



# 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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## A Beautiful Thing

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Mary Oliver wrote a poem entitled At Blackwater Pond:

At Blackwater Pond the tossed waters have settled  
after a night of rain.  
I dip my cupped hands, I drink  
a long time. It tastes  
like stone, leaves, fire. It falls cold  
into my body, waking the bones, I hear them  
deep inside me, whispering  
*oh what is that beautiful thing  
that just happened?*

So, tell me, *what is that beautiful thing that just happened?*

Saturday morning, quite early, I turned on the water faucet to fill the circular granite fountain in front of the Sangha House. It's a favorite activity of mine—a brief moment of pause, keeping company with the hummingbirds drinking and waking themselves up, sensing the fountain stirring, and responding to the dawn.

For many years, seven to be exact, the fountain did not work. I had given it as a gift in memory of my father, who died by his own hand at the age of eighty. One day, a newcomer to the Zen Center walked through the temple gates and said, "I notice you have a fountain that does not work. May I fix it?" And he did.

I had read somewhere that when a person takes one's own life, that life is in limbo for the duration of whatever that lifespan may have been. I don't know anything about this, but when the fountain started being a fountain again, it felt like my father had moved on at last and the birds all came to celebrate this *beautiful thing that just happened*.



*From right: Roshi, Sensei Shingetsu, and Sensei Ensho demonstrate the backwards bow in three steps.*

But I digress. On this morning, my gaze moved to the sturdy black pine that was recently transplanted to the bare spot by the fountain, and then beyond through the wrought iron fencing. My eyes came to rest on a person lying wrapped thick in blankets on the sidewalk at the foot of a palm tree. He was still and awake, gazing upward at the sky, and I was still and awake and gazing at him, and there we were. Then I remembered that I had seen the person once there before in the shadows of the dawn and something *deep inside me* whispered.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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# Steps-to-Marrow

What might inspire you to walk across the country?

In 2007, Jeana Teiju Moore's newborn granddaughter Jada was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. At six months of age, Jada received a life-saving bone marrow transplant from a perfect-match donor, a young man in Germany. Today, at age three, Jada is in remission and thriving.

As an expression of profound gratitude for the vast web of people that supported Jada and her parents through these times and for the anonymous donor, Teiju and Jada's parents, Kyle and Issa Bascom, founded the Jada Bascom Foundation to bring awareness to the National Bone Marrow Registry. As her contribution to this mission, Teiju is walking across the country to raise awareness of the need for donors and to recruit bone marrow donors.

In November 2009, Teiju's walk was launched at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle. Over 1,000 miles and over four months later, she arrived in Los Angeles, holding bone marrow drives along the way and spreading the word to any person she encountered—from tourists on the Golden Gate Bridge to a lifeguard at Zuma Beach. From Los Angeles, Teiju is proceeding to New York City, step by step, affirming the interconnectedness of all of our lives and the great opportunity each of us has to save lives.

In addition to raising awareness for the need for bone marrow donors, Teiju asks for food and shelter at each new place. Readers may wish to sponsor a drive with or without Teiju, depending on her route. At Zen Center, we were pleased to sponsor a bone marrow drive during the Buddha's Birthday Celebration, adding seventeen potential donors to the registry.

To track Teiju's journey, to sponsor a drive, or to make a donation in support of this journey, please go to [www.stepstomarrow.org](http://www.stepstomarrow.org). "Swab a cheek, Save a Life!" ■



Top: Walking from Seattle to Los Angeles, Teiju, in a fluorescent vest, takes a breather at Great Dragon Mountain with Dharma friends and son-in-law Kyle, who is holding Jada, and sister Mona, standing behind Teiju; left: Faith-Mind swabs her cheek to become a potential bone marrow donor.

*Many Miles* by Mary Oliver (an excerpt)

... or think of your own (feet)  
slapping along the highway,

a long life,  
many miles,  
to each of us comes  
the body gift.

A BEAUTIFUL THING (Continued from page 1)

I did not intrude on his solitude just then, leaving that to another dawn, and remained rooted in place by the indifference of this landscape—the towering palm, the hard dirty concrete, the bitter chill of dawn. I drank in this unconcern for what seemed like a long time and was drawn into an interwoven wholeness. *What is that beautiful thing that just happened?*

How is it that the indifference of this fierce urban landscape can wake the bones, drawing us into itself, dissolving the self-absorption that pervades and dominates?

