

## Inspirations from Chapel House, October 2016

Supported by the Cambridge Buddhist Association and sponsored by the Fund for the Study of World Religions, Jeff Shore was invited to the Chapel House of Colgate University in upstate New York for a week of meditation sessions, talks for classes, and public lectures, including for his new book *Great Doubt: Practicing Zen in the World*. He was joined by five dear Dharma friends: Julianna Lipschutz – a Taiwan born librarian and interfaith chaplain now living in Philadelphia, David Cannon – a physicist and former Mormon missionary from Washington D. C., Martin Applebaum – a mediator from New York City, Jack Vartabedian – a waiter from Maryland, and Tim Armacost – a professional jazz musician from New York City. Here are their reflections:

It was a great pleasure to spend a couple of days at Colgate University with my dharma family members Jeff, David, Jack, Marty and Julianna. The setting is an oasis in the midst of slightly more than rolling hills in upstate New York. The Colgate campus is beautiful and active, and the Chapel House itself is up on a quiet hill, surrounded by trees whose leaves were turning and falling as we sat quietly. The schedule was filled with a variety of interactions with students, who ran the gamut from being keenly interested in fundamental questions, to having their first ever experience of zazen. It was great to see them experiencing Jeff's calm insight, and we occasionally chimed in when inspired.

For me personally, it was a surprisingly moving couple of days. I first encountered Zen when assigned to read Shibayama's *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* as a freshman in college many years ago. Zen seemed dauntingly obscure, but strangely attractive, and it wasn't long after reading it that I started going up to a nearby Zen Center to sit with the residents on the weekends. My interest in Zen grew naturally, and eventually took me to Kyoto, where I was introduced to Keido Fukushima Roshi, Shibayama's dharma heir. Many, many years later, it felt like the rounding of a circle to be sitting in the space in which Shibayama Roshi gave the lectures that became the book that got me started.

Lovely to be present while Jeff extends the work started by Shibayama Roshi and continued by Fukushima Roshi at Colgate.

-Tim Armacost, October, 2016

*Q: What do a cross, a menorah, the likenesses of Vishnu, the Hindu deity, and Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and the many other spiritual symbols found at Colgate's Chapel House, all have in common?*

*A: They all come alive at the University, manifesting most powerfully and unaffectedly as staff, faculty and students. Yes, the effortless warmth, humor, kindness, openness and incredibly attentive care of the Chapel House staff (especially Steve, Jan and Cathy), and of every faculty member involved, were deeply touching. So too were the lively interest, joyous innocence, and probing questions of the students we had the good fortune to meet. So much was gleaned from all of these heartfelt encounters, practice seamlessly enriched.*

*In this vein, deepest gratitude as well to Jeff, Julianna, David, Jack, and Tim of our sangha for sharing their valuable time and for fearlessly and caringly expressing their hearts in shared activities ranging from zazen and mutual inquiry to discussions, seminars, and hikes – all exploring intriguing terrain.*

*And just having the chance to commune with friends old and new over meals so obviously prepared with love – well, how wonderful!*

*With palms joined,*

*Marty A.*

### *Reflections*

*A coming home.*

*A place where many rivers have converged, yet silent, still and peaceful. Hallowed halls with the voices of a theosophical past, the great religious traditions and the stirring of the sacred through Chagall, Rembrandt, Shibayama, Fukushima and so many others. An *ensō*-Zen circle asking, an arhat dancing, and Moses coming down from the mountain with the tablets of stone. And all around large picture windows open to falling leaves, rain and snow.*

A place where the veil of practice is thinned and the questions that remain within are mixed with the golden light of others now pouring in: their questions probing, asking and being accepted.

A place where sitting in stillness, and even darkness, as the lights are magically dimmed, continues on with breakfast, a walk into the forest, or the conversation about peanut butter on oatmeal. Even the most basic question about this practice or this or that from a student takes one back deeply into one's own practice, back to the beginning. How can one not see the rain, the first white snow on maple leaves, the ripple of waves, the child and the enduring question within.

A pleasure to be with friends, old and new, among inquiring students, and those traveling from afar to bring their wisdom, experience and insights into a wonderful tradition.

