

MOUNTAIN SEAT CEREMONY STATEMENTS

PART 1 – ASCENDING THE MOUNTAIN (SHIN SAN SHIKI)

1. SAN MON - Mountain Gate

“the door is round and open where the two worlds touch”
no inside – no outside
no coming - no going
May this gate be welcoming to all beings, always.

2. ZEN DO (silent)

sitting and bowing
TOGETHER
going beyond the many and the one,
TOGETHER
entering the dharma gate of repose and bliss
TOGETHER
taking refuge in Sangha,
bringing harmony to everyone

3. SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

I offer this incense to Shakyamuni Buddha
in homage to your unshakeable commitment to finding the WAY
in homage to you, for TEACHING US THE WAY
in homage to YOUR GREAT VOWS
which allow the bloodline to flow from heart to heart, continuously
and unhindered THROUGH ALL LIFE
(Bowing) I take refuge in BUDDHA, DHARMA & SANGHA
awakening true mind

4. **DAIGEN SHURI BOSATSU**

Oh great PROTECTOR OF THE DHARMA
with boundless gratitude I offer this piece of incense to you and all
protectors of the Way,
for fiercely safe guarding all spaces of practice, the teachings, the
teachers and the community of practitioners.
I vow to be your servant.

5. **BODHIDHARMA** (representing all ancestors)

Fierce Barbarian – wild – untamed
just sitting – nine years
not knowing – always
finding YOUR WAY – EMPTY – NOTHING HOLY

Please concentrate your heart on us and help us
to simply BE – wild – untamed.

6. **KAISAN DO** (Founder's Hall)

This piece of incense I offer to YOU
GREAT GRANDFATHER SHOGAKU SHUNRYU DAI OSHO

YOU came from afar to live the Dharma HERE,
And look - what a wonderful place of practice has come from it :-)
I came from afar to learn about Dharma practice from YOU.
And look – what has come from it :-)

Today I am being entrusted to safeguard, nourish and support this
immeasurable Dharma Treasure you have left us.
I vow to you and to all beings to do this with my whole heart and
being.

Never having met you in person, I nevertheless feel you close and at
my side and I know that I can lean on you when I will need it.
(with a deep bow) Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

7. **HOJO** (Abbots room)

This door is open – please step into this boundless space.
Since Shakyamuni Buddha's time
meeting mind to mind – warm heart to warm heart
not one, not two
and one and two

Everyone is welcome

PART TWO

8. **DENNEI** (Teaching Robe)

This Great robe of liberation – field far beyond form and emptiness –
made of nine panels, each panel made of two long and one short
piece is an immeasurable gift of the sangha.

With deep gratitude I bow

To Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Anna Thorn and Tim Wicks who have
been overseeing the whole process of its creation as well as sewing
throughout,

To the Tassajara, the Green Gulch Farm and the City Center
residents and

To the practitioners of the wider community for their generous help in
sewing all the many pieces together.

I will wear this robe with the mind and body of its sacred meaning.

9 **TODAN** (Ascending the Seat)

Climbing up to this unfathomable Mountain Seat I feel I also climb into
the lap of all the ancestors and teachers that have inhabited this place
before me

Supported and helped by them I'll leap freely into vast emptiness

10. **WHOLE PRACTICE - WORLD PEACE**

Invoking the presence and support of SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA,
BODHIDHARMA, EIHEI DOGEN and all BODHISATTVAS

MAHASATTVAS on this joyful day,
I offer this incense for WORLD PEACE.

PEACE is the aim of our practice

PEACE is the fruit of AWAKENING to the TRUE NATURE OF
REALITY.

PEACE culminates in the manifestation and embodiment of all-
inclusiveness, unconditional love, compassion and the capacity to
CARE and TAKE CARE in harmonious ways of ourselves, each other,
all beings and this beautiful planet.

May we all help each other to practice this together wholeheartedly,
lifetime after lifetime.

11. **ALL ANCESTORS** in this lineage, former abbots

This incense is offered with deepest gratitude to All Ancestors –
women and men – known to us and unknown.

Each single one's unique, complete and courageous practice has kept
this teaching and this lineage alive and vital through the last 2500
years so that we today are able to receive it, practice it and sustain it
for future generations.

From the SEVEN BUDDHAS BEFORE BUDDHA,
to SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

to BODHIDHARMA

to DOGEN ZENJI

to OUR GREAT AND BELOVED FOUNDER SHOGAKU SHUNRYU
DAI OSHO,

whose gentle teaching created this vital practice place for us;

I bow deeply to **EACH OF OUR FORMER ABBOTS** whose practice
keeps casting widening circles:

To **ZENTATSU RICHARD BAKER** for being a bridge and making human mistakes; whose inheritance has left us Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, Green Gulch Farm and much more, all of which continues to support our practice profoundly.

To **TENSHIN REB ANDERSON** for **his fierce and complete love and devotion to this practice and its forms** which keeps sustaining us beyond space and time.

To **SOJUN MEL WEITSMAN**, for **his relaxed and down to earth teaching.**

To **ZOKETSU NORMAN FISCHER**, for his **utter simplicity, slow-moving Way and his practice of inclusiveness.**

To **ZENKEI BLANCHE HARTMAN** for **transmitting our sewing tradition and living everyday practice and ordinary mind** with such love, strength, precision and transcending commitment.