Each of us, alone and all together, must cup our hands and drink for a long time until the sheer nothingness of this life wakes us up and whispers, *ob, what is that beautiful thing that just happened?* ■

# Nature is My Teacher

By James Soshin Thornton

For many years I thought Maezumi Roshi was my teacher. Then one day, my partner Martin drove to the Zen Mountain Center to pick me up after a sesshin. It was the first time he'd met Roshi.

"Thank you," Martin said, "for all the teachings you have given James. They are so important to him."

"I am not James's teacher," Maezumi Roshi said. "Nature. Nature is his teacher."

My practice is to be an activist environmental lawyer. Two years ago, I founded an international environmental law group called ClientEarth. We are a charity and presently have twenty lawyers. As the name suggests, we take the Earth and all beings who sail on her as our clients. Our main offices are in London and Brussels. We have a small office in Paris, and will open an office in Warsaw this summer.

ClientEarth works on law in its whole lifecycle, from the creation of legislation to its implementation and enforcement in the courts. So we work in legislatures as well as courts, and help other green groups. A couple of examples of what we do: the UK government was about to approve a new generation of coal-fired power plants that failed to capture their carbon—the worst possible step in light of climate change. For a year and a half, we made legal representations to the UK government that made it turn around. Now, new plants will have to capture carbon. And we are working to change the laws that govern fisheries in the EU. I'll return to fisheries in a moment.

I got the taste for doing activist environmental law in the United States at a group called the NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), where I used federal law to make companies clean up the pollution they discharged into waterways. At that time I was in New York. When I read Peter Muryo Matthiessen's book *Nine Headed Dragon River*, I moved to the NRDC office in San Francisco so I could be in California to study with Maezumi Roshi. One day, Roshi asked me if I could do environmental work in



*Soshin*

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Los Angeles, and so I founded an NRDC office that now has over 30 people and does great work with the help of the Hollywood community.

I was living at ZCLA while running the LA office of NRDC. Zen practice not only helped get me through the stress of the work, it gave creative solutions. I was challenged by a Nobel prize winner to find a way to save biodiversity in Southern California. With that as my koan, I spent a lot of time in the zendo. Then one morning, a small bird appeared in my mind and I wondered who it was. I spoke with ornithologists and found it was the California gnatcatcher. This rare bird lives only in undisturbed coastal chaparral between LA and the Mexican border. Scientists had just realized that it was a threatened species that lives only in the area between the coast and the first range of hills. This biodiverse area was also the most rapidly developing land in the country, all held by major firms.

Once the bird and its needs were clear, we used the Endangered Species Act to force the federal government to begin listing the bird and thus protect its land. Within days, we were in negotiations with the landowners. Several years later, some five hundred thousand acres of biodiverse land had been protected. All because my client,

*(Continued on page 4)*

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*Soshin received tokudo (priest ordination) at ZCLA from Roshi Egyoku last year. Join ClientEarth by becoming a member for free at: [www.clientearth.org](http://www.clientearth.org) For an hour long radio feature on Soshin's Zen practice and environmental work go to: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/summer/0910/features/stillpoint.htm>*



the California gnatcatcher, had entered my meditation. After setting up the LA office of NRDC, I did a yearlong retreat, ending with an hour's private meeting with the Dalai Lama. He told me to become confident and positive, and then teach other environmentalists to become confident and positive. The solutions we need, he said, cannot emerge from the mind of anger. Out of that 1990 meeting grew an organization, Positive Futures, to bring meditation practice to environmentalists and other social activists.

I interviewed some eighty environmental activists. They all told me that anger was their motivation—anger that people were destroying the natural world. I shared practices with them that help them to go deeper than anger. Other organizations took up the idea, and now many activists go on meditation retreats, and foundations contribute some million and a half dollars annually to these efforts.

My hope in starting this work was that it would not only help activists with anger and burnout but would help take them to creative solutions for intractable problems. A couple of years ago, I did a study to find out how effective this approach was. It turned out that many people reported creative breakthroughs in their work for the earth, when they took their problems into meditation.

One example in particular stands out. The Trust for Public Land is one of the largest conservation organizations in the United States. They own and protect tens of thousands of acres of land. In a week long retreat, their CEO had a realization—that their entire view was wrong. They were protecting land *from* people. They changed their way of doing business entirely. They are now more successful because they protect people and land *together*. This is the kind of fundamental shift in perspective we all know that meditation routinely delivers, if we let it.

