



Water Wheel

Being one with all Buddhas, I turn the water wheel of compassion.

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

A New Vision for ZCLA

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



Happy New Year to you! This dynamic Zen saying captures the spirit of the new calendar year 2015.

*Infinite gratitude to the past.
Infinite service to the present.
Infinite responsibility to the future.*

One of the meanings of my Dharma name “Egyoku” is “Bowl (E) of Blessings (Gyoku).” Indeed, I feel my bowl is overflowing with the many blessings from practicing together with you over many years.

This year, we at the Zen Center of Los Angeles are embarking on creating a new narrative. This is an auspicious time for honoring the deep taproot provided by our founders Maezumi Roshi and Roshi Glassman by imagining an expression of Zen Buddhism that will serve us and those who come after us for many years to come.

Infinite gratitude to the past. Our gratitude to all those who came before us is indeed boundless. As a Zen Center, we have deeply instilled gratitude into our ceremonies and attitudes. Dana Paramita, the perfection of giving, permeates. Each of us also is learning to express gratitude often. My recommendation is to train ourselves so that the first and last words spoken every day are words of gratitude.

Forty-eight years after our founding, most of the people who worked to build the Zen Center are not known to many of the Sangha today. When I ascended this mountain in 1999 to become ZCLA’s third abbot, I wrote and offered this poem at the altar of my Dharma family:

*Grandfather, Grandmother,
Great compassionate benevolence.
I go straight
on the ninety-nine curves.*



*The Great Mountain sits – just this!
My bowl cannot hold
the ten thousand plum blossoms.
Thank you for your blessings.**

I express deep gratitude to our donors, in particular our Legacy Donors, who ensure the successful continuation of the Zen Center. In recent years, the legacy gifts of practitioners Robert Heart-Mountain Yanez, Dolores Ejun and Vernon Lowell, and Teido Cartee, have eased the financial challenges of sustaining this Zen mountain. Our gratitude is boundless.

**Maezumi Roshi’s Dharma name is “Tai (Great) Zan (Mountain).”*

(Continued on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 ZCLA Honors Sensei Shingetsu
- 3 Like A Ball Tossed On Rushing Water *by Jeanne Dokai Dickenson*
- 5 The Three Tenets Unfolding *by Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown*
- 6 Fall Practice Period Commitments
- 10 True Giving: Not Yours, Not Mine *by Darla Myoho Fjeld*

ZCLA Honors Sensei Shingetsu

On Sunday, December 21st, following a zendo ceremony in which Roshi Egyoku presented beloved teacher Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy with a beautiful white dragon rakusu, Shingetsu performed a ritual walk around the Zen Center in gassho, accompanied by Sensei Ensho. The event marked Shingetsu's retirement at ZCLA at the end of 2014 from formal teaching.

Shingetsu plans to devote her time and energies to the thriving Valley Sangha she began over 23 years ago as a sitting group in her home. "Over the years," she said, "we've evolved into much more than a sitting group. We're a real Sangha with all the activities of a Zen Center with zazen as its backbone."

"The number one event in my life," Shingetsu said, "was meeting Maezumi Roshi, and number two would be Egyoku Roshi coming to the Zen Center and bringing a real female energy. We now have a lineage of women ancestors we never had before."

Following the formal zendo ceremony, members of the two Sanghas gathered in a packed Dharma Hall to honor Shingetsu with expressions of gratitude and affection



From left: Sensei Ryodo, Roshi Egyoku, Sensei Shingetsu and Sensei Kodo

after which we enjoyed a delicious lunch in the style of an English tea complete with china and pink tablecloths.

Many bows to Sensei Shingetsu for her years of spiritual friendship and contributions to our Sangha. May her Valley Sangha continue to grow and flourish.

A NEW VISION FOR ZCLA (Continued from page 1)

Infinite service to the present. Our lives abide in the Four Great Bodhisattva Vows, which are:

*Numberless beings, I vow to serve them.
Inexhaustible delusions, I vow to end them.
Boundless Dharmas, I vow to practice them.
Unsurpassable Buddha Way, I vow to embody it.*

These vows express a clear and directed intention, setting in motion the energetic forces necessary for its fulfillment. We raise the bodhisattva vow; the vow raises us. The vows, which are central to our lives, ground our service in the wholeness of life. Our sense of who we are serving, what is service, and who is being served expands infinitely.

As our conditioned reflexes release, can we experience the empty, boundless nature of who we are, allowing everything to simply be itself? Can we experience this very body-heart-mind as a conduit for the life force – or whatever we wish to call it: Buddha nature, True Nature, Love, Original Face – that unites us all?

Now, then, how will we serve?

