



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

How to Feed a Hungry Spirit

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



When I first heard of the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME church in Charleston, South Carolina, a thundering shock wave overcame my body and mind. There was only silence – no words, no thoughts, no impulse to do anything. After several days, I checked in with Sensei Kodo to see how she was doing and she

replied, “If we ever doubted we were prey, we don’t doubt it now.”

Sensei’s remark clarified what I had been experiencing. Emerging from the silence, it dawned slowly that the horrors of Charleston had given rise to the hungry ghost of being the “other,” of being objectified – the knowing that terrible things can happen due to the color of one’s skin or the slant of one’s eyes. I have known this fear since childhood.

At Zen Center, we practice weekly the Gate of Sweet Nectar, the ritual of inviting in and feeding the hungry spirits. During this rite, we plunge together into the vastness of ritual time when anything is possible, such as inviting in and feeding all the hungry spirits throughout space and time. We – all the Sangha in the Ten Directions – invite and feed together because individually our spiritual strength is insufficient for a task of this magnitude.

Roshi Bernie encourages us to see the Gate as a celebration, but what are we celebrating when we invite the hungry spirits? We are celebrating the fact that nothing has to be hidden, that our situation, even one of immense suffering, is workable. We can celebrate inviting in our personal and collective shadows – the very parts of ourselves and our society that are “the other,” and by extension the habitual mindsets, situations, and systems in which exclusion has become the norm, the way things are.



HEAR (Hearing, Ethics, and Reconciliation) Circle advisors and members from left: Myobo Fjeld, Gessho Kumpf, Shogen Bloodgood, Reigen Ledley, and Roshi Egyoku.

In a reflection on our recent Gate workshop, Nathan Doshin Woods wrote: “... how often are we called to celebrate our personal or collective shadow? To include the forgotten or unacknowledged in these everyday ceremonies or celebrations? How often do we make ceremonies of disavowal, or a celebration of exclusion? I find myself increasingly and subtly inclined ... to celebrate each ceremony as one of reciprocity, recognition and renewal of ... the fullness of all things together.”

In China and Japan, the hungry ghosts were the spirits of deceased ancestors or other worldly beings whose

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HOW TO FEED A HUNGRY SPIRIT *(Continued from page 1)*

insatiable desires caused unbearable suffering. They were depicted with huge bellies bloated from insatiable desires, with elongated pencil-thin throats, and food that turned into fire as it reached their mouths. Their hair was standing straight up, often aflame. The feeding ritual is performed annually with the intention of releasing these beings from torment.

Maudgalyayana, one of Shakyamuni Buddha's main disciples, was gifted in speaking with the dead and leading them to a favorable rebirth. The story in the Ullambana ("Rescuing Those Who Are Hanging Upside Down") Sutra is that wanting to make offerings to his deceased parents, Maudgalyayana saw his mother hanging upside down in the Hungry Ghost realm.

Distraught, he went to the Buddha, who guided him by saying that Maudgalyayana alone did not have sufficient spiritual strength to end his mother's suffering, but when the entire sangha in The Ten Directions makes offerings of food and prayers together with the intention of ending such suffering, his mother's defilements would end. So at the conclusion of the summer training period, the rite for feeding Maudgalyayana's mother and all hungry spirits was initiated in the Buddha's sangha.

“The Gate is a great solace ...”

Today, we perform the Gate in the spirit of the Zen Peacemakers as the rite that intentionally invites in the shadows – the disowned or excluded energies – of our life. We are choosing consciously to align with a bottom line of wholeness, of inclusion without exception. We do this not annually, but weekly. Over time, this feeding permeates our daily awareness.

Recently, someone shared with me a quote from St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis “saw God as a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere ... You fall into this wholeness when you stop denying or excluding things, even the dark parts of yourself.” It's an apt description of Indra's Net.

Roshi Bernie, in speaking about the shifts that happened to him after many years of teaching, said he wanted to meet more of himself – he wanted to meet the parts of Indra's Net that he did not yet know or was afraid of. It is exactly this that is the heart of the Gate: we are Indra's Net itself, without circumference or boundary. Therefore, each particularity of the Net – each form, each being, every life form without exception – is my body.

To invite in the hungry spirits is to admit that each of us has a yearning buried deep in our heart of hearts to know wholeness intimately. We invite and feed our hungers, the parts of ourselves that need to be fed to be free, to be satisfied, in order to live our lives to their fullest capacities. These cravings are exemplified in the Gate by the five confusions of greed, hatred, lust, envy, and delusion. These are very particular – not a gloss of hatred, for example, but hatred of a specific person, a specific group of people, or a specific situation.