In creating the new group ClientEarth in Europe, I started by interviewing environmental activists. It emerged that there were very few lawyers working in green groups in the EU. ClientEarth is designed to fill that gap by giving people and the Earth the same degree of legal muscle as governments and multinational corporations. There is a great hunger for our work. We are advising the Irish government on its new climate change bill, and we expect to do the same for Hungary. We are helping members of the European Parliament write a law to prevent illegally harvested rainforest timber from being imported into any European country.

Courts provide a democratic opportunity for citizens to share the balance of power. Governments often fail to protect environmental interests. When citizens use the

courts to force government and industry to comply with the law, there is a benefit to the whole public. But access to the courts in Europe is often more restricted than in America. In the UK, for example, a losing plaintiff pays all the legal fees of the defendant, and those fees can be a million dollars or more, so cases are few. We aim to change that. We have sued the UK in an international tribunal in Geneva demanding that the UK change these rules, and we expect to win.

Soon billions of dollars from first world countries will flow to developing countries to pay them to leave rain forest standing. This could be a lifesaver or it could end in disaster, depending on the details. Money could wind up

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***“The solutions we need, said the Dalai Lama, cannot emerge from the mind of anger.”***

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in Swiss bank accounts and never get to Brazil or the Congo; indigenous people could be pushed off their land, and so on. We are working with groups around the world who share our belief that rain forest can only be protected by enhancing the rights of indigenous communities. And we are beginning to have an impact in designing the legal structure of the system, though much work remains.

In London, we are trying to clean up the air. London has among the worst air of any city in Europe. As many as six thousand people die every year from air pollution. In addition, pollution stunts the growth of children's lungs and reduces their longevity and quality of life. Clean air laws exist, but are not being enforced. We are aiming to have London air legally clean in time for the 2012 Olympics.

How does a Buddhist approach to environmental problems work in practice? Let me return to the problems of fisheries in the EU. EU fisheries are in terrible shape—the worst in the world. Some 90 percent of EU fish stocks are in poor condition, as against 25 percent worldwide. The reason is simple: overfishing. And overfishing is what the current law allows. Everyone knows there is a terrible problem, but thus far there has been no answer.

We studied the problems and the intricacies of the law for a year. Then we set aside our studies and moved into not knowing. With no preconception of how the law should be, we asked what the system would look like that protected both fish and fishermen. We then moved into bearing witness. We met with scientists and environmentalists, fishermen, government officials, and supermarkets.

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# The Heart of Healing

By Rev. Claude AnShin Thomas

My life is committed to walking in the footsteps of Jizo Bodhisattva, the King of Vows who practices in the Hell Realms, because it is in the hell realms where I am most comfortable and life makes the most sense to me. In these realms, what I perceive as my greatest liabilities have become assets. It is impossible for me to be in the hell realms without a disciplined spiritual practice, so I study the Dharma. The Dharma supports me in these realms because I have become so conscious of how small and insignificant I am in the face of all that I am invited to engage with.

Recently, I was invited to Chile, Colombia, and Argentina to carry a very simple message to those suffering from the effects of war. How to set aside a period of time every morning and evening for a disciplined spiritual practice, one rooted in self-reflection. In Colombia, I went to a place called the Battalion Sanidar, where government soldiers are recovering from wounds like severe head wounds or the loss of arms or legs. I know what it's like to confront this kind of loss. I also know what the healing process can look like, so I have an opportunity in the moment of our meeting to offer a map of healing and transformation to the soldiers. Not to impose it on them, just to offer.

Most of the people I interact with don't know anything about Zen or Buddhism and may not ever be interested. Yet because these practices can benefit them, I invite people to sit quietly and to engage in self-reflection, recitations, and rituals. These simple practices, which have helped me to see through my conditioning, have been part of my long journey of healing and transformation. I approach the teachings as information to be studied and received, in the midst of which I ask, "What do I do with this information?" If there is no answer or when doubt surfaces, I just keep taking the next step.

I recall that when I received priest ordination from Roshi Glassman, I asked, "Do I really have to shave my head?" The answer was yes! I had quite long blond hair. It was getting thinner, but I loved my hair. I kept telling myself, "At any given moment, I can say 'no' to this process." When the clippers were raised to my head, I was transported immediately back to basic training in Fort



Rev. AnShin

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Dix, New Jersey, and to thoughts of prisoners and to those in concentration camps, and to how head shaving was an act of humiliation. All of this arose within me at the time of my head shaving, and I continued to just take the next step.