Infinite responsibility to the future. Just as those who came before us – family, the Buddha, all the many beings – are

our life blood in the here and now, we, too, take our place, as only we individually can, in the great round of life. How can it be otherwise? With this awakening comes a profound sense of our responsibility for all that will come after us, including the future Sangha. When ascending this Zen mountain, I offered my breath and incense to the future Sangha:

... In taking this path, I call upon those who come after me, those whose faces I cannot see and whose names I cannot know. ... Even now, I feel your feet upon this mountain path. I will be faithful to the task that I must perform, so that there will be for you, as there is for me, the blue sky, lush trees, birds singing, clean air, and an abiding reverence for the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. All these I weave into a garland for the prosperity of the Buddhadharma in the West.

As we move forward into 2015, may we affirm our service to ourselves and others. May our new narrative affirm the collective awakening of all of humankind together, so that wisdom and love can flourish unhindered.

Gassho!

Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA's Abbot & Head Teacher.

Like a Ball Tossed on Rushing Water

by Jeanne Dokai Dickenson



A monk asked Joshu, “Does a newborn infant also have six consciousnesses?” Joshu said, “A ball tossed on rushing water.” The monk went on to ask Toshi, “What is the meaning of ‘a ball tossed on rushing waters?’” Toshi said, “Moment-to-moment nonstop flow.”

Have you ever spent some time around a newborn infant? Deeply engaged with her perennial feedings, diaper changes, midnight hours, his experiences of life are just beginning. Whatever catches her gaze she watches intently, utterly absorbed.

He has no storehouse of cognitive memories. She is in a state of Not-Knowing. His mind is ready to grow through new experiences, many within the context of “mirroring” and human relationships at the heart of development. In this exchange between Master Joshu and a student, the monk’s question might refer to some such experiences of a newborn babe. But is the student really asking about a newborn? He asks Joshu, “Does a newborn infant also have six consciousnesses?”

The term “six consciousnesses” refers to the five primary sense consciousnesses – seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting – supplemented by the sixth consciousness of the mind: discrimination. Discrimination helps a new-born baby – and all humans – in determining likes and dislikes, separating subject from object, analyzing problems, distinguishing between dull and sharp. According to this understanding, “discrimination” and the ways we employ it can explain the way the mind constructs the reality we experience.

But the sixth discriminating consciousness, the consciousness that is capable of picking and choosing, this innate and analytical aspect of our mind’s functioning, often becomes so dominant that we confuse it with our very identity. For example, I am a person who hates war, always looks for Cherry Garcia, loves to play World of Goo. I like this, I don’t like that. We can grow so dependent upon what suits our fancy that we are rarely able to see or experience life beyond it, blocking ourselves from sensing or perceiving aspects of the world, ourselves, and being that aren’t part of the constellation of our “likes.” We cannot see clearly. The “reality” our discriminating mind has helped to construct is the only reality we can see.

The student in this koan is asking about himself as a novice, a newcomer to the path of awakening. Doesn’t even an infant or a newcomer – fully equipped to see, hear, smell, taste, touch – also discriminate? And so isn’t the beginner’s mind constituted of all six of these levels of consciousness? We practitioners are always being reminded to cultivate beginner’s mind and dissolve into not-knowing – but what does that really mean? Am I to eradicate all that I know? Annihilate the mind? Obliterate all my senses?

What is pointed to here is not a total loss of the mind and sense of reality formed by discrimination, but a loss of preferences and the attachments and meanings we ascribe to them. It is the First Tenet: letting go of fixed ideas, all those things the discriminating mind likes to cling to and which impede the experience of “non-stop flow.” Can we, moment-by-moment, dissolve into a stream of Not-Knowing, letting go of holding on to that fixed idea, whatever it is? The monk wants to know whether or not he should suppress all of the sensory activity – to wipe out his mind. What is it to respond to phenomena with our senses in a way that is alive and free-flowing?

What is pointed to is not a total loss of the mind.

Joshu roars: *“A ball tossed on rushing water.”*

This glimpse of dialogue from Case 80 in *The Blue Cliff Record* points to the fact that everything moves at a pace and with a vitality far beyond what we can measure with our five senses or limited cognitive faculties. Dogen Zenji calls this “the vital process on the path of going beyond buddha,”* the full experiencing of your moment-by-moment experiences, and engaging in awakening as an active process in your everyday activities.

How about that ball tossed on rushing water? What is happening to that tossed ball? It bounces. It moves in many directions, depending upon conditions. It flows over and under the water. It swirls in the eddies. It responds to the current in which it is moving. The ball moves from one place to another, drawn by the coursing current, headed downstream with the rushing water, emptying into the ocean. There is a beautiful, large outdoor mural painted on the west wall of the Sangha House. In it is a verse by

*Leighton, T.D. and Tanabashi, K. (Translators). Gyobutsi.

