



Water Wheel

Being one with all Buddhas, I turn the water wheel of compassion.
—Gate of Sweet Nectar

Zen Center of Los Angeles / Buddha Essence Temple

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The Glow of Ripeness

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

The poem “Love” by the Polish Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz expresses the essence of the upcoming Fall Practice Period:

*Love means to look at yourself
The way one looks at distant things
For you are only one thing among many.
And whoever sees that way heals his heart,
Without knowing it, from various ills—
A bird and a tree say to him: Friend.*

*Then he wants to use himself and things
So that they stand in the glow of ripeness.
It doesn't matter whether he knows what he serves:
Who serves best doesn't always understand.*

At Great Dragon Mountain, the annual 90-day Practice Period is held in the fall (details to come with your electronic copy of the *Water Wheel* by first of September), a naturally busy and stressful time of year—the start of school, Thanksgiving, traditional religious observances including the Buddha’s enlightenment, and the ending of the calendar year. In the midst of all this, we frame a practice period and *stand in the glow of ripeness*.

In Shakyamuni Buddha’s day, the mendicants stayed in one place during the rainy season, a time of collective ripening at the feet of the Buddha. In Japan, this intensive period was called *ango*, or “peaceful dwelling.” In Los Angeles, the weather does not drive us indoors—the blue sky above constantly shows the nature of original mind—and sangha practice throughout the year is grounded in *nen*, now-heart-mind. So what does a practice period mean for us?

Through tradition and our own experience, we find

Roshi Egyoku is Abbot and Head Teacher of ZCLA.



A flower says to you: Friend.

that it is skillful to occasionally punctuate our life by framing a period of time in which we each raise our practice intention and effort to a greater level. In *The Lotus Sutra*’s verse on “The Lifespan of the Thus Come One,” the Buddha says (paraphrasing): I pretend to die, because if living beings see me constantly, they will become complacent and no longer search for me.

Isn’t this so? The so-called conditioned aspects of our self are so obscuring—seemingly unrelenting and shameless, indeed! The stability and constancy of *zazen*, and the framing of a practice period, allow you *to look at yourself the way one looks at distant things, for you are only one thing among many*. Milosz calls it love; we call it Zen, the fact of awake original being.

Upon meeting Great Master T’ung-an Tao-p’i, the fortieth Zen Ancestor, the student T’ung-an Kuan-chih

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said, “The ancients said, ‘What worldly people love, I love not.’ I wonder what you love.”

Let’s put aside the casual ways in which the word “love” is used in everyday speech—we love the weather, we love cookies. Or as the opposite of hatred or dislike, arising from the conventional ideas of me and you. So tell me, what is this love of worldly people that Kuan-chih speaks of?

Are we not worldly people? We have children, spouses or partners, our work, material goods—all of which, according to convention, and even religion, define a worldly person. But such things in and of themselves do not make someone worldly. What does? A worldly person is attached to a self—to the “me, myself, I” that positions her at the center of the world, above all others.

Milosz calls us to look at our self *the way one looks at distant things*. Great Master Dogen instructs us to *take the backward step and illuminate the self*. Stop! Step back! Step back far enough so that you see beyond *the various ills* of self-absorption. Step so far back that you, as Master Dogen says, *forget the self*. Forget the limited, self-absorbed you and know the you that is *only one thing among many*; the you that *is* the many. See the *glow of ripeness* of originally awake reality!

In Zen practice, we experience the conditioned self binding itself tighter and tighter. To cut through this, the clear-eyed ancients ask, “Who are you?” This question is Zen’s love potion, but it is too strong a dose upfront for most people. When we are not ready for this medicine, it does not quickly *heal the heart...from various ills*. We do, indeed, want a quick fix. Daily practice and upping the ante during the practice period enable us to take bigger and bigger doses of reality that do not deny our conditioning, and, at the same time, enable us to hear *a bird and tree say...Friend*.

Over time, we develop the clear-eyed seeing of conditioning and its appearance of a self. We recognize “me, mine” and know the habitual patterns, the craving of the so-called small or ego-centered self that seeks to take center stage at every opportunity. For this suffering self, love is the worldly love of self satisfaction—the insatiable hungry ghost of craving and objectifying an “other” for the sake of its own fulfillment.