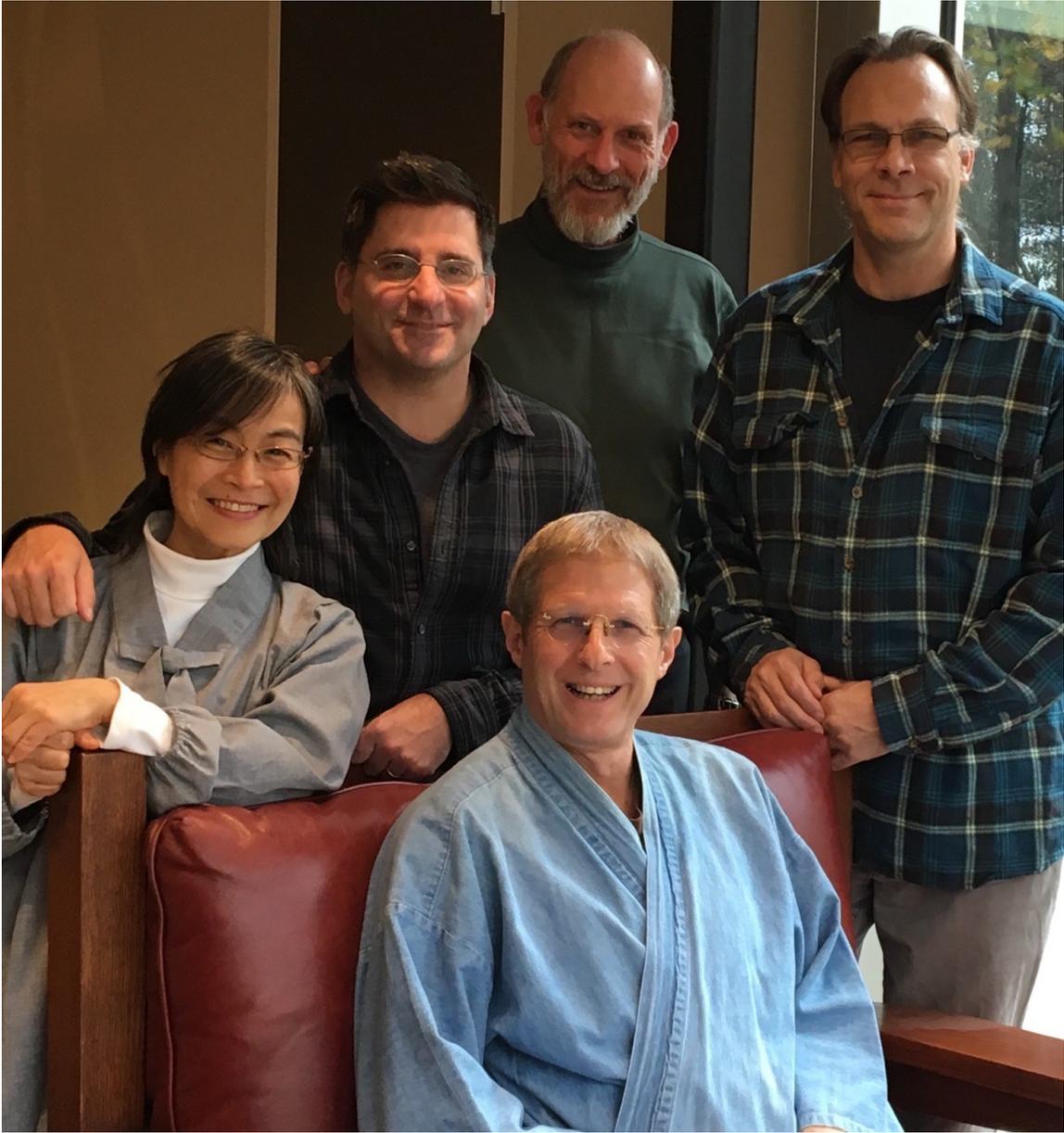
With love

*Gasshou,*

David C.



Jack, Julianna, Marty



Julianna, Jack, David, & Tim with Jeff