



# Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

## Come in Out of the Cold

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



### A Householder Koan: Sam Comes in Out of the Cold

*Sam was living a good life. He had been practicing on his own for about a decade. Everything in his life was going well: his relationship with his wife was good, his daughter was happy and thriving, there was food on the table, and his work was coming along. Every-*

*thing was good. And yet, despite this, right in the center of himself, where he couldn't help but notice it, there was a big empty hole. It made no sense to him.*

*Sam called his good friend Jolene and told her of his situation. "Something is missing," he told her.*

*Jolene replied, "Oh, honey. It's just time for you to come in out of the cold."*

*Sam laughed nervously, then asked, "What do you mean?"*

*Jolene replied, "It's time for you to take refuge."*

*Upon hearing this, Sam burst into tears.*

*Later on, Sam said, "My entire aspiration for wholeness just came flying out. I knew what she said was true."*

An old friend in Dharma shared this story with me when we were talking about our spiritual journeys. Immediately, I said, "That is a wonderful householder koan." He gave me permission to use it however I wished. By tweaking it a little and changing the names, I know that this is a koan that will resonate with you. There are many dharma gates in this koan through which you can enter, depending on where you are in your life right now. Let's examine some of these.

"*Something is missing.*" Or, as many people whose lives seem to be going well say, "Something is wrong. I've worked hard and achieved so much, so what is this uneasiness—this big empty hole in the center of myself that I can't shake off?" This can come over us at any age. For



Roshi Egyoku with her measuring rod.

me, it was when I did my first sesshin in my mid-twenties and felt deeply that I was on the wrong life trajectory. I had a home, career, husband, but something was off—something was off because I was not connected to myself. For Sam, this awareness arose in his thirties, and for you, when did this recognition that living out your agenda still leave a sense of *something is missing*?

Indeed Sam had so much going for him, including a good friend that he felt comfortable calling to share something so intimate. She listened well and replied, "*Oh, honey.*"

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COME IN OUT OF THE COLD (Continued from page 1)

*It's just time for you to come in out of the cold.*" There is nothing like being seen. Someone sees you, resonates so deeply with your predicament. "Come," said Shakyamuni Buddha whenever he spoke the Dharma, "Come see for yourself what is true." Jolene said, "*Come in out of the cold.*" What is this *cold*? The phrase "come in out of the cold" was made famous by John Le Carré in his novel, "The Spy Who Came in From the Cold." It means to return from concealment or exile, such as being exiled from one's true self. It can mean "to return to shelter and safety, be welcomed into a group." For Zen students, it can mean return to the source, the very source of life itself. How do you do this?

Upon hearing Jolene's reply, Sam laughed nervously and asked, "*What do you mean?*" Jolene said, "*It's time for you to take refuge.*" It's time for you to come in out of the cold and come into the Buddha's house. It's time to end the exile from the Self. It's time to step into the wide, open space of Buddha Mind; to see your life from the wide perspective of the Buddha. It's time to stop seeing your life and yourself from a limited telescopic view—time to step out of a narrow, self-centered way of living. You may not think that you are living in such a way, but look! Look closely!

In Zen, we say that our practice is to penetrate the Grave Matter of Birth and Death. Do you know its root? What is the source of this very life? The very nature of it?

*It's time for you to take refuge.* In our Zen tradition, there are two primary forms of taking refuge. In Japanese Zen, we call it *zaïke-tokudo* and *shukke-tokudo*. *Zaïke* means staying at home; *Shukke* means *leaving home*. The word *tokudo* is translated in English as "ordination" or "initiation." I am told these words do not accurately convey what it actually means. Today, we say that one takes *jukai* and receives the precepts, so it doesn't quite convey the same sense. And for the priests, we say that one receives *tokudo* and becomes a priest, but one doesn't leave home, so the sense of it is also not quite attuned with the original meanings.