Continued on page 4

LIKE A BALL TOSSED ON
RUSHING WATER (*Continued from page 3*)

Dogen: “The ocean does not refuse any kind of water.” When the artist left the mural to dry, I overheard someone say that there must have been a mistake. In three or four places, gushing from the ocean imagery, down the wall, are long paint drippings. This person asked the artist if he was going to repair that; the artist simply said, “No mistake.”

The student went on to ask Toshi: “*What is the meaning of ‘a ball tossed on rushing waters’?*” It was the custom in ancient China for Zen monks to refine and deepen their spiritual understanding by travelling throughout the country to study with respected teachers. Toshi, a contemporary of Master Joshu, was also renowned for his straightforward, eloquent teaching style. Toshi said: “*Moment-to-moment nonstop flow.*” Can we appreciate this?

Am I willing to surrender fixed ideas about myself, you, the world, everything, and rest in that silent stillness, receptive and open to the vast, wild, and unpredictable eddies and currents of existence? Am I willing to choose to listen deeply to you, myself, to the whole universe in its throbbing course of living?

Am I willing to take the actions that arise from these states of Not-Knowing and Bearing Witness? Relaxing into the inevitable ever-shifting “vital process” is dependent upon surrendering into the rushing water of ever-changing experiences. This function of transformation moment-by-moment happens with each and all of us, together, right now, whether we “know” it or not. Whether you prefer calm waters to choppy waves has little to do with the reality of the waters around you at this moment.

The monk traveled on to Toshi, wanting to know what Joshu meant by “a ball tossed on rushing water.” The question betrays a mind seeking an answer. A “solution.” Toshi discerned this just as Joshu had – the student was teetering into the stickiness of conceptual morass, and with compassion, Toshi responds in a flash: “Moment-to-moment nonstop flow.”



According to the teachings of the Buddha, life is a progressive moment. *Nen-nen*. A successive series of different moments, joining together to give the impression of one continuous flow. Experience is an uninterrupted flow or flux. It’s not chopped up. Can I let go of the moment that has just passed and surrender into the moment that is? Can we appreciate becoming intimate with the twists and turns of this life of ours?

Our unaffected, unattached mind is always flowing, never halting, never freezing up. This is the mind of no discrimination, no affective preference. This Not-Knowing mind fills the whole body, pervading everywhere, nowhere standing still. This is the no-mind that Joshu and Toshi are trying to show to the student. Mind moves fluidly from one object to another, one eddy to another, flowing like a stream of water, filling every corner.

Here we are face-to-face with the possibility of shifting from a self-centered, grasping way of life to a non-grasping way of life, moment-to-moment, non-stop flow. Become the ball in the rushing river, not resisting the changing nature of your life. The ball on the river bobs up and down, gets tossed about on its journey.

Can you see the ball that is your life without trying to catch it, hold it still, bounce it in a particular direction? See it coursing through the rushing stream in accord with the cause and effect that will play out in this moment and the next? Streaming into the vastness and now-ness that contain one another’s lives?

As our pioneer founder of ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple, Taizan Maezumi Roshi, commented on this continuous life: “You’re doing it anyway. You might as well appreciate it.”

Jeanne Dokai Dickenson is a priest at ZCLA.

The Three Tenets Unfolding

by Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown



In partnership with Peace Over Violence (POV), ZCLA hosted Marie Misukyo and Obed Musimbwa of SOFIBEF*, a Democratic Republic of Congo-based Human Rights NGO dedicated to ending sexual violence in that region. Roshi, Dokai, and I met Marie during the Bearing Witness Retreat in Rwanda earlier this year and were deeply inspired

by the work she is doing. A trip to the U.S. was arranged to connect SOFIBEF with other organizations in this country that might benefit SOFIBEF's programs. Marie is a co-founder and SOFIBEF's executive director and Obed, its programs director. Marie receives no salary, living off small donations from SOFIBEF's local community. Obed's modest salary is paid for by a grant that ends next year.

Based in Uvira, a city in Eastern Congo, SOFIBEF works under incredibly challenging circumstances. Except for Tanzania, Congo's eastern neighbors – South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi – contribute to nearly constant instability and warfare in the region. Ugandan rebels, Congolese-based militia, and other military groups cross routinely into Congo, commit rape and murder, and cause whole communities to flee their homes and villages. Women have few rights in Congo. Sexual violence by men is common, and victims of rape are frequently rejected by their husbands or communities. Amidst these conditions, the Bodhisattvas of SOFIBEF do their work.

Marie and Obed's trip to the U.S. was filled with incredible moments. At the LAPD, we met staff working in the areas of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, trafficking, and victim support programs. We learned how POV is responding to sexual violence in Los Angeles. We discussed prevention and intervention strategies, volunteer recruitment and retention, crisis response, and the broader work of changing the rape culture. Whatever organizations we visited, the staff wanted to share experiences with Marie and Obed. At Homeboy Industries, we learned about their programs aimed at trading jails for jobs, and at the YWCA, we saw how women and girls are being empowered. We had an amazing opportunity to participate in trauma resiliency trainings by Elaine Miller-Karas of the Trauma Resource Institute.