From time to time, Sangha members have conflicts with each other. The Zen Center’s protocol is to ask people to address the conflict by first speaking with each other, but sometimes people feel that they cannot do this on their own. Occasionally, I tell people, “I don’t think

you can work it out.” Meaning, of course, that as long as you are seeking only your own satisfaction, the chances of you opening to a larger view are minimal. Lately, I have rather enjoyed saying such things to some of you.

Even so, recently, I experienced a conversation with a practitioner who was trying very hard to understand the conflict he found himself in. As the view became more distant and more of the situation was revealed, he suddenly, literally, opened wide his eyes and said, “I see what I’ve done—I’ve made everything about *me*.” In that moment, he stood *in the glow of ripeness*.

Kuan-chih said, “I cannot love these conventional notions of a self.” What is this Buddhadharma that he is revealing by asking, “I wonder what you love?” Milosz says *whoever sees that way heals his heart*.

“I wonder what you love?”

—Master T’ung An Kuan-chih

Zen Master Yasutani Roshi, a teacher of both ZCLA abbots Maezumi Roshi and Roshi Glassman, used to present it this way: in the Buddhadharma, buddha is equality; dharma is differentiation.

In the Buddhadharma, equality means that all things—all people—are equally buddha nature. This empty-of-a-self nature is equally everything; no thing has more or less, no person needs more or suffers from a lack of it. Everything, everyone *is* so—*is* thoroughly, completely so. However, being so does not mean we necessarily act like a buddha—to the contrary, we may function in ways that do not heal the heart.

Conventionally, we often speak of equality in terms of having equal rights, such as the right to vote or to health care. But the equality of buddha does not recognize conditions—it does not recognize anything personal or needing or deserving any special attention. It is without conditions—this is the love that Kuan-chih points to. And of which, T’ao-pi says, “I have already been this from the very beginning.” You, too, have already been the glow of ripeness from the very beginning!

What is the dharma of buddhadharma? Yasutani Roshi taught that the dharma is differentiation—that buddha or emptiness takes a multitude of forms, each of which is unique, different. From a self-centered viewpoint, differences are problematic—we compare, contrast, judge, separate. We take our self-made views and thoughts to be the whole. In the buddhadharma, differences are each unique expressions of buddha nature, of

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the oneness of life. The self-centered mind judges; buddha mind discerns and differentiates. Conditioned, habitual mind attaches; buddha mind unifies—it detaches from self-centeredness and ceases making everything about me, myself. We *glow in the ripeness* of reality realizing itself.

The Zen practitioner keeps taking the backward step and sees that we *are only one thing among many* and in that way *heals his heart, without knowing it, from various ills*. How wonderful: there is no one to know it! What then? Milosz says, *a bird and a tree say to him: Friend*. Master Dogen says, *to forget the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas*—the ten thousand friends enlighten us.

What then? *Then he wants to use himself and things so that they stand in the glow of ripeness*. Master Dogen says *to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas is to free one's body and mind and those of others*. This glow of ripeness—this life in which self-centeredness is not stage center—is the radiance of our intimate relatedness to all which mysteriously moves us to service. There is no longer love, there is only loving—Zen loving is not specifically directed at all. It simply flows unhindered in all directions through the very activities of hands and feet.

Zen Master Dogen says *to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas is to free one's body and mind and those of others*. We are simply serving unhindered by any sense of self or conditions, without any expectation of receiving a return. Milosz says *it doesn't matter whether he knows that he serves; who serves best doesn't always understand*. We don't even know that we are serving—just doing the bodhisattva work of putting out the fires of suffering one drop of water at a time. The view is vast and boundless; we take care of what is right under our feet.

Milosz's poem hints that we become the other—we ourselves are the world which we serve. So, who are you really? Master Dogen says that *no trace of enlightenment remains, and this traceless enlightenment is continued forever*. This is the beauty of Zen love—it attaches to nothing, includes everything, and acts fully in service of the whole.

Does this mean that you should not love your children or your spouse? By all means, love them without reservation—love them by recognizing them as the *glow of ripeness* that is their birthright. Love your neighbor, your enemy, the stranger in this way. Just as we will undertake a 90-day practice period in the midst of all the stresses of life, please, in the midst of attachment and conditioning, stand in the glow of ripeness—non-attached and unconditioned, traceless and new, in each now-moment mind! ■

Kanzeon Glowing

The radiance of the eight-foot garden Kanzeon was restored by ZCLA member Brandon Clark. Our Kanzeon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, was carved on-site by artist Barbara Yates in 1998. The limb of a torrey pine, which was listed on the national register of trees, was donated to ZCLA by Treepeople after a winter storm destroyed the tree in Beverly Hills. Carved on the back: "This very moment is the great love of Kanzeon" from a poem by Roshi Ekyoku.