If I didn't have a spiritual discipline that enables me to create spaciousness in my life where these kinds of thoughts can just be present, I would be grabbing onto my thoughts, as I have for most of my life, as if the thoughts were absolute facts. For many years, I sought escape from the suffering such thoughts bring through alcohol and other drugs.

I am a soldier. I say *I am* a soldier, not *I was* a soldier, because that which we have experienced is forever a part of us; it is never finished or done or gone. This realization is an important part in this process of healing and transformation. What I see as I travel around the world is that people are attached to the idea that healing is the absence of something.

Recently, I had surgery on my knees. The process was completely donated by a doctor in Germany. When I filled out the forms, the anesthesiologist asked me if I had ever taken any drugs. I thought, "Ha!" Instead of naming the individual drugs, I filled out the categories: hypnotics, hallucinogens, opiates, barbiturates, because there's not enough space for all the drugs I've taken. In my drugged-out days, I was trapped in an endless cycle of suffering, seeking only escape. I wanted the pain gone because I believed that healing was the absence of suffering. What is reinforced again and again in the sutras is that healing is

*(Continued on page 6)*

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*AnShin is a Zen Peacemaker mendicant priest and author of At Hells gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace. This is an edited version of a talk he gave at ZCLA in December, 2009.*

not the absence of something; it is being with what is.

Healing and transformation are not possible unless we are engaged in a practice that is respectful of the Precepts, which Zen Masters Dogen and Rujing emphasized over and over. It is important, however, to understand that precepts are not a rigid discipline; rather they are an organic practice, yet unwavering. Precept practice helps me to understand that healing is not possible as long as I am taking intoxicants. I had to stop taking drugs and stay stopped. Through this process, I have been willing to discover and wake up to the more subtle forms of intoxication in my life, which I find just as intoxicating as the drugs I once took.

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***“Healing is not the absence of suffering. It is being with what is.”***

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I have learned how to steady myself through breath awareness practice, which is the foundation of everything I do. Breathing in, breathing out while chanting, walking, eating, going to the bathroom, working, sitting. Breathing in, not anticipating breathing out. Breathing out, not anticipating breathing in. Breathing in and becoming conscious, I ask, “Do I dare to cultivate consciousness?” When I am conscious, I come up against those pieces of my own existence which are uncomfortable for me, and I see that I am conditioned to not want that.

While lying in the pre-surgical prep room, a needle was put into my arm, and my mind and my body remembered all those needles I’ve put in my arm. The anesthesiologist was busy strapping down my arm, and suddenly I remembered an execution I witnessed where the strapping-down procedure was the same. Every time I took drugs to anesthetize the suffering that I had, I was executing myself. That which I was unwilling to become conscious of was eating at the very fabric of my existence, preventing me from realizing the wonder of the interconnected reality of which I am a part. After the surgery, I cried a lot because I remembered all those months I lay in a military hospital, and the insensitivity of the people who engaged with me there. I became very conscious of the general sense of disconnectedness that permeated that place, and a disconnectedness in myself that had kept me overwhelmed.

Through practice, I am able to not be overwhelmed by life, to just do the next thing, because life is not other than practice. I really have no idea about how life is supposed to be: Life is just as it is. I find that most people that I meet suffer greatly because they have ideas

that life is supposed to be this way or that way, and that life is not measuring up to their ideas. If we want to know what this life is, then we must be willing to fall through ourselves and step right into the midst of our suffering. Not rejecting or attaching, but allowing suffering to become present in our life. Through this process, healing and transformation can take place.

*Q: Do you believe what President Obama said, that there are just or good wars?*

AnShin: No. I understand the position, but there is no such a thing as a just war. There is just war. The roots of war, violence, and suffering rest in each and every one of us. What are we willing to do about this in our daily lives? When we don’t have a life rooted in the Precepts, when we don’t have a conscious awareness of cause and effect, then nothing will ever change.