While it is tempting to point at someone – such as the shooter, the homeless, the ones who perpetuate oppressive systems, the white supremacist – I know better. I know that the hungry ghost is not someone out there. As much as I may want to deny or exclude, the Gate has turned my world topsy-turvy by asking me to turn towards and invite in what terrifies me.

The Gate, therefore, is a great solace – it is love. It is the solace of wholeness, of inclusion that is aligned with the essential nature of life. It aligns with the fact that we cannot ignore the suffering of the world by picking and choosing only the parts of Indra's Net that we like or agree with. There is solace in righting ourselves, in extending our hands to help and to be helped because each of our lives are interwoven and depend upon all other lives.

The Gate ritual teaches us how to invite, how to prepare the meal, and how to serve and celebrate. It begins with singing Krishna Das's song, “Hungry Hearts”:

Calling out to hungry hearts
Everywhere through endless time
You who wander, you who thirst
I offer you this Bodhi Mind.

Calling all you hungry spirits
Everywhere through endless time
Calling all you hungry hearts
All the lost and left behind
Gather round and share this meal
Your joy and sorrow
I make it mine.

The song affirms both our beginningless hungers and that we ourselves are the food. It affirms that we have all that it takes to invite in, prepare, and serve the meal. When we sing the Hungry Hearts song, the parts of ourselves in the deep freeze compartment begin to thaw; we begin to see “other” as ourselves. When we practice the Gate, we are inviting in radical change within our own being and the world in which we live. We muster our courage and step into the shoes of a bodhisattva.

Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA's Abbot & Head Teacher.

Racism, Privilege, and Practice

by William Earth-Mirror Corcoran



Recently I gave a talk on the second precept: “Don’t Steal.” Unearned privilege provided the door to my discussion, extending “stealing” to acting with race, class, or gender privilege that compromises the humanity of others and me. What am I stealing from others and from myself? This essay uses that talk as a jumping off point to focus on race, privilege and practice.

At the outset, if you’re reading this without the context of my physical appearance and demeanor, it’s important to highlight some markers of my conditioned presence. I am an upper-middle-class, straight white male who grew up in a family that moved from working class to middle class during my childhood and adolescence.

The recent slaughter of nine black people in a South Carolina church forced America to confront yet again the acid bath of racism that exhausts, thwarts, and attempts to erase people of color in America. In contrast, in my day-to-day experience embodying my conditions as a white person, it is as easy as breathing for me to move through the day without having to consciously interpret the world through my racial identity. My whiteness can remain invisible to me in myriad ways each day because it is seen, among whites, as “normal” and unremarkable. Whites commonly think of racism as a black thing about black people, but that’s not the story. It is about white people, as “white people” conceive of themselves (and that has shifted over time), and the power we wield in American society.

Working with my whiteness is a great collective action for liberation.

Over time, through opportunities and challenges brought to me through my work as an environmental advocate, I have followed a path of inquiring deeply into my whiteness and privilege. My Zen practice helped me to open to hard realizations and lessons without moving directly to defensiveness. It gives me a grounding in no-ground. This proved to be a two-way street as I became conscious that in owning and working with my racism and privilege, I was also finding new dimensions to my practice. The conscious path of practice in this realm has cut to the core of my being and further increased my apprecia-

tion of the porous nature of outside and inside, self and community. This essential work of knowing, owning, and working with my whiteness and my unearned privilege is in fact a great collective action that helps to liberate me and others. It is a 21st century Bodhisattva path.

Recently, I was in a meeting meant to unpack the race, gender, and equity issues going on in a particular office. The meeting powerfully reminded me how fear and dis-



comfort can really get us stuck. For two hours, we talked around the hot center of the room. The white people in the room generally wanted to be seen as nice, conscious, progressive people who were seriously concerned about racism, parking their racism as a thing outside.

The place people wanted to go was “We need a solution, and then we can put together a plan, and if we have a plan, then we’ll know what to do to address this.” The facilitators were not going to let us get stuck there because they knew the plan wasn’t a “plan” but a deflection. A plan would define the “problem out there” and provide “measurable” steps to address it. That all might make some sense later, but there is a critical first step, just as there is in practice. And that is to step into intimacy, to accept vulnerability, and to experience fear and discomfort without turning away.

After two hours of this circling and deflecting, one of our group, who has done deep work in owning and working with her whiteness and her racism, finally broke down and said, “I want to work on this, I need your support, I need to know you have my back.” It was in that moment the room came alive. What a gift she gave to the group, dropping directly into her anguish and asking the group to support her! With that plea, the white participants started

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to take the time to sit in the muck of our privilege and our racism. We were alive together in a place where we could acknowledge that, “Yes, I act with privilege and racism, and I obtain things from that which is unearned and harmful to others.”