The Joy of Infinity

By Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Singer, Sensei

Herm is an old friend of mine who lives in Puerto Rico. He is an engineer of big projects. He is my age and getting stubborn and abrasive with family and work. Still, he is somewhat of a romantic figure; he chose to work in exotic places all over the world. He has a sense of beauty, an intellectual curiosity, and loves. But lately, as they used to say in the old westerns, “He’s a caution.” Which is probably one of the reasons he rented a catamaran to sail to a corner of the Caribbean he had wondered about for 25 years, the Windward Islands. He knew he had to let go.

So here we are sitting alone on deck, Herm and I. The three other companions are asleep. The boat is anchored this evening in a quiet bay of a lovely island. On the boat, you get to feel that the lulling motion of the waters is the natural movement of life.

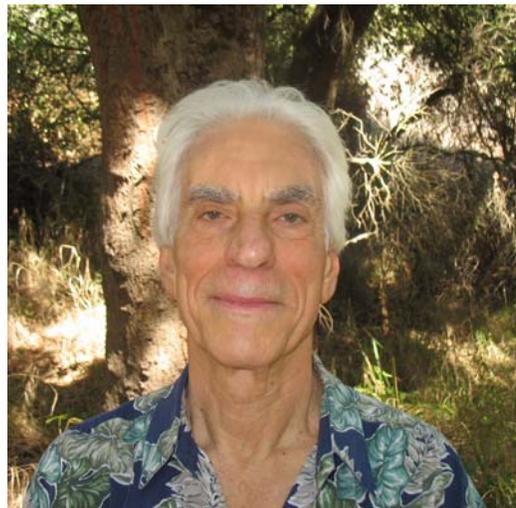
I’m thinking that hard work and concentration and the pressures of business life have put his mind in a rut. He keeps ranting about Homo sapiens and proteins and evolution. He declares, “The human being... has to evolve more before he can live in peace... on this planet!” I reply that there isn’t time; we can’t wait for some physical evolution. Wisdom is not based on time. We have to realize it now. He says, “The basis of wisdom is protein!” He goes on like that.

Yet something is moving us together in this vast space of heaven and ocean. It is sailor’s space. Up above there are the stars that tell you where you are, if you know how to read them. We have been calmed by the passage of good days. And here we are face to face, wrapped in the mystery of a blue and silvery night, breath of night breeze, Eden.

Herm has said that he believes in numbers (math and physics). I remember something I read a few weeks before the trip. The writer studied mathematics in his youth. He said that when he came upon the concept of “infinity,” he was so moved by the realization that he burst into joy.

I said, “Herm...if someone realized the joy of infinity what would he realize?”

Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Singer, Sensei is the guiding teacher of Shir Hadash Community.



Rabbi Ani Shalom, Sensei

Herm pauses, I watch his every movement. Solemnly he looks down at his hands, spreads his arms and says, “He would never hurt another human being again, or any living thing!”

Infinity

Infinity shall be contained in every deed of man, in his speaking and seeing, listening and walking, standing still and lying down. —Martin Buber

One of the insights listening to the word “infinity” is that the cosmic implications of the word can apply intimately to our own—so-called “finite” life. Life is lived in a present we may call “infinity.” We live in the infinite. We meet in the infinite. We are of the infinite. We have the sensibility to realize the infinite. But, for reasons well known, we are afraid to accompany the swift, ever new movement of infinite life.

We want to stake out our own “secure” world. But excluding the infinite brings conflict and sorrow. We call the “secure” view reality. It may be reality, but it is not the whole truth. It is not the action of a whole person. Wholeness is real life. To be real, to be at one with heaven and earth, is to live an infinite life.

Remember Chicken Little? Running about yelling and crying, “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” The sky never falls; you can count on it. It is our space.

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Ben Zoma, a rabbi in the first century, used to say that heaven begins three fingers from the earth.

One of the names of God is Space, another name of God is Sky.

