TOKUDO CEREMONY

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Gary Zochi Faysash
Jane Jishin Faysash
John Yukon Simon

Tokudo translates from Japanese as "the attainment of going beyond". In Japan, since the 13th century, monks, also known as home-leavers, have been ordained in the Tokudo ceremony.

This "leaving home" can be understood on many levels. In some cases, as with the monk who takes monastic vows, it may mean literally giving up all worldly possessions and severing all personal ties to become a member of a monastic order. In other cases, it can be understood more figuratively, where the "home" that is being left is a set of constructs we have each built with our discriminating minds, the structure that gets in the way of realizing our true nature. Through practice, and in taking the vows of the monk, we disassemble that structure, collapse that house, that "self' as we have come to know it, so that we can realize our interconnectedness with all beings.

Shaving the head is a symbolic act of renunciation, renouncing whatever it is that we cling to, whatever it is that we attach to. When we let go, life flows through our hands like a river, and as it arrives, moment after moment, we try to meet it as fully as we can. In this way, renunciation means:
"Just this is enough."

A person, a monk, on this path is called, in Japanese, an Unsui. Unsui means "cloudwater" or one who moves from place to place as necessary without obstruction, without attachment, like a cloud; and one who fits into whatever situation that arises without resistance, like water. Thus, the Unsui finds home wherever s/he is, in whatever circumstances s/he may be ... right here in this very body, in this very place as-it-is. This is what our practice is - this finding home in the midst of homelessness, right here, right now ... home.

GATTHA OF THE KESA

Vast is the robe of liberation, a formless field of benefaction, I wear the Tataghata's teaching, saving all sentient beings.

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The Unsui's path of discovery is illumined as they explore the following koan and find out who they truly are.

A student asked the Roshi 'What is a monk?'
And he answered,
"I don't know."
And so she asked another Roshi, and he said,
"Hmmmm, I don't know."

GATHA OF ATONEMENT: 3X
All evil karma ever committed by me since of old
On account of my beginingless greed, anger and ignorance,
Born of my body, mouth and thought,
Now I atone for it all.

FOUR GREAT VOWS: 3X
Creations are numberless, I vow to free them.
Delusions are inexhaustible, I vow to transform them.
Reality is boundless, I vow to perceive it.
The Enlightened Way is unsurpassable, I vow to embody it.

Officiant: Mitchell Doshin Cantor, Sensei