It became not about getting stuck in a place of self-serving guilt that can subtly keep white people as the center of attention, but to inhabit a space of vulnerability about it and really sit with knowing in the pit of your gut that you are really there. When we did that together, meaningful response and action started to arise in the room.

The action became how do we heal and not how do we fix. The healing can't take the form of “I'm really sorry this happened to your ancestors and mine were terrible people,” although that's a stage some white people go through. Rather, it's about acknowledging the seeds we have been planting and creatively imagining the seeds we will plant together to yield future conditions. Then it becomes a recognition of things as they are in order to acknowledge the thievery of racism and white privilege and to start on the lifelong path of practicing with these conditions. But until I let the pain of racism manifest in me, I can't take the next step – just having the sense of my own implication, seeing how it arises in me, and not moving to the solution right away. How am I assessing the situation and seeing it as it is? It's hard!

A while back, *The New Yorker* ran a brief interview* with Peggy McIntosh, a Women's Studies scholar at Wellesley College. In 1988, McIntosh authored a groundbreaking essay on white privilege and has also written a book, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack*. In the interview, McIntosh provides a wonderfully nuanced and compassionate perspective on how privilege manifests and how we can work with it from the individual and group points of view. I found her perspective helpful in capturing the dynamic of white people both “calling out” and “calling in” other white people when they manifest racism and white privilege.

In the interview, McIntosh says: “In order to understand the way privilege works, you have to be able to see patterns and systems in social life, but you also have to care about individual experiences. I think one's own individual experience is sacred. Testifying to it is very important – but so is seeing that it is set within a framework outside of one's personal experience that is much bigger, and has repetitive statistical patterns in it.”

*<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-origins-of-privilege>



When I read that, my mind went right to our shared practice in the Buddhist tradition of appreciating and working with the interwoven nature of the personal and impersonal and the contingent construction of the “self.” Indeed, we need to appreciate our individual experience as the Dharma treasure, while knowing that we function within an interpenetrating world of pattern as conditions arise and fall away. It's a big world and an intimate world!

Working with my racism and privilege allows me to ask myself all kinds of challenging questions in this intersection of “individual” experience and “impersonal” repetitive statistical patterns. Am I stepping back to see the full perspective – is it sufficient, have I gone broadly enough? Am I taking the opportunity and responsibility to go deep and challenge what I think of as my “self” and accept that I am endlessly integrated into the world and implicated in the world because I am the world?

That can feel perilously bottomless to the small self, the one that hopes to fix things with plans. Can I really open to how my conditioned self is colonized by systems of oppression, and that change is not just working on my “self” but acting in the world? Am I really opening to the raw places of my own and other's experience? Here in our daily life, in our heart-breaking daily news, is an endless practice, becoming increasingly aware and sensitive and agile while acting and knowing and accepting that I will make mistakes.

There is far more that can be said on this topic and rich places to illuminate the convergence of our Bodhisattva practice and work with race, class, and gender; for example, the three tenets and the principles of our koan and precept practices. I have hoped to indicate here that white people and, specifically for this essay, white North American Buddhist practitioners can, by embracing this practice, reclaim their humanity, contribute to healing, transform themselves, and help to liberate others. The first step is ours to take.

Maezumi Roshi on the Passing of his Mother

This year, we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of Maezumi Roshi's passing. We offer here edited text from his remarks upon the death of his mother, Mrs. Yoshi Kuroda, age 90, in 1992 along with a transcript from February 15th, 1992 marking the Parinirvana, the death of the Buddha.

I appreciate your participation in this memorial service for my mother. She had a very difficult and hard life. Before her marriage, she had a difficult time with her brothers. After marrying, she had a difficult time raising awful kids like myself, eight of us. She had to serve her in-laws, who were not so kind to her.

This evening as I watched you offer incense for her, I was reflecting on the cultural conditions in Japan in which women are discriminated against. I myself almost purposely wanted one side of the altar to be filled with men and the other side with women as we do in Japan. And when you all started offering incense, I see that the intermingling of male and female, of ordained and laity, of those who have had jukai and those who haven't — here you are all together not in any particular order, all of you just offering incense.

I feel that my mother is watching all of you and this might be the most delightful present for her. I am very much grateful. In a sense, order is important. Even in the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, there was a clear order of monks, nun, laymen, and laywomen. In this country, too, some kind of order will emerge sooner or later. This intermingling of each position is a wonderful thing. In Japan, you'll never see this kind of thing.

