate vows. A monk or nun is usually celibate and lives to some degree in alignment with a traditional form of renunciation such as owning few things, taking a vow of poverty/simplicity, wearing robes or other non-conventional attire, and having a shaved or closely trimmed head. A monastic (gender-neutral term for monk or nun) in the Zen tradition is also considered a priest/priestess.



A *priest/priestess* may marry, own a house and live a life seemingly close to that of a lay person. They may keep a shaven head or not, be celibate or not, and store money or not – it depends on that particular lineage's style of ordination as well as that particular person's path. The main differences between a lay person and a priest are 1) the level of formal commitment and service to the Three Treasures and the shifting of priorities in one's life to make that commitment number one, and 2) a priest/priestess carries on the liturgical tradition of officiating during ceremonies and services, as well as giving the precepts during the Jukai ceremony.

In order to become a *fully ordained priest or priestess*, the trainee/student is ordained first as a novice priest/priestess and undergoes three to five years of intensive training in which one's aspirations and commitments are tested and clarified, at which point both the teachers and the novice decide whether to proceed with full ordination or not. Upon full ordination, the commitment is deepened further.

May we appreciate and congratulate the commitments that Gyodo and Gento have made to this Sangha, to our teachers, to the Zen Center, and to the future generations who will be able to enjoy the fruits of the Buddhadharma as a result of their devoted service.

Jukai: Yuki & Sōten

On August 2nd, Billy Osipenko and Chip Chase officially became Zen Buddhists, students of Great Mountain Zen Center and its teachers, and aspiring bodhisattvas by taking the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts. When the Buddha began teaching the Dharma 2,500 years ago, he ordained each person who had a sincere desire to be enlightened and relieve suffering. This ordination consisted of taking refuge in the Buddha and accepting to live by five original precepts (not to kill, steal, lie, or take intoxicants, and to be celibate). After a period of time, the ordained person would take on another 200 or so precepts. The intention of taking the precepts was for the harmony of the community, for the purity of behavior, for the cleansing of one's karma, and for the foundational preparation of one's mystical journey into meditation. As Buddhism has traveled from India through China, Korea, Japan, and now to the U.S.A., this ordination procedure has transformed to meet the needs of the many populations, including the sincere lay population of the West.

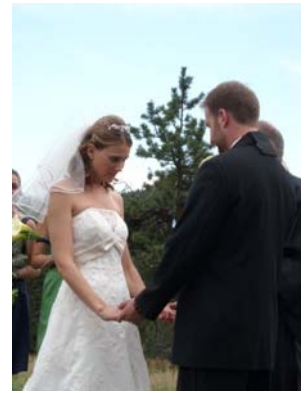


Jukai is considered a lay ordination in which one generally makes a commitment to one's teacher, a commitment to support the Zen Center, and a commitment to explore the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts and how they reflect the places where one is still stuck (attached) in daily life and how those attachments bring suffering to oneself and to others. In the Japanese Zen tradition, the precepts have been reduced to sixteen - the Three Refuges of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; the Three Pure Precepts of ceasing from doing evil, doing good, and doing good for others; and the Ten Grave Precepts of non-killing, non-stealing, non-lying, non-hatred, non-stinginess, non-intoxication or ignorant, not talking about others errors and faults, not using sexuality in hurtful ways or being greedy, not elevating oneself or blaming others, and not speaking ill of the Three Treasures. Unlike commandments, the precepts are more like guidelines that are observed with mindfulness and used as lenses through which to observe and work with one's shadow.

Billy has been a regular attendee of weekly zazen including the early morning sessions and has attended many sesshins. Billy's new Dharma name is Yuki, meaning "Brave Spirit." In recent years, Chip has attended numerous sesshins and has been a server during the oryoki meals. His new Dharma name is Sōten, meaning "Blue Sky." May Sōten and Yuki become fully realized and serve the Buddhadharmā in their unique and magnificent ways!

Wedding: Hokai & Erin

On August 8, Angelo Hokai Ciliberti was married to Erin Dittelberger on a hilltop at Starhouse up Sunshine Canyon. It was a beautiful day with about 100 people in attendance. Shishin Roshi performed the ceremony emphasizing the path of service to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and that their practice is to support each other and all beings. "Two streams of practice become one."