After Marie and Obed arrived, we learned that Marie has a daughter living in Canada whom she hasn't seen in ten years since saying goodbye at a refugee camp in Tanza-

nia. Both Marie and Obed's families fled their homes after the Rwandan genocide. Marie returned to Congo to continue her work but refused to allow her then 16-year-old daughter to return home, fearing for her safety. There, Marie's daughter, was eventually allowed to emigrate to Canada where she now lives the better life Marie envisioned for her with her husband and two young children. Since Marie had never met her son-in-law or grandchildren, we decided they were too close not to be reunited. Marie couldn't enter Canada without a visa so we flew her to Grand Forks, ND. Her daughter and family met her at the airport and were able to spend a few days together. Just before leaving LAX to return to Congo, Marie brushed away tears and said, "I'm wanting to say thank you to everyone, but there are no words, no language to say what



Marie Misukyo and Obed Musimbwa

I'm feeling. Never before have people cared like this or done so much."

I want to express heartfelt thanks to everyone in our Sangha who helped make this amazing journey possible. This experience has truly been one of no giver, receiver or gift. I forgot all about me and my usual petty complaints and demands of life. My perspective shifted and my world got bigger. Marie and Obed arrived with an image of the Congolese woman as many hands shackled. They return home with an image of the Congolese woman as many hands empowered. In the Congo, Marie cares for a woman who hasn't spoken since the trauma she experienced. May that woman again find her voice and may we all be free from suffering.

**Solidarite des Femmes de Fizi pour le Bien-Etre Familial*

2014 Fall Practice Period Commitments

We acknowledge the more than 130 Sangha members who participated from the Zen Center of Los Angeles, the Lincroft Zen Sangha, the Monday Night Meditation Group, the Ocean Moon Sangha, the San Luis Obispo Sitting Group, the Santa Barbara Zen Center, the Valley Sangha, the Westchester Zen Circle, and Twin Towers Men's Central Jail.



Katherine Senshin Griffith, incoming Head Trainee (left), Roshi Egyoku, and Mark Shogen Bloodgood, outgoing Head Trainee.

Alan Taigen Turton
 Andres Fossas-Durante
 Anonymous
 Arthur Seisho Pavliska
 Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown
 Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran
 Billy Morales
 Bill Ware
 Bonnie Myosen Nadzam
 Brett Chilton
 Burt Wetanson
 Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt
 Carlos Soto
 Cassie Ocean-Heart Guarino
 Cassie Riger
 Charles Duran
 Chris Daian Fields
 Chris Hackman
 Christian Garcia
 Conrad Butsugen Romo
 Daniel Newman-Lessler
 Daniel Pope
 Darla Myoho Fjeld
 David Kwan-Wo'l Arrollado
 David Kisen Thompson
 David Weinman
 Davon Moore
 Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen
 DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass
 Diane True-Joy Fazio
 Diane Enju Katz

Dylan Neal
 Eberhard Fetz
 Edwin Iraheta
 Elizabeth Jiei Cole
 Ellen Reigen Ledley
 Ernest Alemain
 Frank Martinez
 Frank Thomas
 Freddi Diaz
 Gabriel Lucero
 Gary Belton
 Gary Koan Janka
 Gemma Cubero
 Geoff O'Quest
 George Mukei Horner
 Hannah Seishin Sowd
 Hilda Bolden
 Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka
 Jack Granite
 James Ryushin Carney
 Jamie Jian Nappi
 Jane Chen
 Jeanne Dokai Dickenson
 Jessica Oetsu Page
 Jill Shingin Peters
 Jim Dōjun Hanson
 Jim Quam
 John Daishin Buksbazen
 John Shinjin Byrne
 John Heart-Mirror Trotter
 Jolene Belser
 Jonathan Kaigen Levy
 Joseph C.
 Kane Phelps
 Karen Brodie
 Katherine Senshin Griffith
 Kathi Koshin Novak
 Kathy Myoan Solomon
 Katrina Eko Fossas-Durante
 Katy Keisen Behrens
 Kay Myokai Snodgrass
 Kipp Ryodo Hawley
 Kirk S.
 Kristi Twilley
 Laos Onshin Chuman
 Larry
 Lee Nedler
 Lorraine Gessho Kumpf
 Louise Myotai Dasaro
 Mara Shiko Moon Cohn