*Q: When you said you are more comfortable in these hell realms, all I could picture was the loneliness and fear. How do you tackle being afraid and alone?*

AnShin: Well, I don’t tackle it any more; my practice is to just be present with it. Suffering was the greatest for me, in terms of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts, when I didn’t want to be alone, or when I didn’t want to be afraid, or when I made the effort to pretend that I wasn’t afraid. For the longest time, I was much too cool to be afraid. Visiting the Battalion Sanidar, talking with the demobilized fighting groups in Colombia, with young men in Chile, with people coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and with men and women contemplating going into the military, the conditioning is the same: “Afraid? I ain’t afraid. I ain’t afraid o’ nothin’!”

Today, fear is information for me; loneliness is information. I am supported in my commitment by the writings of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton and the writings of the Chinese Zen Ancestors. They say, if you’re not willing to live in right relationship to intense loneliness, awakening is not possible. What I find is that even though loneliness is present, if I don’t allow it to control me, or if I grasp it or reject it, it passes. It just does. It comes and goes, like the rain.

*Q: What do you feel is a proper response to violence on a large scale?*

AnShin: There is no one proper response! There isn’t one way, so I return again to a disciplined spiritual practice. When I’m grounded in a spiritual practice, which means being open and present in the moment, then the information on how to respond is transmitted to me by what’s taking place in that moment. Violence doesn’t have one face; it has 10,000 faces. When I am blind to the roots of violence in me, then I will perpetuate it. I know this to be true from my own life. ■

# Zen Programs at Great Dragon Mountain


## Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

Roshi will offer Face-to-Face meetings for members on Wednesday evening, Friday dawn, and Saturday and Sunday mornings during scheduled zazen, when she is on campus. Members of the Teachers Circle will offer Face-to-Face meetings on Saturday and Sunday mornings for members and non-members. Their specific schedules will be posted in the weekly Programflash.


## 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 wish to take part in a particular program, please do not let financial difficulties keep you from attending. Inquire with Dokai in the office for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to practice the Dharma!


*See our calendar at [www.zcla.org](http://www.zcla.org) for the daily program schedule and for additional program details and updates.*

 Please register in advance. Contact the office at [info@zcla.org](mailto:info@zcla.org) to register.

## Zazen Programs

**Wall-gazing Day.\* Saturday, May 8, 6:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come to this silent half day of sitting. A **Chant Circle**, held at 8:30 a.m., is dedicated to the Amerindians of the Amazon basin who are facing extinction as the Amazon rain forest is being destroyed. Zazen is scheduled every hour on the hour, with ten minutes of walking meditation starting ten minutes before the hour. No interviews or talks. Includes breakfast and lunch. Fee: Dana. 

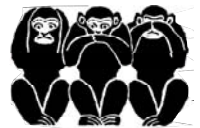
**Introduction to Sesshin.\* Thursday evening, May 27, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) to Saturday, May 29, 9:00 p.m.** Led by Sensei Shingetsu Guzy. This two-day sesshin is designed for newcomers to sesshin practice. Instruction is given on all aspects of sesshin. Sesshin, "to unify the mind," is an essential practice for the deepening of one's zazen. Also for experienced sitters and those who haven't sat sesshin in a long while. The schedule will be posted and sent by ProgramFlash. Daily fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. 

**Zazenkai.\* Friday evening, June 11, 7:00 p.m. registration; 7:30 p.m. (zazenkai begins) to Saturday, June 12, 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Led by Sensei Ryodo Hawley. Everyone is encouraged to enter The Great Silence with zazen, service, work, meals, Dharma Talk, and Face-to-Face meeting with Sensei Shingetsu. Open to everyone. Daily fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. 

\* Zendo remains open for non-participants.

## Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts will take place on **Saturdays, May 15 and June 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**



**May 15** will be led by Shogen Bloodgood on Precept # 5: Not being deluded.


**June 19** will be led by Gessho Kumpf on a precept to be determined. Open to everyone.

**Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, June 17, 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.

## Annual Observance

**Maezumi Roshi Memorial Service. Saturday, May 15, 8:30 a.m.** Roshi Egyoku will officiate at the morning service dedicated to the memory of ZCLA's beloved founder Taizan Maezumi Roshi on the 15th year of his passing. Everyone is welcome.

## Classes and Workshops

**Jukai Class Series. Saturdays, June 5 and 12, 9:45 to 11:15 a.m.** Sensei Daishin and Sensei Ensho lead this two-part series for those who wish to receive the Precepts. The Precepts Study Series is a prerequisite for this class. Tuition: \$70 for members; \$120 nonmembers. Register through the office. Contact Senshin for information about combined class package with reduced fee. 