**CONGRATULATIONS
HOKAI AND ERIN
CILIBERTI!**

June Sesshin

As usual, the summer week-long sesshin was a wonderful opportunity to sink deeper into practice. With more than eight hours of daily zazen, silent samu (work practice), silent meals, oryoki breakfast, and some free time to reflect and carry practice into a walk around the lake or lounging in the garden, the internal weeds that inevitably grow over time under our radar of awareness are noticed and softly plucked, providing a more vivid clarity with which to return to one's daily life.



The Great Heart Way's New Addition



SHINKO SENSEI says this about The Great Heart Way using Voice Dialogue:

“What a great experience it was for me to witness and experience the transformative power of these two Upayas (skillful means), the Great Heart Way and Voice Dialogue. What first started as an experiment has turned out to be among the most sacred experiences of my life.

“Let me explain in short how these two techniques work together and why they are such great tools of liberation.

“When we are born we carry the pure light of our true self unobstructed. As small children we are open to the world without preconceptions or conditions. The world through our child’s eyes was a place of wonder, mystery, joy and goodness.

“Within that state of openness of mind when painful situations occurred in our lives as children we didn’t understand and we closed up our heart-mind not knowing a better way to deal with the hurt. As a result, our vibrant true self with which we were endowed at birth became obscured.

“We discovered that we didn’t live in a perfect world, that we didn’t have perfect parents and teachers, and that some of our friends, teachers, and parents were not always loving to each other. We learned that there was cruelty in the world.

“The child who was the bearer of the wisdom of our true self got obscured at some point in our lives due to the reaction against the hurt we felt when we were judged, abused, criticized, controlled. This child that got hurt at some point in our lives is what we call the *wounded child*.

“In order to cope with this wounding we started to form conceptions, judgments, and strategies to deal with a world that we did not understand. We do anything in order not to feel abandoned or judged, to get the love we want, and to be approved and admired by our parents, friends and teachers.

“Our true vulnerable child inside that has access to the wisdom of our true self gets buried by the wounded child. *We develop protective voices, judgmental voices and critical voices in order to protect the wounded child. Early in our lives we decided that invulnerability was the only choice.* To seek invulnerability only freezes our life force. It separates us from our true essence – the true essence that is being blocked from flowing freely by our wounding and protected vulnerability. Our wounded child is buried under many layers of protection and fortresses of defenses that were constructed around him or her through life.

“The Great Heart Way objective and techniques are designed to heal the wounded child in order to recover the full potential of our life force and soul energy, or true self.

“The Great Heart Way has benefited immensely with the collaboration of the Voice Dialogue facilitator Coly Vulpiani. Coly, using Voice Dialogue, talks to our protectors, judges, critics so these strong voices voluntarily open the gates to allow the Great Heart Way to bring healing to our inner wounded child so we can be fully



integrated adults. With integration we can use the life force of our true self to manifest who we are in this lifetime.

“The practice of Zazen is the most important in the trilogy of these three Upayas – Zazen, Voice dialogue, and The Great Heart Way. *Zazen gives us the awareness through which healing the old wounds of life are possible so we don't have to live in contracted and fearful ways.* It allows us to come 360 degrees into this world of wonders, mysteries and infinite possibilities.” ▲

Some quotes from the participants of the July Great Heart Retreat using Voice Dialogue:

- *“I realized then that this wounded child is the instrument of my transformation”*
- *“The love came from the sky, the sun, the clouds, the grass blades, the birds, the frogs, the fish, the bushes – all that surrounded me.”*
- *“There was one image – a baby of pure gold cuddling inside a pure gold womb and heading into the starry sky.”*
- *“I went to the retreat in a reserved mode... It always seems to take severe discomfort for me to make any progress on the path. Now, I am feeling much more open, less stuck in my ‘perfection,’ and willing to try going forward. As Maezumi Roshi used to say, ‘Just keep going!’ So I go.”*
- *“The Great Heart retreat was a beautiful way to face into some of the hidden places within my Self in a context of safety, respect, transparency and compassion with the support of trusted sangha.”*

Voice Dialogue was created by Hal and Sidra Stone in the 1970s. This psychotherapeutic method works with opposed sets of “voices” (or energies, archetypes, subpersonalities, etc.) that, when in conflict with each other and when expressed in unbalanced ways, create havoc for us in our daily lives. For example, one may have a strong “inner good boy/good girl” voice while the “inner rebel” is disowned (repressed, suppressed). As a result, one may become very tight in their lives, highly critical of others and oneself, and subsequently unhappy due to the level of stress that such perfectionist behaviors cultivate. Getting in touch with the inner rebel can offer perspective and give some room for the more vulnerable, relaxed, and fun aspects of the psyche to breathe and be expressed. Roshi Dennis Genpo Merzel’s *Big Mind Process* was heavily influenced by Hal and Sidra Stone’s Voice Dialogue method.