Marinel Mukherjee
 Mario Gamez
 Mark
 Mark Shogen Bloodgood
 Mark Shefrin
 Marley Klaus Dowling
 Mary Rios
 Matthew
 Max Andes
 Merle Kodo Boyd
 Michael Jishin Fritzen
 Morris Paliwoda
 Nan Reishin Merritt
 Nem Etsugen Bajra
 Nicole Starrett
 Pam Smith
 Patti Muso Giggans
 Patricia Shingetsu Guzy
 Patricia Pfof
 Patricia Way
 Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson
 Peter Nyodo Ott
 Raul Ensho Berge
 Reeb Kaizen Venners
 Richard Schulhof
 Robert Ross
 Robert Dokan Sandberg
 Robert Lone-Pine Smith
 Roger Haferkamp
 Roland Palmer
 Rosa Ando Martinez
 Ryan Smith
 Sandy Goodenough
 Sarah McCarron
 Shawn Shaon Sattva Nichols
 Spencer Hecht
 Susanna Knittel
 Steven Totland
 Tara Jihō Sterling
 Tim Zamora
 Tina Jitsujo Gauthier
 Tom Yudo Burger
 Ty Jotai Webb
 Ulla Yandell
 Vanessa Eisho Moss
 Vanessa Kahner
 Wendy Egyoku Nakao
 Willie III
 Will Johnson
 Z Zeller

My Practice Period Experience

“What has this training period meant to you so far?”

by Burt Wetanson



Karen Enduring-Joy Brodie

The commitment I made for this practice period was to start sitting again because I haven't been sitting for about ten years. And it's been wonderful coming back to it after all those years.

It's like starting brand new. There's a certain awareness with me during the day that wasn't there when I wasn't sitting. Really subtle and hard to articulate.

The other thing that has changed is that I find that I'm not as withdrawn as I was before. I'm much more able to talk to people and let them into my space. That was a completely unexpected result of sitting. I didn't even think that I was withdrawn, but now that I'm sitting, I see that I was. It's nice to come out of my shell.

I'm able to watch my reactions and choose to meet people and talk to them whereas before I thought, “Why do they think they can talk to me just because they feel like it.” I'm really happy now about being more open to the people around me. The goal that flowed out of that was becoming more involved in the residential community. I've always wondered if I'm using my time wisely – am I behind in my paperwork? It's kind of a leap of faith to spend more time in the community and maybe let other responsibilities go undone. It takes time and energy to interact with people – and it takes time and energy to close yourself off. Because I had done that for so many years, I didn't feel the energy you feel when you open yourself to people.



The wild parrots feeding in the Zen Center's China Berry trees.



Tim Zamora

For Ango, I made a commitment to start sitting in the morning again, which I had stopped. Also, I'm making a commitment to be more fully involved in ZCLA life again.

I'm working hard on something difficult – to communicate authentically how I feel. This involves overcoming my defense mechanisms. Not doing that compromises and undermines relationships. As I carry through on that commitment, I see changes in subtle ways. Even in this early part of Ango, I can see how it enhances my life, how it involves really being able to cut through internal resistance. I want to extend these practices past the end of Ango, especially my commitment to being more authentic.



Tara Jibo Sterling

I looked forward to this practice period and the motivation to deepen my practice. I intended go to the zendo for early morning zazen and attend every service. Those intentions haven't found complete fulfillment. Do intentions count or only action?

Ango is a useful reminder to me about the value of practice. I'm beginning to understand what is meant by “roll everything into your practice.”

Going through a time of deep changes, all year I've been asking myself: what do I value? What is essential? I've begun to look at all the possessions I have collected and ask what do they mean? I'm gaining awareness of ways in which I create identity, the small self, and seeing how the small self can create itself through the indulgence of self-critical thoughts. I'm recognizing that it's through this body that this awareness manifests. I've heard it so many times, but it's shifting in meaning. I was often bored by trying to be in the body. In retrospect, I think that was hypervigilance from trauma.

I continue to work to turn a light inward, to listen to the body, and to feel things I never had awareness of. How armored and tense I was. There is no safety in my world. Of course, safety is an illusion counter to impermanence, but that doesn't keep me from deluding myself that I can find something to hold on to.

Seeing What's Here

by George Mukei Horner



George Mukei Horner tells how meditation entered his life as the art of photography.

My first camera was a Kodak Instamatic that I won as a door prize at a Christmas party. I was 12 or 13. Although I used it in my teens, it wasn't photography. Then I went to college. Older, finally on my own, the campus I found myself living on was a bird sanctuary with lots of undeveloped land. I suddenly began taking real photographs. I took the camera for long walks on campus, among the buildings, out among the palmettos, capturing the texture of a wall embedded with orange shell, the alertness of a burrowing owl guarding its nest, the stillness of an alligator floating on a mirror-like winter lake, even newly bought pottery, newspaper wrapping behind it on my bed.

I quickly sensed that in framing a shot the world was malleable. I was working it with my whole body, trying to find the right shape. At times it worked; at others, something I really wanted to photograph ... it didn't. Either way, it was completely experiential, not an analytical process. I wasn't trying to do something, I was immersed in doing it, in just seeing.

