



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

Forgiveness

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



The theme for the Fall Practice Period is Forgiveness, which is the act of letting go of resentment, blame, and feelings of ill will toward oneself and/or another person. As Zen Buddhist practitioners, forgiveness is a pathway to ending the suffering that arises from the emotional and psychological wounds that you have received from, or that

you have inflicted on, another person. Forgiveness is a skillful means for upholding the ninth grave precept: “I will transform suffering into wisdom. I will not harbor resentment, rage, or revenge. I will roll all negative experience into my practice.”

In April 2008, I was invited to deliver the invocation at the annual Death Penalty Focus Dinner in Beverly Hills. At the event, Azim Khamisa (www.azimkhamisa.org) was presented with the Norman Felton/Denise Aubuchon Humanitarian Award during which he delivered powerful remarks about forgiveness. In 1995, his only son, college student Tariq Khamisa, was delivering a pizza when he was senselessly murdered by Tony Hicks, a 14-year-old gang member. The tragedy totally upended Khamisa’s life.

In time, Khamisa realized that in this tragedy, there were “victims at both ends of the gun”: his son and the teen who pulled the trigger. Khamisa’s realization led him to choose forgiveness, thus embarking on a life-transforming path of grace and compassion. He asked to meet Ples Felix, the teenager’s grandfather who had been raising Tony, and invited him to join him to end youth violence by speaking together to high school students about the tragedy and its consequences. This was the beginning of the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (www.tkf.org).

Khamisa had embarked on a long journey of forgiveness which transformed his life and became the cornerstone of his life-affirming work. He has led workshops



on forgiveness all over the world. It was through meeting him that forgiveness came alive for me. As I have listened to many Sangha members this year, forgiveness — particularly forgiving oneself — has emerged as one of the dominant themes.

During the Fall Practice Period, we will explore what a practice of forgiveness entails. Often when we think about forgiving another or ourselves, various obstacles to forgiving naturally arise. The concept of forgiveness is shrouded in misconceptions, so I find it helpful to begin with what forgiveness is not. Khamisa names seven myths of forgive-

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FORGIVENESS (*Continued from page 1*)

ness, which I set out below and offer brief reflections on each. Please become aware if you are holding any of these.

“Forgive and Forget.” The reflex response to deep hurt is often to move on and forget. In the practice of forgiveness, the cause of the wounding is examined. It may be one act, a series of actions, or a pattern of behavior that has been playing out over a long time, maybe for generations. It can include an entire family ‘pattern’ of behavior. The aim is not to forget what happened, but to remember and acknowledge the harm that has been done. It is bringing the actions into the light of awareness so that it does not live underground where resentment, rage, and revenge can take root. It also means not minimizing or excusing the actions that caused harm. Rather, you can begin to see an expansion of the pattern of suffering and how it has played out in your life.

“Forgiveness removes consequences.” The myth is that when we have forgiven a harmful act, the person who hurt us no longer is subject to the law of cause and effect. Cause and effect is, on the one hand, very straightforward — every action has motive and effect. Every action has multiple consequences, some of which are not immediately apparent. On the other hand, cause and effect are somewhat mysterious in that the effects reverberate over and over again in ways that cannot be foreseen at the time the act was committed. While the harmed person may not witness the full consequences that befall the one who has harmed, and vice versa, no one escapes the consequences of their actions, even if forgiven.

“Forgiveness is acting as though it did not happen.” This is denial, a common and powerful response to trauma. You deny your reactions and say you are fine and have moved on without addressing what has happened. If you are the one who has caused harm, you may say that it was a minor offense, or that it really did not matter, or “I don’t know why she reacted that way,” and so forth. If you are the one who has been harmed, you may “move on,” when, in fact, you are angry and hurt and are unwilling or unable to address what has happened.

“Forgiveness is a quick fix.” When you are suffering, you may just want to put it behind you. You might even say that you forgive someone, but, in fact, this does not reverse the circumstances and painful feelings that continue to arise. Harmful actions have many consequences that cannot be glossed over — they live themselves out in their own time, and are not linear with an endpoint. A spiral is a good symbol of

the process: the effects arise and are revisited again and again over time. Each time the reactions arise, you do the work of forgiveness, and each time, the effects of your work heal different dimensions of one’s being and the situation.

“Forgiveness is a sign of weakness.” Forgiveness implies a willingness to face the harm that has been done. In this myth, there is an implication that if you forgive, you are unable to endure what has happened. Facing one’s emotional wounds requires strength and resilience and can lead to discovering resources you never thought you had, including learning new ways of thinking and different emotional responses, thus expanding your own capacity for adapting to a new reality.

“Forgiveness is an event.” Forgiveness is an ongoing practice, a continual effort of being aware of anger and resentment as they arise and of loosening your grip anew each time. As you flex the muscles of forgiveness, you simply become more adept at accepting uncomfortable reactions. You find that resentments are held onto for shorter periods of time, thoughts of punishing the one who has harmed you occur less frequently, and your story of being a helpless victim diminishes.