The word *tokudo* is very interesting. It consists of two Chinese characters. *Toku* means "to attain or to acquire." *Do* has several meanings depending on whether it is used as a verb or a noun. Both are important. As a noun, *Do* means "a ruler or a measuring rod;" as a verb, *Do* means "to carry across or to take over to the other shore or other side of the river." In the case of *zaïke-tokudo*, or what we now call *jukai*, it means "the ceremony for the householder to acquire a measuring rod to see how to carry one-self and others across the river of suffering to liberation." So

we are not just receiving the precepts and worrying about whether we can live by them or not. In fact, we are committing to something beyond the needs of ego when we take refuge.

When Jolene told her friend Sam, *It's just time for you to come in out of the cold... It's time for you to take refuge*, she recognized his need for a measuring rod that was beyond his limited view of his life. No matter how smart we are, we are always seeing things from an ego-centered view, aren't we? Ego-centeredness is so pervasive. In the spirit of true spiritual friendship, Jolene invited Sam into taking refuge, into joining a community and practicing the Buddha Way together with like-hearted seekers.

What does a measuring rod look like and what does it measure? My rod is very whimsical. It measures my alignment with Not-Knowing, with Buddha Mind. Can I realign with this boundless, sky-like mind? Can I remember non-duality? Can I remember that nothing is fixed? It also measures my alignment with infinite connection, with the Dharma of inter-being. Can I realign with bearing witness in the most subtle and nuanced ways from the view of Buddha mind? Can I listen deeply by closing the gap with the person or very thing that I fear or despise? Can I stay connected to suffering? It measures my alignment with the Bodhisattva Vow to help everyone. Can I see myself and others on the raft crossing the vast ocean of suffering and being liberated all together as one body?

*Upon hearing this, Sam burst into tears. Later on, Sam said, "My entire aspiration for wholeness just came flying out. I knew what she said was true."* Each of us knows this aspiration for wholeness—the aspiration to know who we truly are, to know that nothing is missing. In this exploration, we come to know the nature of the so-called Other. We come to know the nature of everyone and everything, all connected, as the wholeness of life.

Taking refuge carries us across the ocean of suffering to the other shore. Where is this other shore? It is right here, now. We are not, however, crossing alone. We are helping to take others across. This is the key point of taking refuge: learning how to help others. It is not easy to help others, but in doing so, we learn who we are; we learn what life is truly about. So when we come in from the cold, we take refuge in a way of living in which our aspiration for wholeness is realized by helping each other across the ocean of suffering. And that is enough to make us all burst into tears.



# Inviting Freshness Through Not Knowing

by Sensei Koshin Paley Ellison

Transcribed by Burt Wetanson from Sensei's book *"Whole Hearted."*



There's a great poem from the Third Ancestor of the Zen tradition that begins: "The Great Way is not difficult for those who don't cling to preferences."

Right – easier said than done. Usually, our preferences rule the roost. Conditioned feelings and opinions tend to determine how we behave in all of our relationships, which means that, in our every interaction, we tend to follow the same script. Rather than taking the chance to interact with the moment as it is, we interact with the fixed ideas that live in our heads. "Not knowing" is the dropping of all of this; instead, we completely enter the moment in front of us. In Zen, we call this having "beginner's mind."

In the first ten years of my meditation practice, I was super into the idea of being a meditator. I was always telling people, "Yeah, I'm a meditator, actually." "I'm going off to meditate." "Did you know I meditate?" Oh, I was so obnoxious. "You don't meditate?" I'd ask people unprompted. "You should try it." Obviously, I was not at rest with myself and was compensating for some insecurity. And obviously, I wasn't really having beginner's mind. I was assuming I knew something that other people didn't.

In Chinese, one of the translations of the word for suffering is "walls in the mind." Even though I was purporting to be a meditator, I was using my practice to do exactly the opposite of what it's meant to do. I was building a wall not only between myself and other people but also between me and my own mind. Caught up in my opinions and preferences, I was creating subtle divisions, because I wasn't being honest with myself. The whole thing had a kind of odor to it. I can recall people's faces when I used to do this; it was this scrunchy look like they were smelling something bad, like, "Why don't you leave me alone?"