To learn more about Voice Dialogue, go to: <http://www.voicedialogue.com/voicedialogue.htm>

GREAT HEART CLASS WITH VOICE DIALOGUE - LEVEL II

Sensei, Roshi, Coly and the participants in the Great Heart Class using Voice Dialogue are amazed at how powerful these two techniques function together in helping us heal the inner wounds from childhood.

These wounds keep our ego contracted and obscure the pure light of our true self. The results of the first class have been amazing. In the setting of a sacred circle we have learned self-healing skills to

liberate us from years of ego imprisonment. We have witnessed participants rising like the Phoenix from the ashes.



In the next four classes we will continue learning how to heal the wounded child. We will practice living from our "golden child" and vulnerable self. We will learn about the unhealthy bonding patterns that have kept us captive in unhealthy ways of relating to one another.

Once you learn to hear the music of vulnerability and to feel its feelings, the next step is to learn how to communicate these feelings to your partner. We are not talking about identifying with vulnerability and becoming a victim. We are not talking about becoming a weakling. What we are talking about is learning how to communicate your vulnerability in relationship while at the same time you are in touch with the parts of you that carry your strength. This is one of the greatest -- and most rewarding -- challenges for each and every one of us. – Hal and Sidra Stone

Since these are more advanced topics, this class is open to those who have attended Great Heart classes or retreats in the past

Dates: October 4, 11, and 18, and November 8. Sunday afternoons, 2 - 5 PM.

Fees: \$200 for regular members, \$150 for training members, and \$250 for non-members.

Contact: Please let us know that you will be attending the classes as soon as possible by emailing to gmzc@gmzc.org

Thank You



- *Kelly Lusk* - for efforts in establishing the new GMZC library, for a donation of a bookshelf, and for the amazing cupcakes after Gyodo and Gento's ordination.
- *Jamie Wood* - for the donation of a bookshelf for the new library.
- *John Fugetsu Rueppel* - for book donations sent from San Francisco.
- *Anonymous Book Donors* - book donations.
- *Christopher Daishin Melton* - for book donations and the new doors to the Old Zendo.
- *Brian Lewandowski* - for fresh vegetable donations.
- *Lin Erhardt* - for donation of a tent for the GMZC booth at the Boulder Pride-fest Block Party.
- *Kevin Chavez* - for coordinating the LGBTQ group for the entirety of the summer and for continued service into then

fall.

- *John Schoonbrood* – for commitment as a Training Member during the past year and dedication to the position of Jikido (time keeper). John will be stepping down from being a Training Member in order to focus his attention on his ever-successful and growing business. May your ventures serve all sentient beings, bringing them happiness and great joy!
- *Brandon Gaither & Richard Shinzen Blackmore* – for continual generous financial support of Great Mountain Zen Center

Dana - GMZC Donation Needs:

- **Food donations** are greatly appreciated and will be used for Sunday lunches. Dry foods are most easily managed, but fresh foods are appreciated as well. No meat items please.
- General use items such as **paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, and tea boxes.**
- **Farm/ranch** property – see below...

Stop the Press!!! Opportunity for transformation!

Have you ever wanted to live in a residential Zen community? Have you ever wanted to live close to the land, farming and helping to manage a ranch? Have you ever wanted to help manage a residential Zen retreat center? Have you ever considered devoting your time, energy, and finances toward creating and maintaining Zen Buddhist practice for future generations?

If any of these questions arouse your interest, you may have an opportunity to do so sooner than you might guess. Shinko Sensei and Shishin Roshi are currently looking for the appropriate property to make some version of these

ideas happen. If you would like to participate, contact them asap! At this point, they are especially looking for financial donors and investors who sincerely have the future of GMZC and American Zen in mind.



*May Anko bring you deep clarity, a compassionate heart,
and openness to all of the experiences of life!*



gassho...