“Forgiveness is pardoning, condoning, or excusing behavior.” This is a particularly debilitating misconception. Forgiveness is the process of liberating yourself from resentment, rage, or revenge. It does not in any way alter what has happened and does not let the person who has caused harm off the hook.

There are many compelling examples of forgiveness that we can draw upon for instruction and inspiration of what the human heart is capable of. Examples include Azim Khamisa’s response, the forgiveness of victims towards their perpetrators in Rwanda’s genocide, the forgiveness by the Amish community towards the man who shot their children, and so forth.

The practice of forgiveness can also shed light on self-blaming. How can forgiveness serve as a skillful means to end your own suffering and allow you to see more deeply into the nature of the ego-centered self and the nature of clinging and attachment? Forgiveness can free you from the emotional prison that you are creating for yourself, rather than taking full responsibility for your own life and the consequences of your own actions.

Join us during the Fall Practice Period for this exploration. What is your heart truly capable of?

Roshi Egyoku is the Abbot of ZCLA.

Being-Time

by Charles Tenshin Fletcher



Zen master Eihei Dogen wrote a fascicle called Being-Time. Even though he wrote it 700 years ago, it's just as valid for our lives as human beings today as it has been for others before us.

Do you ever question time? Does time speed up or slow down? As a boy, I can remember

the glacial progress of the last half hour of school. I had an accident when I was 17. I was riding my motorbike and hit the side of a car and bounced off into the front of another car coming down the road. I flew up in the air. It felt like moving through molasses – it was so slow. When there's danger, adrenaline kicks in and time goes very slowly.

Our sense of time is heightened by the direct experience of whatever is going on. Sometimes time goes faster – another experience of time. When I was a boy playing outside on a summer evening, time just flew by. My mother would come for me about 10 or 10:30 – it was still daylight at that time in England where I grew up. My mother would say, “Why aren't you in? You should be in bed.” That's our experience of time when we're absorbed in something – it seems to fly by. Sometimes when you're sitting and you really immerse yourself in zazen, time goes by very quickly. You're deeply absorbed in whatever you're doing.

In Being-Time, Master Dogen writes, “The way the self arrays itself is the form of the entire world.” This is the understanding that the self is time. Can you separate your being from time? Can you step out of time? Time is time no matter what you do, just as your being is time. You can't separate those two things. Time has its own flow: it's fast, it's slow. Don't fix time as having a certain duration. Rather, experience time as whatever it is. Time is time no matter what you do, as is your being.

Dogen says, “For Being-Time, stand on top of the highest peak.” We have those experiences where we can see very clearly. There's also time when we go to the depths of our own being. As Dogen says, “For Being-Time, proceed along the bottom of the deepest ocean.” Sometimes we're up, sometimes down. It's not fixed. You can't hold on to “up” or “down.”

**Dogen quotations are from Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen by Eihei Dogen, edited by Kazuaki Tanahashi, first paperback edition.*

“For Being-Time three heads and eight arms.” The heads and arms refer to guardians, protectors. Sometimes we have to hold to something, somehow protecting it, to make sure that people or precious things or places are protected.

“For Being-Time, an eight-or-sixteen-foot body.” Sometimes we can be magnanimous, like the eight-or-sixteen-foot body of the Buddha. We can be at the top of our game and do very well. We can impart wisdom. We can give things to people.

“For Being-Time a whisk or a staff.” Sometimes, we're directly influenced in our life by objects. These can break us out of our self-regard and open up a different vista in terms of our own Being-Time. Sometimes, there is being one with a tool or whatever our environment is.

“Things do not hinder one another, just as moments do not hinder one another.” Someone might say, “I'm from Detroit. How can a person like me be enlightened?” But our so-called station in life, our family name or heritage, these things don't hinder us in terms of our own living. Who knows the reputation of the Buddha's Shakyia clan? Maybe it didn't have a good reputation. You can't know. In terms of practice, in terms of Being-Time, it's not about me or how I'm doing in life. The world is always showing up on a momentary basis, whether you're on top of a mountain or at the bottom of the ocean. There's no hindrance.

“The way the self arrays itself is the form of the entire world. See each thing in this entire world as a moment of time. Things do not hinder one another, just as moments do not hinder one another. The way-seeking mind arises in this moment. A way-seeking moment arises in this mind. It is the same with practice and attaining the way. Thus the self setting itself out in array, sees itself. This is the understanding that the self is time.” This raises the question of how you regard the self. “The way the self sees itself is the array of the entire world.” In terms of your experience what do you think he's talking about.

It's important not to be myopic about practice, but to open up to the world, outside and inside. When Master Dogen says “the self,” it's not “I, me, my,” the self-creation of, “This is what I am, this is what I like, this is what I do.” It's this whole world as it is in each moment; it's our life itself, our Being-Time. Look at your being and see if the world doesn't show up in each moment. Even when I wake in the middle of the night, the world's never caught napping – it always shows up.