The sky in plain sight, the stars of the night, and the horizons of the day testify to infinity. Dreams testify as well, reminding us in lucid moments of sleep, when mind goes beyond the self, that we live in a cosmos ever changing, never ending, full of meaning we cannot name. We are not just our thoughts and memories, our ambitions and our desires. It is a fact worthy of our wonder that we be open like the sky. God is called the Infinite, but we tether the word God to our private wills. I have seen faces worn with care looking to the distance and awakening to a space beyond the horizon that seems to hold them, quiet them, comfort them, no barriers, no walls to scale, spacious, open, emptiness, looking on to infinity.

My young students, the noble youths, in our conversations, tell me of precious moments when they have discovered the sky, or friendship, or a room full of strangers

“ We live in the infinite. We meet in the infinite. We are of the infinite.”

feeling intimate and timeless. In their solitary encounters, they discover themselves as seers, able to translate and commune with the everyday wonders of life. We are full of wonder, we are larger than what we may be able to consciously express.

“What of love?” I sense that love is the heart of Infinity, Great Love, *Abavah Rabah*, our Great Heart. Sometimes we use the word Compassion in place of the word love; because the word love is so often compromised. But the word love, I think, is closest to our hearts. Love is what we mean when we say real love or true love. We speak of the wisdom of the heart. We mean love’s wisdom. We speak of God’s Love, or the Compassion of the Buddha; we mean the love we realize in our integrity, in our compassion for all. Shakespeare’s “Love has no impediments.”

From Solomon’s *Song of Songs*: “For love is as strong as death, many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.”

The Song’s words mean that love is as real and as strong as death. One cannot compromise with death, but with love’s wisdom one can see it in a different light, with

a different life. That love cannot be drowned or washed away is a way of expressing love’s primordial presence. In love, infinity is in all our limbs, in our every moment and our every movement.

Even in the night sky, the lover sees his beloved, “Daunting, like the Morning Star.”

Awesome to contemplate...love is infinite.

Not long ago, I dreamed I was in the front garden of the Zendo looking at a grey night sky. Across the way, I see my friend, Ensho, dressed in his priest robes, stepping onto a balcony of the apartment house. Other companions join him. I see them like shadows, outlined by the sky. They sit themselves down and look to the sky. The sky reflects the bright city lights; a few shy stars glimmer faintly. Then, in an instant, the curtain of sky disappears and a new black velvet heaven fills the night with great stars and whirling galaxies, tiny suns and many colored planets.

Long ago, I crossed the Sinai desert to climb Mount Sinai. On the night before the climb, there was a full moon. The night sky was transparent. When I looked above the great mountain, I swear I saw the starry sky in three dimensions.

The Hebrew Bible is referred to as *Torah mi Sinai*, Torah from Sinai. It was marvelous to be there. But the only mention of a return to Sinai in the Bible is Elijah the Prophet’s fearful journey in flight from the king’s assassins. He sought a message from God. What he discovered at the Mountain was “The Still Small Voice.” Silence, profound silence in which there is something immeasurable and nameless.

The wise counsel us never to return to the mountain. But to listen to *Torah min HaShamaim*, Torah from The Heavens, that speaks constantly, silently and without words, teaching goodness.

*Without speech and without words,
without their voice being heard.
Throughout all the earth their call goes forth
and their words to the edge of the world.*

—Psalm 19

Shakyamuni Buddha sits solitary, all are still asleep. The dark sky begins to blue. The Morning Star is rising. Now, in a moment beyond moment, nothing of time, he sees.

“I and the great earth and all beings, simultaneously achieve the Way.”

Is this not joy? ■

Zen Programs at Normandie Mountain

Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

Roshi holds FTF for members Wednesday evenings, Friday dawn, and Saturday and Sunday mornings. Changes to her schedule are posted in the DharmaFlash each week. On Saturdays, FTF meetings are rotated between Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy and Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley. On Sundays, Sensei John Daishin Buksbazu offers FTF. Sensei Ensho Berge is on leave through the end of the year. Changes to these schedules will also be posted in the weekly DharmaFlash. Please note that all of the Teachers Circle members are also available for private appointment.

Dharma Training Fund

Through the generosity of the Sangha, the **Dharma Training Fund (DTF)** is available to all Zen Practitioners to supplement program fees. No one is ever turned away for lack of funds. If you find yourself in financial need for a particular program you wish to attend, please do not let finances keep you from attending. Inquire with Dokai in the office for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to study the Dharma!

See our calendar at www.zcla.org for the daily program schedule and for additional program details and updates.