As far as the differences between monks, priests, and lay persons are concerned, I want to see things happen in a way that all of you have an equal opportunity to do whatever you'd like to do in the Dharma. I really believe that this would be the best offering to my mother. I deeply appreciate this sense of equality.

On the Parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha.

In the Parinirvana scroll, the Buddha's death is beautifully rendered with him wearing a golden robe. It is said that he



Maezumi Roshi greeting his mother, circa 1991.

died from food poisoning from eating spoiled pork. You can imagine what kind of last seven days he lived, being 80 years old, sick with severe diarrhea, and maybe sleeping under a tree. I'm sure his last moments were not as pretty as depicted in this scroll.

The February 15th Nirvana Day as commemorated in the Mahayana tradition means a lot to me these days. My father also died in early February, and my mother just recently died. What comes up for me is comparing her last moments to the Buddha's. For her last month, she was in a hospital with very good care and a wonderful nurse. She died quite peacefully.

At her funeral, people spoke about the hard times she lived through and that her main characteristic was that she was always thankful, always grateful to people. As I mentioned at her memorial service, her life was very hard, but even having such a hard time, she hardly ever complained. She was always saying, "Thank you," and "I'm sorry that I'm not doing enough."

Someone was telling me that because of the influence of my mother, we are having a rather unique development in that my senior disciples are doing things in their own unique ways. Until this was mentioned, I did not think I was doing

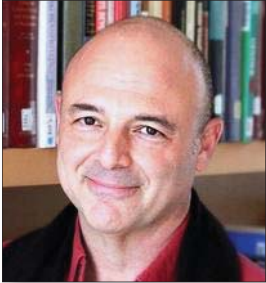


The Parinirvana Scroll

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Council as a Path of Service

by Jared Oshin Seide



In a time of unprecedented challenges to economies, socio-political structures, ecological systems, anxiety is widespread and suffering is deep. How is it possible to provide effective interventions to individuals, and communities, rather than the preconceived notions of “experts.” How do we bear witness

to the unique characteristics of the situation, rather than inflict external theories which we presume will fix things? For me, Council provides a dynamic and generative space for easing suffering, interconnecting, and flourishing together. I’m so grateful to have found a path that enables me to support this work in the world.

Throughout my life, I’ve been captivated by storytelling. As a teen, I was a semi-professional actor and, after Brown University and a variety of drama schools, was led into directing and producing film. Some years into a Hollywood career, I was introduced to an innovative program unfolding at my daughter’s elementary school, in partnership with The Ojai Foundation.

After the Rodney King riots, the school was rife with racial tension, frustration and conflict. I watched as the practice of Council was introduced to the students and to the greater school community, and I observed a radical transformation of the campus into an empathic, cohesive community of stakeholders. The school community became engaged and unified.

It was clear to me that the Council program had precipitated this shift and was leading to a deeper sense of social connectedness through the simple act of sharing our stories. The impact on the children and their engagement at school was similarly transformative and, on a personal level, I believe Council inspired my daughter to find her voice.

Witnessing and participating in that process changed my life. I became a student of the Council process and began to devote more of my time and energy to the work. I studied the practice intensely and was mentored by Jack Zimmerman, Director of The Ojai Foundation. I became a practitioner and then a trainer, at a time when Council programs were expanding rapidly in Southern California schools, and found myself training teachers and coordinating school-based Council programs.

As our program’s popularity grew and the necessity of interfacing with systems beyond schools became apparent (government, corrections, veterans affairs, corporations, health care), we came to recognize the need for an outward-facing organization that could collaborate with these systems. In 2013, the Board of The Ojai Foundation agreed to “spin off” its council work – the independent Center for Council was launched.

As director of the Center for Council, I have been responsible for developing and supporting Council trainings and programs locally, and throughout the world, in prisons, hospitals, community and environmental groups, social-profit organizations, social service agencies, and businesses. By sitting in quiet and contemplative sharing, Council participants report that they feel “more heard and



A recent Council Training Workshop in LA, integrated art and visioning. In the center are the talking pieces.

seen” by peers, co-workers, families and friends. They discover a greater sense of community and empathy for those around them, as well as an increased sense of self-esteem and empowerment. They report that they find their voice, discover what truly matters, and take a stand for themselves, their values and their dreams.

I have found Council to be a strikingly effective tool for developing and strengthening interconnectedness through storytelling, as it offers experiences that are engaging, empathic and dramatic – experiences I’d hoped to find working with theatre and film. When trained in this practice and these tenets, the Council facilitator can offer a powerful upaya to individuals who are suffering and a way to celebrate our commonalities and interconnection.