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BEING-TIME (*Continued from page 3*)

Again, it's a matter of focus in terms of relieving your own suffering if you tend to self-create: "This is who I am, I'm a musician, I'm a soccer player, I'm a Gemini"—any of these things. These definitions never quite reach it. But if you open out to the world, then the world is always teaching you on a momentary basis. It's always giving us the teachings of light, sound, taste, touch, smell and the teachings of how we reflect and engage with the world in itself, our very being itself. The first of the Four Great Vows is: "Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them." But it goes the other way, too — things save us, wake us to our own lives.

Just look at Shakyamuni's statement when he had his great awakening, "I, all beings, the great earth are the wisdom and virtue of the awakened one to thusness." So that's the great realization — the opening up to just this, thusness. Certain things may drop off, like our habits of being, the ways we've acculturated ourselves to this world. In that basic unwritten aspect of living, the world comes in without a filter. It's like a small child. There's an intimacy, a feeling of being at home in this world, in this life. This is Being Time — it doesn't need a "you" to be filled by anything, but it will be filled in many different and sometimes unexpected ways. It's important to practice this moment in time, this Being-Time, over and over and over. We tend to reflect on life as an object, rather than experiencing time as a momentary occurrence happening now. When we objectify it, we tend to overlay our own fixed views on top of it.

Our practice is the practice of reality. Dogen says, "Practice realization." Realization isn't something that occurs later in time or something that happened in time past. This realization is the only realization that I have. But how do I practice realization as Dogen suggests? It's to practice this being, this time, not overlaying it with my ideas of how things should be. When I started practicing, I was always waiting for something to be easier, for good experiences to come — for the flowers to fall. "Then I'll be good and enlightenment will be taken care of." But at some point, I realized that this moment in time is amazing in itself. It's far more interesting than anything that comes up in my head. The mind can really settle in this place, when it's not a matter of wanting to be something different, or another time and being than this.

Master Dogen describes eight perspectives on how we are as human beings, but there are far more than that. And our mind is the container for all these perspectives. When you're in the midst of some shadow, perhaps a habit or an addiction, what is practice? Should it be another way? In the reality of this time, there's not another way. By practicing over and over and over the realization of this moment in time, seeing and not engaging those things that promote

the addiction in the first place, you can find the clarity to avoid engaging in those things that promote the shadow.

Being-time encompasses everything that we do. The irony of the main so-called hindrance to the full experience of this time is the belief that these things, these shadows, are the hindrances to our own being. "When things get easier, then I'll be able to practice," or "When I'm at the Zen Center it'll be easier to practice." But it's never about when — that never occurs. "When" is always in the future. The things that occur in one's own life and practice are the ingredients of life. Do you think that if you're devoid of ingredients, it'll be a lot easier? Maezumi Roshi's brother used to say, "The more you do, the more trouble there is." Can you avoid trouble? If you can somehow transform whatever's there, that's an amazing power. This is where Buddhism really works. As the Buddha said, "This one here is a stuck axle wheel," a direct translation of what's often represented as, "There is the fact of suffering." The stuck axle wheel is far more important. You can look at why it's stuck. It's not just a matter of, "Well, I'm stuck. Ho hum. I'll just wait here until help comes along. Hope it does."

Look at where you're stuck. And then start to turn that wheel. In time, you'll find that you can actually shift the habits and conditionings that stop us from seeing. The Buddha said, "I, all beings, the great earth are the wisdom and virtue of the awakened one to thusness." And then he said, "But because of our upside-down views, we fail to see it." If we choose to think that the world is a certain way and just stick with that, then we'll always feel that life is suffering, because the world is always showing us that you can't stick on something. But things change. Internally, externally, it's always going on. So how do you sit with the experience of this being and time?

On the other hand, people sometimes say, "Well, this is the way the world is. Get used to it." Like the law of the jungle. Definitely you can say that, but if I want the world to have more compassion and mutual support, then it's important to practice those things. The world won't do that for me. And in terms of practice, I will still do what's needed, even though other people don't, because it's important to me. It's not a matter of giving up. "Well, I've been trying that for 40 years, and it's not working. Screw it." I can't say that. I know that practice works and has some help in it. There's the model of the Buddha. When he saw people acting crazy in many ways, he might have just walked away, "I'm enlightened now, I'm done." But he proceeded to teach for 40 years. For 40 years, he tried to reach people in many different ways. But it's not that he just made that decision. He couldn't do anything else. Why? Because he and all sentient beings are the same thing.

Tenshin Roshi is the Abbot at Yokoji Zen Mountain Center.

Painting Awakening

An interview with Tina Jitsujo Gauthier



Jitsujo: Roshi asked me to do a mural of Buddha's enlightenment. Basically, the idea was to paint a Bodhi Tree with the Buddha facing east just as he saw the morning star at dawn and was enlightened. The lamp in the right-hand corner of the wall represents the morning star. If you walk out there at dusk or dawn, the light is on and it's really beautiful.