Fall Practice Period

Fall Practice Period. October 3 to December 31. Led by Roshi Egyoku at ZCLA Normandie Mountain, Sensei Kodo Boyd at Lincroft Sangha (NJ), Sensei Ryodo Hawley at Westchester Zen Circle (CA), Sensei Daishin Buksbazu at Ocean Moon Sangha (Santa Monica, CA), and Sensei Shingetsu Guzy at Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA).

The focus this year will be on zazen and the precepts. We will also investigate living by vow/intention in daily life. Please complete your commitment form and return it by September 28, 2009. Check the calendars and Practice Period Commitment Form for schedule details.

Practice Period Entering Ceremony, Saturday, October 3, at 9:00 a.m. Please join us as we officially open the Practice Period.

Sangha Meals: Thursday eve and weekends. On Thursday eve, supper is available at 6:15 p.m.; on Saturday and Sunday mornings, a buffet breakfast is

available at 7:00 a.m. (first ten minutes in silence). All members may join. Members may find weekend breakfasts especially conducive to your schedules. No fee for meals. Please sign up for meals in advance. ☎

Practice Period Commitment Agreements. All members are asked to make practice commitments for the Practice Period. You will be receiving your Practice Commitment booklet and form at the end of August. ZCLA members should send a completed copy to the Zen Center office by September 28 (Attention: Roshi), so that we can list your name on the Training Board. The Lincroft, Westchester, Ocean Moon, and Valley Sangha members may return their commitment forms to the respective group teachers.

Zazen Programs

Zazenkai.* Friday evening, October 9, 7:00 p.m. registration; 7:30 p.m. (zazenkai begins) to Saturday, October 10, 5:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Ryodo Hawley. Everyone is encouraged to come to this silent and restful day with zazen, service, work, meals, Dharma Talk, and face-to-face meeting with Sensei. Open to everyone. Fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers.

Autumn Sesshin.* From Sunday evening, October 18, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) to Saturday, October 24, 9:00 p.m. Led by Roshi Egyoku. "Sesshin" means "to collect one's heart and mind." It is highly recommended for deepening one's practice. The schedule includes zazen, chanting, face-to-face meetings with Roshi, Dharma talks, work, rest, and three vegetarian oryoki meals daily. Limited overnight accommodations available. \$240 for members; \$450 for nonmembers, plus housing; daily fees also. Please note: although this sesshin officially ends Saturday evening, sesshin schedule will continue on Sunday morning until Head Trainee Dharma Combat at 11:00 a.m. A detailed schedule will be issued. ☎

***Note:** Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Head Trainee Dharma Combat on Sunday, October 25, at 11:00 a.m. followed by celebration. Head Trainee Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson's year-long training as Head Trainee will culminate with the ancient ceremony of Dharma Combat with the Sangha. The Head Trainee has been working on a case koan, which she will present

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to the Sangha in her first official Dharma Talk in which she will challenge the dragons and elephants (you!) to dharma combat. This is an important rite of passage for the Head Trainee and for the Sangha, so please plan on participating and support this practice effort.

Public Face-to-face Meeting. Thursday, October 8, 7:30 p.m. Roshi will speak on a practice theme and invite everyone to engage in a public dialog with her.



Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva precepts will take place on **Saturdays, September 19 and October 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

September 19 will be led by Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown on Precept #2: Not stealing.

October 17 will be led by Katherine Senshin Griffith on Precept #5: Not being deluded.

Open to everyone.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, October 15, 7:30 p.m. During this ceremony of renewing the Vows and Precepts, we each have an opportunity to bear witness to our conduct in thoughts, words, and actions. Everyone is welcome to participate. Those who have received the Precepts are asked to attend on a regular basis. Sensei Shingetsu will officiate.

Classes and Workshops

Conversation about Practice. Sundays, September 13 and October 4, 11:00 a.m. to noon. This conversation is led by a member of the Teachers Circle. The leader introduces a topic and leads the Sangha in a conversation. Sensei Ryodo will lead the conversation on September 13; Sensei Shingetsu on October 4.

St. Bede's Sunday School. September 13, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Shoshin Spraker will lead an Introduction to Zen Buddhism for children from St. Bede's Episcopal Church at ZCLA. Children and parents from the Sangha especially encouraged to join. All are welcome.

Dharma Chat. September 27, 11:00 a.m. Led by True-Joy Fazio and Genkai Barber on Eco-responsibility and the Dharma.