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## Sangha Appreciation Gathering

**Sunday, August 1  
12:30-3:00 p.m.**

You, your family, and friends are invited to celebrate our summer Sangha Appreciation Gathering in appreciation of ZCLA's members. Our last big members' celebration was three years ago. We look forward to this special event honoring the circles and groups of Shared Stewardship and of the Center's Mandala, the Circle of Life.

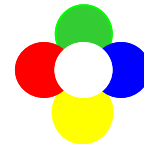
As the date draws near, there will be announced and posted diverse opportunities for all members to participate in the ongoing creation of this special members' event. A splendid vegetarian lunch, a program of Sangha appreciations, and Sangha entertainment all await our collective wisdom and awakening in action.

## Call for Event Sponsors

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the 2010 members' event. Sponsorship at every level is deeply appreciated. For example:

- ◇ General sponsorship
- ◇ Catering
- ◇ Dessert
- ◇ Paraphernalia
- ◇ Linens
- ◇ Aesthetics (flowers, tables settings, etc.)
- ◇ Program booklet

To explore this opportunity and/or for inquiries about how to become a sponsor, please contact:  
Chairperson Enduring-Vow  
[betsybrown@earthlink.net](mailto:betsybrown@earthlink.net).



PROGRAMS (Continued from page 7)

### **Fushinzamu. Friday, June 20, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

Cleaning the kitchen as practice. Then, eating brownie sundaes as even more practice. What else is needed? Join us as we take collective awakening in a whole new direction. Led by Co-Tenzo Coordinators Dharma-Joy Reichert and Dharma-Lotus Armstrong.

### **Head-Trainee Presentation by Gojitsu Snodgrass.**

**Sunday, June 27, 1:30 to 3:30p.m.** "Exploring Different Realities," An interactive seminar with talks, exercises, and sharing. Inquiry into how we construct our personal reality; and how to understand another's reality. Come and support Head-Trainee Gojitsu. Everyone is welcome.

**STUDY TOPIC.** The dharma talk themes for the upcoming months continue to focus on *The Brahma Net Sutra*, which is regarded as fundamental among scriptures elucidating Mahayana bodhisattva precepts. In addition to the version on the ZCLA members' website, we recommend Martine Batchelor's *The Path of Compassion: The Bodhisattva Precepts and The Chinese Brahma's Net Sutra*, AltaMira Press, 2004.

## Residential Training at Great Dragon Mountain

One of the unique features of ZCLA Great Dragon Mountain is its residential training Sangha. We currently have 30 residents in training. Come and explore what it is to practice and live in this intentional community, a verdant oasis in the middle of an urban setting.

We currently have a studio apartment available. Gated assigned parking is available. Public transportation is easily accessible by Metro bus and subway and Dash buses. Guest and Extended-Guest stays for shorter periods are also available. Vacancies are not frequent, so please consider if this is the time for you to take up residential training. If you are interested, please inquire [info@zcla.org](mailto:info@zcla.org) and you will be directed to the appropriate contact person. ■



## A Quester Comes Home

As Katherine Senshin Griffith dons the many hats worn by the Zen Center's Program Steward, she brings a wealth of experience and a depth of enthusiasm and commitment to this broad spectrum administrative position. While working long hours in the commercial world, including 28 years for major public relations companies in New York, the Julliard graduate pursued her vocation as a performing artist and organizer of projects for the arts.

"But always, I've wanted to do something more expressive of spiritual experiences and vows alive in me since childhood," Senshin says. "I was raised Catholic and before I started high school, my father, who was an English professor, said to me, 'You can either go to catechism at the parish church or you can take walks in the country with me and we'll talk about the meaning of life.' I chose 'b.' On our walks, we explored questions like what is man, what is our purpose on earth, what is pantheism, what is God?"

"Walking the fields on my grandfather's farm, I would feel one with the universe and present with everything. I felt that any point is an entry into the wondrousness of life. I've always had life appreciation, but I realized, Wow, it's hard to sustain. I need to train that spirit of bodhisattva or Don Quixote. I've got to practice."

Before arriving in Los Angeles in 2001, Senshin received Jukai with Eido Shimano Roshi. "Here, too, I was working a lot of hours in public relations, trying to be an artist and actor, and never having enough time to be fully active at the Center."