Mukei cut a bunch of Bodhi leaves out of Balsa wood. Kyogen, Sarah, and I painted them. The Bodhi leaves are in the Dharma Hall. The idea is that our Sangha, or whoever wants to, can write a vow on one of the Bodhi leaves. It can be a personal vow – but it's really a vow for the Zen Center so that the Dharma can flourish in this place for the next 100 years. As I understand it, it's really going to take all of our vows together to nurture this place, the Mother Temple, so that it can be a vehicle for the Dharma to flourish and grow.

Finally, the vows will be attached to the mural. It'll look as if they're hanging from the branches of the Bodhi tree.

WW: Had you had any mural experience in the past?

Jitsujo: Yes, I went to art school and have a Master of Fine Arts degree. Honestly, I have to say that it feels a little scary and vulnerable to do this on the Zen Center's wall. I'm close to it and I'm struggling with it. I guess I can talk about the process. Otherwise, it'll sound kind of abstract.

For example, I had an image of a sky that I really liked, it was beautiful, but when I tried to paint it, I struggled day after day to give it depth and the feeling that it was encompassing everything. I didn't feel confident, and I was aware of all that was going into the sky. Meanwhile people were walking by and asking me, "Is it finished? What is that? Is that water?" So I began to ask people, "Do you think it looks okay? What do you think I should do?"

WW: Had you seen paintings of the Buddha before?

Jitsujo: I have seen paintings of the Buddha over the years. I'm trying to trust the process. I'd like to make this Buddha more feminine, and the Mara coming out of the tree, more masculine.

WW: Is Mara a menacing spirit trying to attack the Buddha?

Jitsujo: I think the scriptures talk about when the Buddha was enlightened, all these Maras appeared to tempt or distract him, but he was able to not react and just allow them to be there. In his August Dharma talk, Mukei spoke about "having the freedom to not react."

WW: Has working on the painting changed your sense of Vow?

Jitsujo: Enduring-Vow, Faith-Mind, and Robert prepared the wall. They did a lot of foundational work. The people walking by and talking with me, commenting, have also influenced the whole thing. There are many hands in this, some directly and some indirectly. I think Vow has something to do with all this. It's not just my vow. It's bigger than me. Do I understand what that is? It's much more than just a few sentences written on a leaf.



A vow is something that goes beyond anyone's lifetime. I'm hoping that in painting this mural, whatever is being put into it by me or anyone else will still be here in 100 or 10,000 years. I think that's what the vow is.

I feel very honored to paint this mural. It's not something I'm taking lightly. It's part of my training as a priest. It's hitting me on my edges, calling me to expand. Other murals I've done have always been jobs. This is not a job. It needs time to sit for me to know what the next step is. It's difficult when someone asks me, "Is that how it's going to be? Are you done with it?" I'm not done with it and I don't know how it's going to be.

Jitsujo is a priest-in-training and a resident at ZCLA.

When Asked You Gave

by Darla Myoho Fjeld



In our appeal for the Dharma Training Fund this year, we reached out to our Sangha members and friends to remember ours is a sincere practice of kindness and generosity, because we know that this practice affects others in ways known and unknown. It provides an antidote to the Five Poisons of Greed, Hatred, Lust, Envy, and Delusion that are so prevalent in our world today.

The call was answered with a great generosity. This year, our goal was to raise \$12,000. This is the minimum amount that was needed to ensure that no one is turned away for lack of funds and to cover our program costs. I am happy to report that we surpassed our goal. A generous 96 donors helped us to raise \$13,725, giving in the following way:

- 46 gifts in the \$10 to \$50 range
- 27 gifts in the \$60 to \$150 range
- 15 gifts in the \$200 to \$400 range
- 8 gifts in the \$500 to \$1,250 range

We are particularly grateful that a donor came forward to help us surpass our goal by promising to match any other donation that came in for one week. This act of generosity helped to put us over the top. This donor, along with all our donors, truly embody the spirit of Bodhidharma's teaching: "They give their body, life, and property in charity, without regret, without the vanity of giver, gift, or recipient, and without the bias of attachment."

As we begin our 2017 Practice Period with the theme of forgiveness, each of us will make commitments to intensify our practice. One of the commitments that we are asked to make is to donate to the Zen Center's Annual Fund. Our goal this year is to raise \$70,000. You will be receiving an appeal letter in the mail before Thanksgiving – we call upon your generosity, once again, to give as much as you are able.

The Zen Center could not make its many offerings without all of your generosity. One of our speakers this past month said in her Practice Talk that she needed *zazen* to live. Let's all reflect on how important the Zen Center is to our lives and give back accordingly.

Incoming/Outgoing Shusos



Outgoing Shuso Darla Myoho Fjeld (left) and incoming Shuso Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown (right) with Roshi Egyoku.

Roshi Egyoku has appointed Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown as the Shuso for 2017-2018. During this time, Enduring-Vow will take the designated Shuso seat in the Zendo and focus her Zen training by working consistently with her teacher, serving the Sangha, and cultivating discernment in all facets of her life.