I don't think my Zen practice has changed my photography at all. I still work in exactly the same way, the same experience of being totally present to what's visually here, the same searching for something that works. What's different is understanding how what I'm doing is a practice. When I walk with a camera, I'm just seeing. My vision is wide open. No babbling in my head. No sense of "that"

being "out there." Too present for what I'm seeing to feel distant from it, I notice all kinds of things.

I'm always looking everywhere anyway when I walk, down at the ground, up at the sky. The camera gives me freedom to see with a richness and completeness that I don't normally use. Looking for something to photograph, I see much more thoroughly. My attention lingers on things I would otherwise only see for a moment. That makes it deeply satisfying, even on those occasions when I get the photos out of the camera and find none of them amount to much.



To see more of Mukei's photography, go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mukei>

I'm reminded of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, where Suzuki Roshi says that as long as you can taste your food while you're eating, you are all right; it means you are you. Seeing is like that for me.

Shogen's Dharma Combat 2014



The zendo was packed for Mark Shogen Bloodgood's Dharma Combat ceremony, the climax of his year of intensive study and practice. First row center stands Roshi Egyoku. To her right are Shogen with Karla, his wife, and Dokai. To Roshi's left are Enduring-Vow, holding the Case of Shogen's koan, and Senshin, who chanted the Case.

The Zen Center's Mandala is made up of Circles which attend to specific areas important to the Zen Center's mission and vision. We asked the Stewards of four of these Circles about their activities during the current practice period and their future plans.

HEALTH CIRCLE

The Health Circle has taken the example of the Brown Green Circle and begun a purposeful study of a particular book for however long it takes to go through it. The book is "The Tao of Equus: A Woman's Journey of Healing and Transformation through the Way of the Horse." The book is an interspecies look at deep presence and deep listening, in this case between human and horse. The HC continues to support the CaringNet volunteer services for those ZCLA members who need support after an illness or accident, and we will look for opportunities to offer help with Advanced Care Directives. We're also engaged in an ongoing exploration and discussion of our experiences with family members and loved ones who are dying or have died.

TENZO CIRCLE

The Tenzo Circle continues to meet bimonthly to discuss tenzo practice at ZCLA. Some current projects (with help from many outside the Tenzo Circle) include: coordinating the brand new Tenzo Coordinator program, producing a booklet of simple recipes for new (and old) tenzos (currently on the cookbook shelf), continuing to improve our support of tenzos on Sundays and during zazenkais and sesshins, ongoing kitchen repairs and improvements (new kettles, new kitchen zabuton, updating the spices), repairing the walk-in, new food containers, and more, putting together a class for those new to cooking at ZCLA and, ultimately, seeking to strengthen the tenzo practice container at ZCLA and exploring how we can best manifest the joyful, parental and magnanimous mind of Tenzo.

BUDDHA HAND CIRCLE

We have many new faces in the residential training community at Zen Center. This Fall Practice Period, the Buddha Hand Circle has focused its efforts on supporting the residential training community by facilitating an additional council and hosting Tuesday night Ango Dinners. The weekly dinners provide an opportunity for those in residential training to connect, support one another in practice, and get to know their neighbors a little better. The BHC is also committed to providing more council practice opportunities to the residential sangha. To accommodate the divergent schedules of community members, our intention is to provide enough voluntary councils at different times so that all residential training students interested in participating can do so. We look forward to deepening community practice in this area.

BROWN GREEN CIRCLE

This fall, the BGC is working with some awareness practices as described in the draft Green Order Manifesto from retreat last summer. Each month we choose an awareness practice to do as a group and then share our experiences at our next meeting. The first practice we took on was to closely observe a square foot of earth for half hour. The square foot extends forever above and below the surface. How much life is contained in that foot? Our current practice is to make an effort to see wind. It is invisible, but it can be seen in the reactions of the living things it touches. There is something poetic about these practices and it has been an enriching experience to hear the different perspectives that arise as each person practices with them.

True Giving: Not Mine, Not Yours

by Darla Myoho Fjeld



Each year we call upon our members and friends to make a financial contribution for the health and well-being of the Zen Center. Our goal this year is \$65,000 – the amount we need to balance our budget. To reach this goal, we ask that everyone whose lives have been touched by the Zen Center to contribute a financial gift.

The support that we receive from this annual appeal is one of the Zen Center's main sources of income – income needed to maintain our buildings and grounds, pay for the food we eat on Saturdays and Sundays, pay our hardworking staff and Abbot, and pay for the expenses associated with the many offerings of the Zen Center.