This “spiral council” concluded the Zen Peacemakers Bearing Witness Retreat in Murambi, Rwanda.

Working with the Zen Peacemaker Order has been dynamic, provocative and deeply nourishing. It is extraordinary and intense to step into a Council after bearing witness to the Childrens’ Barracks at Auschwitz-Birkenau, or the horrific remains of the massacre at the church at Ntarama, outside Kigali. The dehumanizing realities of prison life in California are also profoundly challenging to face. And when we listen completely to what is manifesting in our hearts, and in the hearts of those with whom we sit in Council, we become more intimate with the situation at hand.

The action that arises from entering into a situation with not-knowing and bearing witness is necessarily aligned with love and care; when we choose not to turn away, but we allow ourselves to care and act, we manifest compassionate action, we “do good for others.” As Roshi Bernie suggests, doing good in the world must be grounded in rigorous practice, clarity of vision, and generosity of heart. This is deeply aligned with the practice of Council and is the underlying essence of Council’s intentions to “listen and speak from the heart.”

In January of 2013, I was asked to lead a five-day Council training workshop in Kigali for a group of Rwandan peace-workers participating in the ZPO Rwandan Bearing Witness Retreat and committed to healing their country, post-genocide. The training was a powerful inquiry into deeper intimacy with our wounds, an experiential exploration of the nature of healing, and a witnessing and celebration of the emergence of a practice intended to foster community resilience.

This group organized, practiced together, and brought Council into their lives, families and communities, gaining recognition as the “Rwandan Center for Council,” a certified, official Rwandan NGO.

Similar to the prison system in California, Rwandan prisons are overburdened and rehabilitation services are stressed beyond their capability. The Rwanda Council Program provides services to genocidaires reaching the end of their incarceration, as well as to the communities to which they will return. The program interacts with civil society to support successful reintegration of former prisoners. The goal is to promote practices that will help both offenders and their victims heal from their individual and collective traumas while developing resiliency.

The Council program is grounded in the understanding that the most effective intervention begins with an open space, a pause, the opportunity to be with things as they are now, not with an ideology or a “cure” or a sense of knowing. The overall intent is to spur a more compassionate and restorative system of justice that supports rehabilitation for the world’s incarcerated offenders.

Closer to home, Council programs in California correctional facilities have resulted in tangible and meaningful shifts in behavior in prison yards, including collaboration between ethnic groups, inmates taking steps to be accountable for their behavior and seeking forgiveness, as well as improved regulation of impulsive and reactive communication styles, which has led to reduced incidents of violence.

These results have been quite striking, and the Center for Council has received support to broaden its Inmate Council Program to include twelve maximum-security prisons in California. One of the ripples of this program has been an invitation to offer Council-based programs to correctional officers, designed to shift the culture from stress, burnout, denial, and untreated trauma to more healthy self-management and self-care, emotionally and socially intelligent communication, effective stress and conflict management, and overall staff wellness and safety.



An inmate at Gasabo Prison lights the candle of Council.

While the focus is different for staff and inmates, Council-based programs address the dehumanizing that impacts all who interact with dysfunctional systems – including, but not limited to, corrections. Council programs are providing skillful means of fostering wellness and resilience on the individual, community and systemic level. The Center for Council envisions a world in which every voice is heard, no one is invisible, and all have the opportunity to connect to community.

Osbin is a Zen practitioner and the Executive Director of the Center for Council. For information, visit: www.centerforcouncil.org

“Be Funny!!!” he roared. “Make Me Laugh in Three Seconds, or Get Off the Stage!”

by Jane Chen



My teacher, Ronlin Foreman, was my first exposure to the serious art of clowning.

We would have to stand in front of the entire class and “be funny.” He had a box of toilet paper rolls and would throw them at us if we weren’t funny (he called that “STUPID!”). And if we were really failing, that’s when he would join us on stage and provoke us, as if things weren’t bad enough. One

such time, he inched his way over to me with a demonic smile, doing a random tap dance routine. I was eyeing him warily, sweating like a pig, and feeling red in the face (not just the nose), when suddenly, out of nowhere, he lunged at me and shouted, “BOOOOOOOOOO!!!!” I just stood there. No reaction. Until five seconds later. Then I screamed, “AHHHHHHHHH!”