The Shuso year begins with an Installation Ceremony in the Zendo and culminates with the ceremony of Dharma Exchange one year later. This year, the 2016-2017

Shuso Darla Myoho Fjeld will do her leave-taking ceremony and Enduring-Vow will be installed on September 30th in the Zendo.

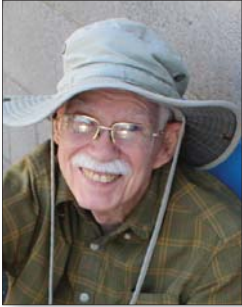
On Sunday, October 22nd, Myoho will conduct her Dharma Exchange with the Sangha. During the Dharma Exchange ceremony, the Shuso engages in a formal ritualized presentation of a case koan and issues a challenge to the Sangha to test her understanding. Please mark this date on your calendars. We congratulate Shuso Myoho upon the successful completion of her training year and look forward to her Dharma Exchange.



Enduring-Vow receives her Shuso fan from Roshi Egyoku.

On the Rez with Simply Smiles

by John Heart-Mirror Trotter



I volunteered for a week in August, 2017, for *Simply Smiles* in La Plant, South Dakota, on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe reservation. What a restorative hoot it was. I highly encourage you to spend a few minutes at the *Simply Smiles* website <http://www.simplysmiles.org/> to get the flavor of the place and their work.

La Plant is about five hours from Rapid City. The highways have what must be expansion gaps to minimize buckling from the temperature extremes, for there's a ka-thump every 100 yards or so. That's okay, for the land is so wide open and beautiful that you wouldn't want to sleep anyway.

I did many things wrong this time. I had no pillow, a mummy style sleeping bag, the wrong hat, too many clothes none of which layered, no way to take pictures, and I expected to read books to at least one or two kids. Hah! I ended up playing their games, *Tenzji* and *Leggo*. A favorite game for the smaller kids is to throw anything anywhere, though if caught in the act, you have to pick up what you can find.

I can't deny the picture of me carrying a long board across the prairie. I'm in the outfit I wore all week except for the evening we drove 25 miles to the Dairy Queen for dinner. On Tuesday and Thursday, we were allowed access to showers at the high school. Whooping & hollering helps a lot in a cold shower, though it's a sign of weakness in the Missouri river where we went with the kids one day.

Simply Smiles has repaired or built a handful of homes. These are either existing house trailers or new simple boxes, sturdy, well insulated, with perhaps four rooms. Their website has pictures and a time-lapse construction video. The *Habitat for Humanity* funding model doesn't work for people as poor as the Cheyenne River Sioux, so the *Simply Smiles* funding model is tuned to the poverty on the rez. It works, and reveals *Simply Smiles* as a "modest pocketed" organization that is dependent on donations and volunteers, and is patient, generous, and truly inventive.

A typical day started about six a.m. when the sun got us up. This was not a diffuse tree-or-building-hampered sun. It was crisp and bright, one did not argue with it. We packed our sleeping bags and mattresses, prepped for breakfast at eight a.m., got our assignments for the morning's work, worked until noon, had lunch, prepped for that afternoon's kids camp, had dinner at six p.m., did our team duties, swept and mopped the



Heart-Mirror carrying a long board across the prairie.

Community Center floor, laid out our mattresses and sleeping bags, and were in bed about 9 or 9:30. Rami Efal and Genro Gauntt led sitting and circles on a couple of evenings.

This week, we volunteers nearly finished a bunkhouse for future volunteers. We electrified the building, painted inside and out, and installed rain gutters which feed a 1,000-gallon water tank so the new garden could have water when there's no rain. A modest rain one night filled it a quarter full.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe treasures and protects the earth, so being allowed to build the bunkhouse is more important than it sounds. It means that *Simply Smiles* has gained the trust of the rez. Bryan Nurnburger, founder of *Simply Smiles*, explained how this trust is built – *Simply Smiles* waits until they are asked. That's why we volunteers slept on the floor of the Sam D. Horse Community Center for seven years before the bunkhouse went up. The Three Tenets in practice.

A final story. We all slept in the same large room, men mostly on one side and women mostly on the other. Late at night, one of the guys had to pee, so he got up and started for the outhouse dressed only in an unbuttoned shirt, undershorts, cowboy hat and boots. Out of the darkness came a woman's voice... "You just made my night."

Heart-Mirror, a long-time member of ZCLA, is a retired mechanical engineer. He frequently volunteers to work on projects for Simply Smiles.

Heart-Mirror is a Practicing member at ZCLA.

A Plunge into Forgiveness

by Jeanne Dokai Dickensen



This past August, our band of 35 came together at Founders Park in Rapid City, SD. After greetings and introductions, leaders huddled and laid out plans. I observed the arrival of a tall, husky middle-aged man with a quiet demeanor and a hearty laugh. The first words he spoke to me, as he lifted his arm wide and turned about in a circle, This is our land. He called himself

Manny Iron Hawk and invited me to take the position of host, welcoming all guests into his home body.