As we are reminded each Sunday in our closing ceremony: “The buildings and the soil protect the Dharma and give peace to all.” Our seven buildings and our beautiful grounds do indeed radiate peace, but they also must be maintained on a regular basis. Our buildings are beautiful, but they are old. Our residential membership fees go a long way in covering some of the costs of this maintenance, but are not enough to cover all of them.

Many of us pay monthly membership fees and offer our labor, skills, and teachings to the life of the Sangha. All of this is greatly appreciated and exhibits the wonderful generosity of our members. It is only with the additional gifts brought in by our annual appeal, however, that the Zen Center can cover its costs and continue to grow and touch the world around us. It takes a generous Sangha to keep our Zen Center going and to keep our budget balanced.

We all benefit from the many offerings of the Zen Center – the support that we receive from our teachers, the samadhi of sesshins and zazenkais, the encouragement of teishos and dharma talks, and the inspiration of the classes, programs, and workshops that Roshi and guest teachers offer. However, giving to the Annual Appeal is not about paying to get something.

As Bodhisattvas, we respond to appeals for support with a spirit of open generosity. We do this to create lives of wisdom and compassion in everyone who practices with the Zen Center's Sangha.

In her Annual Appeal letter this year, Roshi Egyoku wrote: “Every day, I keep in my heart the Zen Center's vision of a world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, where everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized, and compassion flows unhindered.” Acts of generosity that are free of the taint of “mine” and “yours” are a sign of an enlightened being, a Bodhisattva. These acts are an expression of our love for one another – a love that extends throughout the whole world.

We all know that a central teaching of the Buddha is that everything is impermanent. Nothing stays the same even for a millisecond. Impermanence can associate with sickness and death, but it can also associate with growth and development. Fundraising is one aspect of the development of the Zen Center. Development is the process of our Sangha coming together to take collective action to generate the well-being of all aspects of the Zen Center – spiritual, educational, financial, structural and interpersonal.

Acts of generosity that are free of the taint of mine and yours are a sign of a Bodhisattva ... an expression of our love for one another.

It is important not only to raise the funds needed to balance the Zen Center's budget, but also because it is good for the giver to give. Generosity – the Dana Paramita – is closely associated with Wisdom – Prajna. Our attitudes when we give and the spirit of our gifts are essential to the practice of generosity. We do not think about what we get out of it; we do not give with a sense of “mine.” We give with a sense of the Buddha's teaching that everything is interdependent. Just as we are all learning with our daily zazen and our practice with the three tenets of acting from a place of not-knowing and bearing witness, we simply give what is needed.

It is important that everyone take advantage of opportunities for generosity, for practicing Dana Paramita. This is why we are asking for one-hundred-percent participation in answering the call of the Annual Appeal.

Darla Myoho Fjeld is a Temple Co-Director at ZCLA.

Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt “Thank You!”

The Zen Center is maintained by the hands and eyes of each one of you.

Please contact Burt (bookstore@zcla.org) if you know of bodhisattvas to appreciate. Have we missed anyone?

To Lorraine Gessho Kumpf for her many years of stewarding the Tangaryo program, including fixing lunch for the participants;

To George Mukei Horner for stewarding our September Garden Zazen;

To Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert and Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen for teaching the Precept Series class;

To Michael Jisen Fritzen for arranging the Japanese Garden Zazenkaï on November 8;

To Sensei Pat Shingetsu Guzy for leading the Japanese Garden Zazenkaï;

To Faith-Mind for leading the council at the Japanese Garden Zazenkaï;

To Gary Belton, Carlos Soto, Tim Zamora and Simha Stubblefield for kitchen cleaning;

To Ben Connelly for leading a workshop on *Inside the Grass Hut*;

To Faith-Mind for leading the October Zazenkaï;

To Roshi Egyoku for leading us through 10 classes on the Paramitas;

To all of those who helped with Obon/Day of the Dead:

Rosa Ando Martinez for stewarding the Day of the Dead altar in the garden;

Pat Way, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Yoko Bajra, Tom Yudo Burger, Ty Jotai Webb, Katherine Senshin Griffith and Hilda Bolden for helping with the Day of Dead set-up;

Tina Jitsujo Gauthier and Mara Shiko Cohn for face painting;

Kaizen and Dylan Neal for sound and set-up;

Our tenzos Kane Phelps assisted by Roland Palmer and Diana Barahona;

The Day of Dead band: Kaizen, Dylan, Frank Martinez, Jolene Beiser, Shaon Nichols, and Tim Zamora;

For final clean-up: Shiko, Brett Chilton, Conrad Butsugen

Romo, Gary Belton, Kaizen, Jitsujo, Tim Zamora, and Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown;

Photographers Nan Reishin Merritt, Enduring-Vow, Burt Wetanson, Jon Jones, Shaon, and Yudo;

Sensei Shumyo Kojima, Hiroko Seki, and Yukiko Kadono from Zenshuji for teaching Obon dancing;