Fushinzamu in the Kitchen. September 26, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Join the Sangha for a thorough cleaning of the Sangha kitchen in this working-together practice. Laughter, kitchen degreasing, sing-along to your iPod mixes; ice cream break. Come for all or part-time. Led by Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt and Miguel Rojas.

Sewing the Buddha's Robes. Sunday, October 4, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. For any Sangha member thinking about receiving the Precepts or just wanting to practice sewing a rakusu for yourself or someone else. Preparations are required. Please contact Gemmon for information and planning. Led by Gemmon Ketterer and Faith-Mind Thoresen.

Introduction to Council Practice at ZCLA. October 31, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Topics integrated into practice will be the Three Tenets of Council Practice, including how to facilitate a council. Council practice emphasizes mindfully communicating with each other while holding the intentions of deep listening, speaking from the heart, and lean speech. All are welcome. Newer members are especially encouraged to learn about this core practice of Center life. Led by Jeanne Dokai Dickenson.

LIVING BY VOW/INTENTION

A two-part class led by Roshi Egyoku
Sunday, October 11
Sunday, November 8
1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

What is the experience of living by vow/intention? In these classes, we will explore together and in small groups the nature of vow, what keeps us from clear intention, and explore and formulate vows for our own life. We will include a focus on intention and mental and physical shifts that can occur in our lives once a vow, or a conscious decision, is made to live differently.

Members only. Fee \$15 per class; \$25 for both. The Dharma Training Fund is available to all members.

FALL PRACTICE PERIOD STUDY TEXT

There will not be any one text this Fall Practice Period. The Dharma talks during Fall Practice Period will focus on Zazen, Precepts, and Vows. The teachers will approach these practices from a wide-range of perspectives.

Eightieth Birthdays Sangha Celebration

In July, the ZCLA Sangha's many hands created a joyous Birthday Eightieth Birthday Sangha Celebration for our three 80-year-old Sangha Treasures, Helen Daiji Powell, Charles Duran, and Nina Reiju Wasserman (pictured here with Roshi). Exquisite food and creative and lively entertainment arising from the Sangha followed Roshi's presentation of our living Treasures. All three spoke of the transforming quality of the event.

We asked our three octo-treasures: "What is it like to be 80?" and "What have you learned over the years?" Here are their responses.



NINA REIJU WASSERMAN. Many years ago, in spiritual confusion, I came to the Zen Center. What brought me here, who knows? I just followed events as they came up and soon found myself in the zendo. Maezumi Roshi was speaking and that was it.

So this was me, no spiritual muscle and all that was to be. The what-is-this-about condition went on forever. The foot-in-the-mouths, the pratfalls, humiliations and general disarray in personal negotiations, thoughts, and things carried on. And yet, I slowly began to sense freedom, expansiveness, and the luggage began to drift away.

I came to ZCLA during its darkest period. Disjointed and barely functioning. When I look at us now, I marvel and have gratitude for the teachings and for our American Zen leaderships. We are growing in wholeness moment by moment.

I'm glad to be 80. However, I find that at 80 you really have to be on your toes. Remembering the energy level I had in my 50's, I have to accept limitations and expect surprises. I never know what's going to happen next or how I'm going to handle it.

CHARLES DURAN. My time at the Zen Center has gone through stages, an evolution. When I first became interested in Zen Buddhism, I was seeking somehow to transcend or overcome the problems reality presented to

me. What you might call existential problems. Interacting with people, what you considered success, personal relationships and what value do they have. How do you transcend the distress this kind of thing brings on?

Now I see things from a more biological point of view. The problems we have are really about human beings not being optimally designed, and the existential problems of life are something that you don't overcome. Unless you consider accepting as overcoming. That's as close as I could come to my goal of transcending—acceptance of the imperfection of human beings.

With age, I've become more tolerant. Things that used to seem very significant have lost their significance. I've learned to be more accepting of what you might call failings or faults, because those are just perceptions.

Regarding the Zen Center, the structure we have here is important to the continuity, so people can come and stay for a while. That gives people an opportunity for introspection, analyzing, looking at their life, trying to comprehend what they're doing. Basically to mitigate the pain and suffering of normal living. I think that's what most of us want... to find a respite.

HELEN DAIJI POWELL. Being 80 has been learning to live with greatly diminished energy levels. I tire early
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and easily. Happily, there are also times when I feel like the person I was and keep going until bedtime. These energy spurts last for five to seven days. What I haven't learned yet is how to conserve that energy.