Zen Peacemakers, led by Roshis Eve Marko and Genro Gauntt, with Rami Mukyu Efal, Executive Director, had spent previous days with our Lakota leaders (Violet Catches, Renee Fasthorse Iron Hawk, and Manny) exploring how we might cross, together, Lakota Territory, as defined by the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Therein, the United States government and the Lakota (and other Plains Nations) signed an agreement guaranteeing Lakota ownership of the Black Hills and land and hunting rights in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. This soon broken treaty remains in effect today, and the Lakota and other Plains Nations continue to demand the return of their territory from the United States.

I took a walk around Founders Park, along the banks of the Rapid City River. Stopping before a monument commemorating this walking place, I read “to the original founders” of Rapid City. Said founders were discouraged prospectors, men who came out west with the wave of white settlers flocking to the region after the Custer Expedition discovered gold in the Black Hills in 1874. Within six months, this home to the Lakota and other American Indians for generations had been surveyed and laid out. More than 100 white people from the United States began to call that new town “home.” Gold, greed, hatred, and ignorance would break the delicate balance with the Sioux Nations.

We wound our way onto the old Sundance ceremonial grounds near the Crow agency in Montana. These sacred grounds became the battleground and National Monument of Custer’s Last Stand – the last stand of the Plains Indians for their land and way of life. Only in 1991 did a re-designation acknowledge that the battlefield has a dual identity. An Indian memorial was constructed to re-image the place as hallowed ground for Native Americans as well as whites. In the distance, it appears as a mound, slightly raised above the earth. Nothing special.



Roshi Eve Marko and Dharma-Holder Dokai. Behind them Spirit Warriors, iron sculpture created by Colleen Cutschall and Sister Wolf: Ogala-Sicengu Lakota women born on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Entering from the east, I stood within a perfect circle. Inner dialogue ceased. On inner-paneled walls are the names of Indians who died in the battle. Centered in the southern direction is a narrow opening, the Spirit Gate. Custer’s monument can be seen straight up the hill. The alignment is precise. The Spirit Gate welcomes the 7th Cavalry troopers buried across the road in a mass grave long ago.

Opposite the Spirit Gate, framed by prairie, is a commanding iron sculpture, Spirit Warriors. Three Plains warriors on horseback, a woman handing a medicine shield to one of them, as they ride toward inevitable battle. The women are here, deep source of medicine grounded in the earth. Several times, we returned to this circle, this space of spaciousness. We listened as our guides told stories filled with laughter and tears. Violet tells us that our stories are our medicine, our culture is our medicine, our way through the traumas and sufferings.

Days later, at the base of Bear’s Lodge (aka Devil’s Tower), someone asked whether forgiveness is possible for descendants of colonizer/perpetrators. When I have been harmed, betrayed, abandoned, or abused, forgiveness can seem out of the question. Without forgiveness, I am forced to carry the sufferings of the past. Forgiveness is letting go of guilt, blame, and anger, fear and paralysis.

If Violet, Renee, and Manny can walk and be in silence with children of colonizers to give voice to the Earth, give culture as medicine, and heal this planet, I can bear witness to all aspects of myself, and take action.

Dokai is a Dharma Holder and a teacher at ZCLA.

Many Hands and Eyes

by Katherine Senshin Griffith



At each meal, Master Kin-gyu used to personally do a dance with the rice bucket in front of the Zen hall, laughing loudly, saying, "Come eat, little Bodhisattvas." The Blue Cliff Record, Case 74

As ZCLA's Program Steward for nearly eight years, I often feel like Master Kin-gyu, coaxing all Bodhisattvas present to come taste the delicious meals of dharma being served.

If you've been listening to me, you know we offer regular zazen, frequent opportunities to meet one-on-one with a teacher, services, ceremonies, talks, chats, councils, Public-face-to-face, classes, guest speakers, films, position trainings, special events, lunches and snacks and opportunities to prepare them.

We get many renowned guests because we're the 50-year-old Mother Temple and through Roshi Ekyoku's many connections. Wearing her many hats as Abbot, Head Teacher and Priest, Roshi Ekyoku has created a vibrant environment of practice that is both rigorous and creative, where we're all asked to awake together.

I have a deep appreciation for both those coming through our gates and those doing the hard work behind the scenes.

Our residents are amazing doing their weekly samu assignments like vacuuming our buildings, mopping floors, sweeping porches, raking leaves, watering plants, maintaining the coffee area, preparing for disasters, restocking kitchen supplies, cleaning out the kitchen fridge, and countless other unseen activities. They each take a shift doing security rounds, are often the ones taking on Zendo and service positions, and are welcoming hosts to all who come through our gates.