There are times in life when I don’t let outside stimuli in because I’m scared. Clowning, which feels like real life

under a magnifying glass, makes me see the unconscious ways in which I close myself off for protection. Sometimes, I don’t allow an authentic reaction because I’m afraid of looking bad or failing. But clowning and real life demand active listening and spontaneous action! So how can I do that...i.e., “be funny” (aha!)?

Well, I can see now that I was hiding my fear of not being funny, which was, well, not funny. Instead, I could have had some fun showing the fear on the outside. Like when Ronlin tap danced over to me, I could have done a complementary tap move away from him. Or when he shouted “BOO!” I could have screamed and jumped into his arms, begging, “Don’t hurt me, don’t hurt me, please don’t hurt me!” I could have done any number of things.

But of course it’s easy to think of all the things I could have done, after the fact. (Don’t ya hate that?) The beauty of clowning, and life, however, is that you can’t go back. You can only accept the flawed human self that you are. Then there will be some movement. The clown master Richard Pochinko says that if we look at all sides of ourselves, “we can’t help but laugh at the beauty and ridiculousness of all that we are.”

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anything particularly different from others. But perhaps this is the influence of both my mother and my father. If I have any sense of flexibility more than the average person, maybe I owe this to my parents.

As for the Buddha, the 50 years of life after his realization were lived for the people – for everything, just like in this painting. When he died, he was wearing dusty, messy clothing. My mother was surrounded by heartfelt sympathy and condolences. I have mixed feelings, frankly. So I take her last moments, and comparing those to them of the Buddha, I feel like I received a nice koan from her to work on.

For me, life and death are not particularly such a big thing. While we are alive, we are alive; when we die, we die. Instead of thinking about the significance of death as such, I’d rather share with you how to live this life together while we are alive, focusing on what we are doing *now*.



Bernie Roshi and Gate of Sweet Nectar workshop.

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The Legacy Circle

Please consider joining the Legacy Circle by arranging for a bequest or other estate gift to ZCLA. For more information, contact Darla Myoho Fjeld at dr.fjeld@gmail.com

The Zendo Practice of Face-to-Face

by George Mukai Horner



Face-to-Face is the practice of student and teacher meeting privately during *zazen* for one-to-one instruction. I will examine the character of the meeting itself in a later article. Here, I want to look just at the protocol, how we join a line, wait, enter the room, and leave.

The protocol and forms are not mere formality. They enable us to collect and settle ourselves, to become present, focused, and attentive, so that when face to face with the teacher, we are ready to explore the fundamental fact of our life.

Let each part of the protocol be a complete action; doing only that and doing it fully, before moving on to the next. Be meticulous, fully present for each one. Do not try to do two or three things at once; do not let them blur together.

General Instructions. The *jisha* (teachers' attendant) will call people to come. To properly manage the lines, the call may distinguish members and non-members, commuters and residents, where we are in the Zendo (garden side or street side), and whether we have yet seen a teacher in the past week.

Only join a line in response to a call that has just been made and where the criteria apply to you. When you hear a call that applies to you, respond quickly. Stand, bow to and away from your seat, and take your cushion, bench, or chair to the front *gaitan* or carpet runner as instructed.

While in line, do *zazen* continuously. Move forward only when the person ahead of you goes in, or when requested to do so by the *jisha*, so that the line is not repeatedly disrupted with everyone moving up. When you do move up, stand up completely, then move forward, then sit down again.

During *kinhin* (walking meditation), you may stand and stretch your legs, but do not join the walking. In general, do not leave the line until it is your turn to see the teacher. When your turn comes, set your chair or cushion aside and proceed to the room. Each Face-to-Face room has a cushion and stool, if you need it.

When you enter the room, be careful to always face the teacher and not turn your back. Step to one side and close the door; sidestep in front of the teacher and bow (full or standing, as indicated below); then sit down.

Once seated, pause for a moment to let your mind settle. Then state your name and the nature of your practice during *zazen*, such as following your breath, just sitting, or your current koan. When Face-to-Face is finished, put your palms together in *gassho*, stand and step back. Do a deep standing bow, straighten up, sidestep, open the door wide, and back out of the room.



Meeting Roshi. When ready to see the next student, Roshi will give a long ring on her hand bell. Sitting at the head of her line, respond by hitting the hanging bell twice. Put down the striker, set aside your cushion or bench, and go immediately to her door. Stand to the left; the person leaving will back out on the right. Do a deep standing bow together; then straighten up and, in *gassho*, enter and close the door.

Do a full bow in front of Roshi before sitting down. When finished, Roshi will ring her bell. Exit as indicated in the general instructions above. Outside the room, remain in the deep standing bow until the entering student has closed the door. Then return to the Zendo.