Even so, of late I'm enjoying myself and others in ways never before experienced. A simple, beautiful moment like watching a father lovingly brush the hair off his child's brow, the pleasure of being with friends and loved ones without our even saying a word.

What have I learned? How easy it is to get lost in my stories, reliving past experiences as though that is who I actually am, getting lost in old tapes which spin over and over. I'm finally realizing how deadening that is for me. When I take this practice more seriously and turn off those tapes, along with that has come a feeling of aliveness that is pure enjoyment. ■



From the top clockwise: The Sangha celebrates in the garden; Myoho presenting Roshi with a gift from the Sangha; across the generations, Dharma Lotus and Reiju; Luminous-Heart reading poems she wrote for each of the birthday people; intrepid performers—Bodbi-Song, Seirin, Senshin, Lilly, and Kaizen.

Practice Period Sesshin

*The Sangha is encouraged to attend
all or part of sesshin.*

Autumn Sesshin
October 5 to 11

Enlightenment (Rohatsu) Sesshin
December 5 to 13

Point Zero Painting Retreat Creativity without Limits A four-day retreat

December 27 to 30, 2009

Led by
Michele Cassou

Zen Center welcomes back Michele to share with us again her revolutionary way of unblocking creative potential: "The Point Zero Method."

This work can benefit anyone with a thirst for uncovering their creative voice. No experience is necessary (the less the better), just your desire to create naturally and spontaneously.

Full-time participation in the Painting Retreat is required. All materials and meals are included. There is limited enrollment and spaces are filling up. \$100 deposit reserves your space. ZCLA member and nonmember-fee rates apply.

Details and on-line application at www.zcla.org. For more information, see Michele's website: <http://michelecassou.com/>
See Gemmon for additional information about the retreat.



Sangha Rites of Passage

CEREMONY FOR RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen, Preceptor

Bonnie Myosen Nazdam
August 5, 2009

NEW MEMBERS ENTERING CEREMONY

August 22, 2009
Andre Myers
Tara Sterling

NEW RESIDENTS ENTERING CEREMONY

August 22, 2009
David Green
Lyndajo Thompson

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Incoming

BUDDHA HAND CIRCLE

Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Steward
Rosa Ando Martinez

DAY MANAGERS

Rosa Ando Martinez
Jeanne Dokai Dickenson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Betsy Brown
Ty Jotai Webb

GROUNDS CIRCLE

David Green

MANY HANDS AND EYES GROUP

Prison Circle

Katherine Senshin Griffith, Steward

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Leave-taking

BUDDHA HAND CIRCLE

Sensei Raul Ensho Berge, Steward

DAY MANAGER

Betsy Brown



Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt Thank You!

Please let our staff know of the many bodhisattvas to appreciate. Have we missed anyone?

The Angell Foundation for generous Core Support grant for June 2009-June 2010;

All those who supported the Eightieth Summer Sangha Celebration; and to event stewards: **Dokai Dickenson, Myoho Fjeld, Yudo Burger, Chris Fields, Jusen Warner, Gemmon Ketterer, Dharma-Lotus Armstrong, Luminous-Heart Thompson, Faith-Mind Thoresen, Ando Martinez, and Butsugen Romo**; to **Katie Keisen Behrens**, and to baker-chef **Bob Fisher** for a spectacular birthday cake; The performing artists: **Lilly Berge-Brodie, Bodhi-Song Graham, Senshin Griffith, Seirin Norstrand, Senshin Griffith, and Kaizen Venners**.

Sensei Ryodo for leading **Zazenkai**;

Sensei Shingetsu for teaching the eight-week Precepts and Jukai series for ZCLA members at The Valley Sangha;

Raul Ensho Berge for his skillful guidance of Buddha Hand Council over many months;

Koan Janka, Burt Wetanson, and Reiju Wasserman for sealing and metering the *Water Wheel*;

Lorraine Gessho Kumpf for coordinating flowers for memorial and Obon;

Terry Ryodo Rothrock for offering his pottery sale and its income as fundraiser for ZCLA;

Day Managers (January-August 2009): **Dharma-Joy Reichert, Ryodo Rothrock, Jotai Webb, Faith-Mind Thoresen, Kaizen Venners, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson, Gemmon, and Dokai** for participating in Day Manager Training Program;

Andy Handler for removing ancient shrubbery and roots and placing new plants on Center grounds;