The priests, staff and residents are the first called upon to do the heavy lifting, but we have many members who step up time and time again to do what's needed. Our members tend to our grounds, supply tea and cookies after talks, take photos, arrange the flowers and clean the altars, not only cook our Sunday and sesshin meals but work to make sure we have those cooks. Our ceremonial stewards oversee all services, trainings and memorials. The Zendo Steward oversees everything in the Zendo. Day Managers oversee our weekend activities and senior students teach our beginner classes. Posting the board minutes or sitting

through all-day visioning meetings, I witness all the care taken to ensure ZCLA's future.

I appreciate how sincere people are, making room in their busy schedule to come practice here, taking time away from work or family, pushing past health issues, and sometimes traveling very far to get here. For this fall practice period, we have visitors from Japan and Brazil.

I also can testify to interconnection. How one change affects so much. One sentence changed. How many places is that document listed? One person not showing up. How many people need to be informed?

How people register and communicate reveals them, just as the way you hit the dokusan bell tells the teacher what frame of mind you are in. Do you communicate all needed info in one email, do you RSVP or cancel in a timely manner, do you offer to help? Are you considerate when parking? Our Parking Steward has a big picture in mind, when he instructs you where to park your car.

Do you come here to "consume" the dharma? How do you give back? There is a turning point in practice when you realize that it is not just for you – your practice is for all beings. In fact, it is all beings whether you realize it or not.

Is there something you can do to expand or deepen your practice? Come to a weekday early morning zazen or service. Come to a Thursday night talk, class or council. Be a Dharma Buddy for a newcomer. Expand the amount of sesshin days you do. Join a circle or study group. Learn a service position. Cook a Sunday meal or help with a Saturday snack. Help clean up after Sunday lunch or with the periodic kitchen cleaning. Work is a core element of Zen Practice!

A lot of work and care goes into making ZCLA this oasis of practice. I love seeing the difference between when people are hesitant to commit and the deep gratitude they feel after plunging in.

So, come eat, little Bodhisattvas, I can laugh and dance all I want, but it is you who must directly taste for yourself the delicious dharma being offered.

Senshin is Program Steward and a member of the Teacher's Circle at ZCLA.

ZCLA Seismic Retrofit Project

by Fank Genku Martinez

The Zen Center of Los Angeles (ZCLA) offers residential training opportunities for Zen practitioners at two apartment buildings located at ZCLA. The design of these two wood-frame structures, the Pundarika and Nilotpala buildings, includes “soft-story” construction with residential units placed above a garage/carport. This type of structure is vulnerable to significant damage and/or collapse during an earthquake.

On January 17, 1994, a 6.7 magnitude earthquake shook the San Fernando Valley resulting in 57 fatalities, 8,700 injuries and billions of dollars in property damage. During the earthquake, the multistory Northridge Meadows Apartments pancaked over its soft-story garages killing 16 persons and injuring scores of others. In the aftermath of the Northridge Earthquake, the City of Los Angeles (City) adopted new building code requirements designed to improve the earthquake resistance of new commercial and residential buildings.

One area that remained unaddressed was the vulnerability of older pre-existing structures. The City has now



approved a Seismic Retrofit Ordinance which requires retrofitting older buildings with soft-story construction to meet modern building code requirements for earthquake safety. It is estimated that over 13,000 apartments and condominiums are covered by the Ordinance.

ZCLA has received official notice from the City that the Pundarika and Nilotpala apartment buildings are covered by the Ordinance. The order to comply requires ZCLA to submit design/engineering plans within 2 years (November 2018 for the Pundarika; March 2019 for the Nilotpala) and then complete construction within 5 years after that.

The ZCLA Board of Directors is currently analyzing funding options for the seismic retrofit project and will then select design/engineering and construction firms to complete the actual work. The overall project costs are estimated at between \$120,000 to \$150,000. The construction firm and the Board will also work closely with our residential trainees to minimize disruption during the construction phase.

Disaster Preparedness Report

by Tina Jitsujo Gauthier

The basic question is not will a major earthquake hit Southern California, but when. During our quarterly residents’ business meetings, we review DP in terms of four elements: fire, water, earth, and wind. Here are some basics.

Fire: How to extinguish a fire depends on the type of fire. There are three kinds: 1) trash, wood, paper; 2) chemical, grease, gasoline, and 3) electrical. Fires are extinguished by first removing their fuel. Methods for removing fuel are: smothering; shutting off electricity/heat; or adding water, foam, or powder to the fire.

Water: Everyone should have on hand a three-to-five-day supply of food and water. That’s how long it may take the Red Cross to bring supplies. Each person needs one gallon of water per day for drinking and washing. Dried

food and five-gallon water containers made of FDA-approved plastic can be purchased at camping stores or online.

Earth: We inspect our water and gas shut-off valves, emergency DP supplies, and tool kits. A personal emergency kit should include medical supplies, batteries, flashlight, lighter/matches, \$100 in small bills, work gloves and shoes.