Meeting a Sensei. There are only two differences in protocol for seeing a sensei compared with seeing Roshi. The sensei will use a short ring on a hand bell to call the next student, to clearly distinguish it from Roshi's long ring. You will not ring a bell in response, but should proceed immediately to the sensei's room.

Meeting a Teacher-in-Training. Again, there are two differences in protocol for seeing a teacher-in-training compared with Roshi or a sensei. For a teacher-in-training, no bells are used. Simply wait until the person ahead of you returns from Face-to-Face, then proceed immediately to the room. Enter, close the door, and do a standing bow (not a full bow) in front of the teacher-in-training before sitting down. All other instructions are the same.

Mukai is a longtime practitioner and Zendo Steward.

Gate of Sweet Nectar: Feeding the Hungry Spirits

by Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert

Here at the Zen Center, the Gate of Sweet Nectar has been a core practice dating back to Roshi Egyoku's return to ZCLA in 1997. Based on the Kan Ro Mon, a Japanese Zen ritual observed as an Obon service, it has been substantially transformed and expanded in the way we practice it today. The Gate is also a core practice of the Zen Peacemaker Order.

In April 2015, Bernie Glassman, our second Abbot and now Abbot Emeritus, returned to ZCLA to lead a weekend workshop on the Gate along with Roshi Egyoku. The workshop was offered through the Zen Peacemaker Order. Participants from several Zen temples and lineages joined us for the weekend. We spent around half the time in discussion with Bernie about the history of the form and its meaning and relevance as a peacemaker practice. We spent the remainder of our time being trained by Roshi Egyoku in the forms of the ceremony and the roles of the celebrant and the eleven other positions that comprise the service at ZCLA.

In the process, we learned much from the other participants. Sweetwater Zen Center, for example, includes a "dance of joy" near the close of the service – we now include it in our own form. Being both teacher and student was a wonderful experience for everyone from the most experienced to the newest beginner!



In essence, the Gate of Sweet Nectar is a practice of feeding the hungry ghosts. Like much ritual, there is mystery at its heart; my "understanding" of it will most likely not mirror yours. Structurally, the service has three components: first, it is an invitation, invit-

ing the hungry spirits – not the usual guests at a religious service – to come in so that we can feed them. Second, it is an actual offering. The celebrant prepares and offers food at the altar. We feed the hungry spirits! And finally, we celebrate. The celebrant rejoices: "Now I have raised the Bodhi Mind! I am the Buddhas and they are me!" Everyone responds and we dance.

But that offering is just one component of what is going on. How do I feed the hungry spirits in my life? How do you? The Gate of Sweet Nectar ceremony is a true expression of One Body practice, when the celebrant, all those in the various service positions, and the entire Sangha in attendance have a collective experience of serving and feeding the hungry spirits among us. The Gate of Sweet Nectar is continuously unfolding itself to each one of us. It must be experienced bodily, through the invitation, the offering, and the celebration. It challenges us to plunge in and truly experience the Oneness of Life as we embrace all the hungry ghosts we normally avoid. It is a joyous moment! Can you let yourself go there?

Dharma-Joy is a Priest-in-training at ZCLA.

Congratulations to our new Baby Buddhas



Congratulations to our Jukai recipients on June 14 in the Zen Center Garden: (left to right) Kane Buzen Phelps, Maria Juko Collantes, Jeff Sekiun LaCoss, Michael Jinsen Davis, Roshi Egyoku (Preceptor), Frank Genku Martinez, Bob Doetsu Ross, Eleanor Joen Heaphy, Cathy Jikan Sammons, and Patricia Keian Pfost.



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

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

To all those who supported Bernie Roshi's Workshop in April: **Roshi Egyoku, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Darla Myoho Fjeld, Rami Efal, Mark Shogen Bloodgood, Katherine Senshin Griffith, George Mukei Horner, Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, Jonathan Kaigen Levy, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Nem Etsugen Vajra, Conrad Butsugen Romo, Tom Yudo Burger, Dharma Training Fund** and the **Kobori Roshi Transportation Fund** contributors who helped make attendance possible for Bernie's Workshop;

To **Patricia Shingetsu Guzy** for (cheerfully) handling the scheduling of F2F and speakers!;

To **Tara Jiho Sterling** for donating chairs for our library and throw pillows for our sofa;

To **Robert Diaz** for looking after the Zen Center Nissan;

To our 2nd quarter Tenzos: **Nan Reishin Merritt, Bob Doetsu Ross, Diane True-Joy Fazio, Mujin Sunim, Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka, Frank Genku Martinez, Kane Buzen Phelps, Jessica Oetsu Page, Kim Kimu DeBacco, Nikolai Loveikis, Jim Dojun Hanson, Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson, Diane Enju Katz, Kevin Garrity;**