Faith-Mind, Darla Myoho Fjeld, Jotai, Roshi,

Gessho, and Mukei for setting up the Obon altar;

To Senshin for all her great work organizing Rohatsu;

To Roshi Egyoku, Yudo, and Myoho for creating a beautiful Annual Appeal letter and bookmark;

To Karen Brodie for editing the Annual Appeal letter;

To Jotai for cleaning up our database lists;

To Reishin, her daughter Melissa, Carlos Soto, Jotai, Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Gary Belton, and Butsugen for the delicious lunch in the style of an English tea for Shingetsu;

To Enduring-Vow and Gessho for the Tuesday night Ango dinners;

To Julia Norstrand for books for the prison project;

To Sensei Daishin and Getsuren for the generous donation of twin beds;

To those who contributed funds, clothing, time, skills, transportation and gifts for Marie and Obed’s visit from the Democratic Republic of Congo:

Roshi Egyoku, Enduring-Vow, Gessho, Pat Way, Ellen Reigen Ledley, Patricia Pfof, Carolyn Stevens, Myoho, Luminous-Heart, Roland Palmer, Shingetsu, Frank Martinez, Jonathan Katz, Diane Enju Katz, Nem Etsugen Bajra, Yoko Bajra, Kaoru Kawanishi, Marc Dogen Fontaine, Catherine Sammons, Elaine Karas, Louise Mbella, Virginie Dinsmore, Olivia Labat-Debat-Daye, Arno Kroner, Yudo, Jotai, Carol Schmitt, Faith-Mind, Dokai, Muso, Jessica Oetsu Page, Sensei Raul Ensho Berge, Hilda Bolden, Nicole Starrett, the Los Angeles Police Department, Peace Over Violence, Homeboy Industries, YWCA, Trauma Resource Institute.

Day of the Dead Celebration



ZCLA Affiliated Groups

The Lincroft Zen Sangha (New Jersey)
led by Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd

The Monday Night Meditation Group (Pasadena, CA)
coordinated by Betty Jiei Cole

The Ocean Moon Sangha (Santa Monica, CA)
led by Sensei John Daishin Buksbaze

The San Luis Obispo Sitting Group (CA)
coordinated by Mark Shogen Bloodgood

Santa Barbara Zen Center (CA)
led by Sensei Gary Koan Janka

The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)
led by Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

The Westchester Zen Circle (CA)
led by Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley

Contact info@zcla.org for information.

The *Water Wheel* is published by the Zen Center of Los Angeles, Great Dragon Mountain / Buddha Essence Temple, which was founded by the late Taizan Maezumi Roshi in 1967.

Our mission is to know the Self, maintain the precepts, and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism. **Our vision** is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized, and compassion flows unhindered.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi

Abbot 1995-1999: Roshi Bernard Glassman

Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Staff: Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, *Temple Co-Director*; Darla Myoho Fjeld, *Temple Co-Director*; Mary Rios, *Business Manager*; Katherine Senshin Griffith, *Program Steward*; Tom Yudo Burger, *Guest Steward*; Ty Jotai Webb, *IT Steward*; Robert Diaz, *Facilities Manager*. *Water Wheel*: *Editor:* Burt Wetanson; *Production Artist*, Tom Yudo Burger; *Proofreaders for this issue:* Marley Klaus, Bonnie Myosen Nadzam and Ty Jotai Webb; *Photographers for this issue:* Tom Yudo Burger, Nan Resihin Merritt, Shawn Shaon Nichols, George Mukei Horner, and Jeanne Dokai Dickenson.

The *Water Wheel* is published quarterly in electronic format only. Contact Burt, our Editor, at bookstore@zcla.org. The *Water Wheel* is available on the web at www.zcla.org.



Zen Center of Los Angeles
Great Dragon Mountain
923 South Normandie Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90006
info@zcla.org • www.zcla.org • 213-387-2351



Sangha Rites of Passage

Welcome New Members

Camille Hatch

Shared Stewardship Entering

Library Steward

George Mukei Horner

Shared Stewardship Leave-Taking

Tree-Watering Group Member

Susanna Knittel

Library Steward

Tara Jiho Sterling

Resident Leave-Taking

Susanna Knittel

Nikki Starrett

Dharma Training Fund

Please join us by giving a gift to support the Dharma Training Fund. Make your donations by going to www.zcla.org/donate

The Legacy Circle

Please consider joining the Legacy Circle by arranging for a bequest or other estate gift to ZCLA. For more information please contact Patti Muso Giggans at patti@peaceoverviolence.org.

Residential Training Opportunities

We currently have a two bedroom apartment available. The Buddha Hand Circle (BHC) oversees the application and admission process. Interested parties can contact Senshin Griffith, our Program Steward, at programsteward@zcla.org for information and requirements.