*Senshin at work.*

Among her contributions at ZCLA, Senshin created and performed a powerful post-9/11 monologue and directed the Gate of Sweet Nectar Pageant play. She is Steward of the Many Hands and Eyes Prison Circle and is offering a theater workshop to boys in Central Juvenile Hall.

"Now I'm delighted to be learning about how the Center runs and using all my tools and skills. Dokai and Mary and Yudo have been just great about explaining things to me and I was left with very well organized material to work from. I am particularly struck with the smooth functioning of the ZCLA Day Managers."

"My Zen practice always influences my work," says Senshin. "In both PR and theater, collaboration is the thing. Not you doing everything, but each person helping and supporting the other, as at the Zen Center. There's a sense of family and caring here that holds the ship up. It's so wonderful to be doing work that expresses my deep vow for the Dharma." ■

## ZCLA Development

An array of giving opportunities is available at ZCLA. No gift is too small, each gift is greatly appreciated, and all gifts are stewarded well. Please give generously through one or several of the funds.

Annual Fund ♥ Dharma Training Fund  
Capital Campaign (Great Dragon Renovation, Phase I)  
Angulimala Prison Project  
Kobori Roshi Transportation Fund ♥ The Sutra Fund  
♥ Memorial and Named Gifts ♥ Matching Gifts  
Designated Gifts

Please contact Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward, 213.387.2352, [dokai@zcla.org](mailto:dokai@zcla.org) for more information. ■

## The Legacy Circle

You can help preserve the Dharma for future generations by naming ZCLA as a beneficiary in your estate plan. Legacy gifts are provided in your will and estate plans and include personal property, land and other real estate, securities, life insurance, retirement plans, or outright gifts.

All individuals who leave a legacy gift to ZCLA have the option to be recognized as members of The Legacy Circle.

For more information and discussion, please contact Dokai, Development Steward, at [dokai@zcla.org](mailto:dokai@zcla.org).



## Sangha Rites of Passage

### SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Incoming

**Program Steward**  
Katherine Senshin Griffith

**Day Manager**  
Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong  
Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown  
Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson  
Ty Jotai Webb

### SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Outgoing

**Program Steward**  
Evi Gemmon Ketterer

**Day Manager**  
Gary Koan Janka  
Rosa Ando Martinez  
Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen

**Co-Tenzo Coordinator**  
Gary Koan Janka

### RESIDENT LEAVETAKING April 2010

Jeanne Dokai Dickenson  
James Bodhi-Song Graham  
Evi Gemmon Ketterer

## Dharma Transmission Tree Planting Ceremony



The Sangha commemorates the 2009 Dharma Transmission of Senseis Ensho Berge and Shingetzu Guzy by blessing two trees. A pure white crepe myrtle tree was planted for Sensei Shingetzu, and Sensei Ensho's Shuso tree, a hot pink crepe myrtle, was blessed as his transmission tree.

## Buddha's Birthday Celebration



*Darla Myoho Fjeld and Tim Langdell bathe the baby Buddha underneath the flower bower.*



*The Great Dragon Mountain Levitators, ZCLA's corps of sacred mischief-makers, construct an alternate Buddha's bower.*



*For **Earth Day**, a wheelbarrow of fabulous chocolate cake, designed by Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong, celebrating "dirt"; the baking team included Lilly Brodie-Berge and Diane True-Joy Fazjo.*

## Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt Thank You!

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

To: **Evi Gemmon Ketterer** for four and a half years of devoted, spirited, and creative service as Program Steward, her previous years as Guest Steward, and multi-talented support of myriad Center activities;

The many hands and hearts of **the Sangha** who helped with the Buddha's Birthday celebration;

**Lorraine Gessho Kumpf** for organizing the creation of the Buddha's flower bower, and to **Rosa Ando Martinez** Co-flower Steward;

**Roshi and Moshe Cohen** for leading the workshop: Playing with Koan;

**Gary Koan Janka**, outgoing Co-Tenzo coordinator, for eight months of overseeing, and preparing some of our Sunday lunches;

Outgoing stewards, Day Managers: **Koan Janka, Rosa Ando Martinez**, and **Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen** for many months of devoted basic day stewardship;