Wind: How do we attend to bodily waste? Do not flush toilets after a disaster until you’re sure there’s no problem with sewer lines. A heavy-duty trash bag in a three-gallon paint bucket makes a portable toilet. Put used toilet paper in separate sealable bags. Cover waste with disinfectant, holding tank deodorizer, garden lime, or kitty litter. When a bucket toilet is full, dispose of it in a trash bin.

ZCLA’s Disaster Preparedness Team consists of Dylan Neal, Jesse Heinze, Robert Dias, and myself.

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 **Darla Myoho Fjeld** for leading the Sangha Forum;

To **Kathy Myoan Solomon** for leading July's Day of Reflection;

To **Myoho, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Rosa Ando Martinez, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, Frank Genku Martinez, Nan Reishin Merritt, Cathy Jikan Sammons, Trey LeCroy, Patti Muso Giggans, Geri Meiho Bryan, Bob Doetsu Ross, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, and Ellen Reigen Ledley** for representing ZCLA at the Lotus Festival in Echo Park;

To **Betsy Enduring-Vow** for leading the Bearing Witness council on the Space In Between;

To **Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka** for leading the July Dharma Chat;

To **Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran** for leading the August Zazenkaï;

To the **Brown Green Circle** for the movie screening of *Years of Living Dangerously*;

To **Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen** for officiating the Jukai for Helena Anjo Harvilicz;

To **Jonathan Kaigen Levy** for leading the August Day of Reflection;

To **Myoho** for leading the CAAW2 meeting;

To **Roshi Egyoku** for leading the Priest Retreat;

To the **Brown Green Circle** and **Population Connection** for the film screening and discussion;

To **Butsugen** for August's Dharma Chat and for coordinating all of our Chats;

To **Jane Radiant-Joy Chen, Genku, Jessica Oetsu Page, Tina Jitsujo Gauthier, and Joel Mitsujo Latimer** for their Personal Practice Talks;

To **Gessho** for leading Tangaryo and for preparing the lunch;

To **Gessho** and **Tina Jitsujo Gauthier** for leading the Chant Circle;

To **Reigen** for leading the September Day of Reflection;

To **Kaigen** and **Jitsujo** for stewarding all the Introduction to Zen Meditation instructors;

To **Faith-Mind** for teaching the Precept



Vows waiting to be hung on the mural. You'll find blank leaves in the Dharma Hall to write your vow on.



Kaizen organizing the Welcome Home Baskets.



Dragon sculpture watching over the Buddha Hall.

Class Series;

To **Patricia Keian Pfost** for leading September's Dharma Chat;

To **Keian, Hilda Bolden, Katherine Senshin Griffith, and Carol Flowing Mountain Schmitt** for preparing the tea snacks for Day of Reflection;

To our 3rd Quarter Tenzos: **Meiho, Doetsu, Reishin, Radiant-Joy, Reeb Kaizen Venners, and Taikan**;

To our 3rd Quarter Jikidos: **Anna Josenhans, Doetsu, Ty Jotai Webb, Keian, Meiho, Gessho, Chris Hackman, Jim Dojun Hansen, and Tim Taikan Zamora**;

To those who helped Sanctuary of Hope, an organization that places homeless teens in housing, in organizing the Welcome Home Baskets that are filled with basic items that they would need to start living in a new home: **Roshi Egyoku, Kaizen, Doetsu, Robert Diaz, Karen Brodie, Yuesen Yuen, James Sie, Charles Duran, Faith-Mind, Ben Sie, Yudo, and everyone who donated money**;

To **Dylan Neal** for being a Parking Bodhisattva;

To **Jitsujo** for painting the beautiful mural that will have the White Plum and ZCLA's vows hung from the painted tree for the next 10,000 years;

To those who helped clean the kitchen: **Kaizen, Taikan, Myoho, Enduring-Vow, Reishin, Diane Enju Katz, Meiho, Pat Suigen Way, Jitsujo, Harlan Pace, Amber Bawa, Heart-Mirror, and Christina Eirin Carvalho**;

To our 3rd Quarter Resident Security people: **Gessho, Doetsu, Kaizen, Taikan, Mukei, Burt Wetanson, Laos Joko Chuman, Yudo, Jotai, Meiho, and Charles**;

To our Buddha Hall Service leaders: **John Kyogen Rosania, Taikan, Shogen, Kaigen, Myoho, Dharma-Joy, and Jitsujo**;

To **Dharma-Joy, Ty Jotai Webb, Kaizen, and Heart-Mirror** for assisting Senshin in recording our talks.

ZCLA Affiliated Groups

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

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

The Ocean Moon Sangha (Santa Monica, CA)

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

Outreach Groups

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

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 provide the training and resources for realizing the interconnection of all life, to maintain the precepts and to embody the Three Tenets of Not-knowing, Bearing Witness and taking action that serves these goals. We provide the teaching, training and transmission of Zen Buddhism.

Our vision is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which the earth and 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 Residents

Harlan Pace
Allen Mulch

Resident Leave-Taking

Patricia Keian Pfof
Yuesen Yuen



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