To **RYUSHIN PAUL HALLER** for his **Dragon Heart Teachings** and **for his deep and creative engagement in finding new forms to make our practice accessible to a wider circle of people seeking the way.**

12. MEMBERS, DONORS, FAMILIES AND DECEASED MEMBERS

This incense is offered to all sangha members,
to all supporters and
to all donors and their families

Whether alive or deceased,

The complete interdependence of your practice and your generosity is affecting the entire earth and the entire sky in the ten directions endlessly. It is the life force of these temples.

13. HONSHI (root teacher)

This incense I offer to my root teacher

TENSHIN ZENKI DAI OSHO.

For your complete devotion to the Path of Awakening,

For manifesting wide spaces when I could only see barriers,

For allowing me to move in accordance with circumstances and my own true nature far beyond my knowing,

For never pushing nor restraining –

And for sometimes pushing my buttons,

For giving me the Dharma Name **LOOM OF EMPTINESS**

For always being there, nearby and across vast distances, steadfast and totally committed beyond question.

My gratitude continues to flow from bottomless heart, lifetime after lifetime.

STATEMENTS FROM THE ABBESS

14 TEIKO (Fundamental backbone statement)

Beyond denominations, beyond form and emptiness,
completely devoted to this practice –

simply taking care of everything that is Near, following the ONE desire – TO LIVE IN TRUTH WITH ALL BEINGS.

15. JAGO BYAKUTSUI (Appreciatory statement to Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi)

With deep gratitude I bow to my teacher

HOITSU GYUHAKU SUZUKI ROSHI.

Unforgettable are the few months I spent at Rinzo-In in 1994 – invited by you and welcomed by Chitose-sama. Your **complete, sincere, fluid, joyful, creative and playful practice** has planted indelible seeds of inspiration.

Thank you for being here today, thank you for continuing to support Zen Center in your many ways with such immense generosity.

16. JIIO (Personal Statement)

Gratitude, love, joy and appreciation beyond words are flowing from my heart

To my parents

Madeleine Plancherel and Franz Baumgartner, who gave me this precious life. Their example of upright, authentic living and embodiment of spiritual practice has become a guiding principle for me.

To my six siblings,

Bruno, Maggie, Franziska, Kati, Cornelia and Martin. You have travelled all the way from Switzerland and New Zealand, just to be here with me today – that says it all (bow) – They have been my first training sangha, so if you have complaints you may direct them their way.

To all my friends – here and abroad – two, **Doris and Annelies**, from Switzerland are here today also – who have been enriching my life immeasurably with their unwavering friendship and support.

To Karlfried Graf Duerckheim in whose Zendo in the Black Forest I fell into the home of my heart while sitting zazen for the first time.

To Chikuen Kugai Henry Platov Dai Osho and his disciple **Agetsu Widler-Haduch** for nurturing the seed of practice by welcoming me to their Rinzaï Zen Dojo in Zurich.

To Charlotte Selver, whose work has become part of my life and practice. The 3-month Study Groups she offered at Green Gulch Farm created the incentive for me to arrive at Zen Center in 1988.

To my very first teacher Zoketsu Norman Fischer without whom I would never have entered this practice so completely and who gave me my first Dharma Names – PURE FAITH, DHARMA JOY – you are close to my heart always.

To Sojun Mel Weitsman for leading my first practice period at Tassajara and for stepping in for freshly-hatched dharma-transmitted Zoketsu to enable my lay ordination shortly before I returned to Switzerland in 1989.

To my former husband Matthias Lehnerr – for being one of my best friends and for his wholehearted and generous gift of my first practice period at Tassajara which changed the course of our lives.

To **Marsha Angus**, companion on the Path of Practice and love of my life. For your complete commitment, your lion heart, your willingness to be a fool for the truth and for making me laugh every day. You are an inexhaustible source of happiness, support and encouragement. To **each single person crossing my path and to life in all its manifestations** for continuously expounding the dharma and for teaching me the Truth of all Being.

17. **NENSOKU** (Understanding of a Koan)

Koans have mostly remained a door closed to me through all these years.

HOW DO YOU PRACTICE WITHOUT A KOAN?

DOGEN says, *“without incense offering, chanting Buddha’s names, repentance or reading scriptures you should just wholeheartedly sit, dropping away body and mind”*.

I understand it this way: CONTINUOUSLY LETTING GO OF, words, ideas, knowledge and preferences in order to MEET COMPLETELY UNHINDERED AND WITH COMPASSION whatever arises in front of us moment by moment.

And now hear this:

A monk asked **Zhaozhou**,

“I have just entered the monastery, please give me some guidance.”

Zhaozhou said, “Have you had breakfast yet?”

The monk said, “Yes, I have eaten.”

Zhaozhou said, “Then go wash your bowl.”

John Daido Looi comments: “If your potential does not leave its fixed position, you will sink on dry land.”

Today I would say – drop **who you think you are** and pay close attention to **your actions**, to **how** you handle your bowl, **how** you respond to your neighbor – the way we are **being** is the ultimate expression of our practice.

18. **KETSUZA** (Concluding statement)

Here I am, standing on this mountain, surprised, curious, joyful, my heart wide open and feeling completely supported.

You might think it is just I who is standing here, who is taking this leap but – whether or not you know it – **you are all standing here with me, you are about to leap with me** into this great inconceivable adventure – now and every step of the way.

Please let us all remember this and support each other wholeheartedly on this path of everyday activity; upright, with patience, generosity, zeal, wisdom and compassion.

(deep bow)