**Kim KiMu McShane** for transcribing AnShin's talk;

**Faith-Mind Thoresen** for the handcrafted wooden box for the Parinirvana Scroll;

Everyone who helped prepare for mailing the Dharma Training Fund appeal: **John Heart-Mirror Trotter, Nelida Cartolin, Reiju Wasserman**, and **Tara Sterling**;

**Faith-Mind, Roshi, and Enduring-Vow Brown**, for initiating and planning the Sangha House backporch renovation project;

*WaterWheel* Production Group: **Heart-Mirror Trotter**, Steward of production, assembly, and delivery;

**Heart-Mirror** and **Lynda Golan** for ongoing contributions to the Nilotpala garden;

**Brown-Green Group** for hosting "Dirt! The Movie (Astory with heart and soil), the Earth Day salad with greens harvested from the Center's garden, and the informantive and decorative soil displays;

**Charles Duran** for electrical and plumbing for new fountain in Pundarika courtyard;

**Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong** for creating the earthy Earth Day celebration cake, with **Lilly Brodie-Berge, Diane True-Joy Fazio**, and **George Mukei Horner**;

**Mukei Horner** for photo gallery celebrating Earth Day;

Hearty welcome to new members **Tim Langdell**, Ph.D. professor at National University, child psychologist, CEO of EdgeGames, and student of Sensei Daishin; **Maria Pappajohn**, a psychotherapist who also practices with Sensei Daishin; **Miguel Rojas**, who clerks with Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP and ZCLA volunteer; **Adam Berkley**, who teaches English at

Antelope Valley College, **Jorge Infante**, production manager at Wave Newspapers and father of two teenagers; **David Cook**, manager of international tax at Ernst & Young; and **John Parsons**, CEO of USC Credit Union;

**Moshe Cohen** for leading the two sacred mischief/clown workshops;

Fond farewell to resident **Evi Gemmon Ketterer** who has returned to Switzerland and to a new job as a nurse in palliative care in Zurich, Switzerland; and to guest resident **Gabriel Diamond-Moon Russo**;

Congratulations to the **Sensei Nagacitta, Koan** and the **Angulimala Prison Circle** of Bodhisattvas whose work was brought to attention in a feature article in the *Los Angeles Times*; and to **Gabriel Diamond-Moon Russo**, fashion designer/artisan, for his work in the Palo Alto Style 2010 Wearable Art show, as featured in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. ■

**The Angulimala Prison Project** is in perennial need for your used dharma books and magazines, including *Yoga Journal* for distributing to inmates. There is a collection box for these items in the Sangha House lounge. Bundled packets dropped off the Center door-stop are welcome. Contact Koan with your questions: [koan@zcla.org](mailto:koan@zcla.org).

### 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 Buksbazen

**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](mailto:info@zcla.org) for information.

\* Affiliated groups are led by Dharma Successors (Senseis) of Roshi Egyoku 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.



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;  
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Address Correction Requested

### NATURE IS MY TEACHER *(Continued from page 4)*

We inquired into how they view the situation, what needs they have, what solutions they might see. After exhaustive inquiry, we moved to the third stage. We designed, as best we could, a new system that serves the whole: fish, people, and ecosystems.

So far, our proposal for radical reform has had a positive reception from scientists, fishermen, and governments. The Danish government wants to do sea trials. The UK and EU governments are in discussion with us. Others may emerge with competing ideas now that we have proposed ours. That will lead, we hope, to an evolution of ideas so that in a couple of years we have a consensus on an entirely new approach in what has been a bitterly contested space. If we get a good system in place soon, the fish stocks are still resilient enough to recover, so the stakes are high and the game worth playing.

Something I am spending more and more time on is a koan I've had for decades: what new story can we tell that will draw us into a positive future, a future in which

we live in greater harmony with the living things on earth and with one another?

My sense is that environmental activists, including myself, have so far failed to tell a positive story. We've focused on all the problems. This is a necessary step both for the individual psyche and for us as a society. While we need to see the fatal consequences of our current behaviour, once we see that for ourselves, what story can we tell to help shape the power of our social intentions so that they flow toward a world in which our descendants can thrive? Our new story must include a low carbon economy that grows out of the intricate interdependence of life on our planet.

We need a new Renaissance. The last one was born at a time of social upheaval, when a new story was needed. Those with far sight consciously created a new vision that has carried us for five hundred years. Our new vision needs to be rooted deeply in the wisdom of the Earth. We all need to follow Maezumi Roshi's advice and make Nature our teacher. ■