Executive Circle: Steward, **Myoho Fjeld, Ando, Faith-Mind, Earth-Mirror Corcoran, Pine-Ocean Cleary** for all their attention to ZCLA executive concerns;

Fundraising Committee: Steward, **Muso Giggans, Lynda Golan, Ando, and Dokai** for work on 2009 Dharma Training Fund appeal; **Lynda** for artwork used in the materials;

Roshi for the friendly sunflowers;

Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown for drawings of prospective Chiden area in Buddha Hall;

Rich Cloud-Forest for aesthetic gardening;

Tom Yudo Burger for generous Photoshop support;

For Teido's 49-day memorial service: **Roshi, Ando, Dokai, Enduring-Vow, Gemmon, Heart-Mirror, Jotai, Koan, Luminous-Heart, Mukei, and Yudo**;

Chiden Circle Coordinators: **Carla Flowing-Mountain**

Schmitt and Butsugen, and incoming altar-cleaners: **Pine-Ocean Cleary, David Green, Lyndajo Thomas**; and to departing **Lynda Golan, Jill Jiki King, and John Heart-Mirror Trotter**;

Submitters of Shared Stewardship Proposals: **Larry Genkai Barber** on behalf of the Brown/Green Group for bike racks; and **Karen Brodie** for SCRIP proposal;

Gemmon, Koan, Enduring-Vow, Faith-Mind, and Dokai for Obon altar preparations;

Incoming stewards:

Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Steward, Buddha Hand Circle; **Rosa Ando Martinez**, Buddha Hand Circle and Day Manager; and **David Green**, Grounds Circle;

Gessho and Buddha Hand Council members **Burt and Ando** for attention to matters pertaining to residency;

John Heart-Mirror for replacing Zendo window sills; **Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen** for designing and building shoe rack for Buddha Hall entrance;

Elizabeth Bryer and **Flowing-Mountain** for preparing Saturday teasnack;

Hearty welcome to new members **Tara P. Sterling**, retired Marriage and Family Counselor, and **Kim McShane**, Instructional Consultant with UCSB;

To new residents **David Green, Lyndajo Thompson, Andy Handler**; and **Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown**;

We also enjoyed the visits of visiting teachers **Sensei Elizabeth Yuin Hamilton** and **Sensei Ezra Bayda** from San Diego Zen Center; and the annual gathering of the Southern California White Plum Teachers Circle: Zen teachers **Ensho Berge, Daishin Buksbazen, Tenshin Fletcher, Jiyu Gage, Shingetsu Guzy, Elizabeth Hamilton, Ryodo Hawley, Egyoku Nakao, Seisen Saunders, and Ani Shalom Singer**. ■

A Unique Opportunity Resident Training

A studio and a two-bedroom apartment are now available. This is a great opportunity for plunging into long-term Zen Buddhist training and living in an intentional community.

Guest and extended-guest resident stays for shorter terms are also available. If you are interested, please inquire at info@zcla.org and you will be directed to the appropriate contact person.

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

The ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple 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. **Our core values** are available upon request.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi
Abbot Emeritus: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao
Staff: Mary Rios, Business Manager; Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Grounds Steward; Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward; *Water Wheel*: Editor, Dokai Dickenson; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson. Photographers: George Mukei Horner and Karen Brodie. The *Water Wheel* is published bi-monthly in paper and electronic formats. Contact the Editor at (213) 387-2352 or dokai@zcla.org. The *Water Wheel* is also available through electronic distribution.



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Address Correction Requested

Save this Date!

Day of Dana

Saturday, November 21, 2009

The fourth annual Day of Dana will be held in November this year. This gives us more time for planning and coordinating with our community friends, preparing the food bags and their contents, and just enjoying the event which falls during a busy time of the year for everyone.

Friday night, November 20, there will be food preparation in anticipation of Saturday morning's set-up, assembly, and event.

Day of Dana is a traditional ZCLA fun time together. Everyone is encouraged to participate and lend a hand. More information forthcoming in DharmaFlashes and upcoming edition of the *Water Wheel*. ■

ZCLA Affiliated Sanghas & Sitting Groups*

The Laguna Hills Sangha (CA)
coordinated by Helen Daiji Powell

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

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

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

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

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

Contact us at info@zcla.org for information.

* Affiliated groups are led by Dharma Successors of Roshi Egyoku (Senseis), or coordinated by practitioners who are actively practicing at ZCLA with a teacher. Those interested in leading a ZCLA-affiliated sitting group may apply to the Teachers Circle.