For preparing snacks for Day of Reflection: **Patricia Keian Pfof, Tara Jiho Sterling, Senshin, Jessica Oetsu Page, Diane True-Joy Fazio;**

To our 2nd quarter Jikidos: **Kaizen, Z Zeller, Sarah McCarron, Dwayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, Genku, Chris Hackman, Dojun, Tim Zamora;**

For work on our fountain: **Robert, Mukei, Chris Hackman, Shawn Shaon Nichols;**

For the print making class: **Loren Kantor** (Instructor), **Senshin, Butsugen;**

For Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Singer's Celebration: **Roshi Egyoku, Dokai, Luminous-Heart, Enju, Kevin Garrity, Oetsu, Yudo;**

To the Brown Green Circle for hosting the Ecodharma meeting: **Mukei,**



Luminous-Heart and Enju cooking lunch for Rabbi Singer's Celebration.



Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Singer giving a Dharma Talk.



Bonnie Myosen Nadzam and Dale Jamieson reading from their new book Love in the Anthropocene.

True-Joy, Pat Way, and John Heart-Mirror Trotter;

To the HEAR Circle for all their work on the Zen Center's core documents: **Roshi Egyoku, Myoho, Ellen Reigen Ledley; Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Shogen;**

To **Karen Enduring-Joy Brodie** for her help on editing the documents for the HEAR Circle;

To the Flower Group for the beautiful flowers on our altars: **Luminous-Heart, Gessho, Pat Way, Enju, Yoko Bajra, Reigen, Mara Shiko Moon Cohn, Janet Ko Ren Sager, Cathy Jikan Sammons;**

To all those who helped with the Jukai ceremony: **Roshi, Faith-Mind, Myoho, Mukei, Ty Jotai Webb, Enduring-Vow, Gessho, Tina Jitsujo Gauthier, Kaizen, Dylan Neal, Shaon, Kaigen, Shiko, Jiho, Oetsu, Buzan, Butsugen, Tim, Yudo, Yuesen Lobsang Tenkyong Yuen, Lilly Berge-Brodie, Pat Way, Senshin;**

To our Altar Cleaners: **Gary Belton, Butsugen, Burt Wetanson, Kaizen, Jitsujo, Keian, Chris Hackman, Mukei, Carol Schmitt, Gessho, and Dylan Neal;**

To our Zazenkaï Tenzos **Oetsu and True-Joy;**
To our Zazenkaï leaders **Senshin and Shogen;**

To **Enduring-Vow** for being our Tenzo for the Plum Blossom Sesshin;

To the **Brown Green Circle** for stewarding the Earth Day Sand Mandala;

To **Reishin** for her work as the Photo Steward;

To **Buzen** for stewarding the Sacred Circle Dance workshop;

To our Water Wheel proofreaders **Bonnie Myosen Nadzam and Marley Klaus;**

To our Buddha Hall service leaders **Carol Flowing Mountain Schmitt, Myoho, Kaizen, Shogen, Dharma-Joy, Faith-Mind**

To **Yoko Bajra** for her instruction on how to fold Peace Cranes and to **Keian, Glenn Davis, Carol, Jolene, Jitsujo, Yudo, and Etsugen**

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 Buksbazen

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

Boundless Mind Sangha
Santa Barbara, CA
Led by Sensei Gary Koan Janka

Outreach Groups

CMC Buddhist Fellowship Group
California Men's Colony (CMC)
San Luis Obispo, CA
Led by Mark Shogen Bloodgood

One Essence Sangha
California Institution for Women (CIW)
Corona, CA
Led by DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass

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

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Sangha Rites of Passage

Welcome New Members

Glenn Davis
Kevin Garrity
Ed Etsudo Kimble
Ann Murray

Welcome New Resident

Yuesen Yuen

Shared Stewardship Entering

Board of Directors

William Earth-Mirror Corcoran
Tina Jitsujo Gauthier

Shared Stewardship Leave-Taking

Photo Steward

Nan Reishin Merritt

Resident Leave-Taking

Spencer Hecht

2015 Sesshins

Just Summer Sesshin

July 19 eve - July 25

Autumn Wind Sesshin

October 11 eve - October 18

Rohatsu Sesshin

December 4 eve - December 12

MuGon End-of-Year Reflection Retreat

December 27 eve - December 30

2015 Zazenkai

August 7 eve - August 8

November 13 eve - November 14



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