The behavior was coming, in part, from a place of sweetness. There was that young enthusiastic quality of finding something new that was exciting and meaningful, and wanting to share it. But in a subtle way, I was creating evil. Evil. Creating separation. I could have simply shared my authentic experience and left it at that: "I'm really enjoying what I'm doing. This meditation thing... I feel like it's changing me. It's really new, and I'm really excited." But instead I made it about the other person and

my opinions about what they should do, and with that, I distanced myself from them as well as from my own truth.

There's a beautiful quote from the American Zen pioneer and teacher Shunryu Suzuki Roshi about beginner's mind: "In the beginner's mind, there are unlimited possibilities. In the expert's mind, there are few." In every moment, there are unlimited possibilities as to what might occur. But when we follow the same old script – for me and the meditation thing, it was a habit of mine to look to other people to validate my own feelings – there are not a lot of possibilities. It's not a fresh interaction. It's totally stale, and maybe even a little stinky.

Now, some time later, I don't feel insecure about my choice to meditate anymore (in fact, I'm not even sure if it is a choice anymore), and I've stopped pushing it onto other people. What's funny about this is that recently I was talking to a friend who had come to the center because he was curious about learning how to meditate. I was telling him about how I used to be that annoying meditation evangelist. He told me, "I've enjoyed watching how you behave in the world, and I've always appreciated that. That's what made me want to practice here." So it took some time, but I did end up learning my lesson about it, and when I did, that's when others finally became attracted to the idea of meditating. A key part of the practice is learning how to surrender to not being in control. Allow the unfolding.

In other words. We don't need to hang up a sign. If we can live from a mindset of "not knowing," we naturally cease from evil, and we're left free to really get into things.

I love the Japanese phrase *ichi-go ichi-e*, which means "one moment, one chance." It makes me think of dew evaporating. Have you ever seen that? Right before the sun comes up, all the dew, it's beautiful. And then – so quickly – it's gone. The opportunity to cultivate freshness, to cease from evil, is always available to us. But just for a moment... and then it's gone.

In the story of Cinderella, she really wanted to go to the ball, but the conditions were just not right. The interesting thing about the Cinderella story is that while there are many versions of it, there aren't any in which Cinderella complains. She keeps on meeting with obstacles, and she's sad about it, and she doesn't complain about it. Her step-family throws lentils in the ashes and tells her she can

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## INVITING FRESHNESS(Continued from page 3)

go if she picks up every single individual lentil in time, and she gets down and dirty and does just that. Then she gets all dressed up, and her stepsisters rip the gown to shreds. Eventually, of course, she does get to the ball, with the help of some fairy-godmother magic.

There is something about her attitude that I find really helpful. She enters into the situation fully. It's a totally sad situation, so she allows herself to be totally sad about it, but she also just does the next thing she needs to do, never knowing for sure how it's all going to work out.

Most important, Cinderella doesn't go and start a war with her family. You can imagine Cinderella doing that, right, and who would blame her? In feelings of fear, insecurity, hurt, we sometimes lash out. The thing is, we've been doing that really well for thousands of years. No one needs to practice how to turn the hurtful people in our lives into enemies. The challenge is to do something new instead. How can we be like Cinderella? How do we embrace not knowing, especially in the moments where it feels completely shitty, where we might be on our knees, picking lentils out of the ashes?

My teacher's teacher's teacher, Roshi Bernie Glassman, started "bearing witness" retreats at concentration camps and other places of mass suffering. He brought people together – people from both sides of the suffering, both the perpetrators and the victims – in council, memorial, and contemplation at places like Bosnia and Native American reservations. In 1998, I went to one in Auschwitz-Birkenau, where family members of mine had died. In fact, in my Jewish household, I had been raised to hate anyone who contributed to the Holocaust, especially Germans and Poles. I'm serious. At my childhood dinner table, it was like, "Would you like to take some bread and butter? And don't forget to hate the Germans and Poles, and have a little kugel with that."

We're sitting in a circle on the train tracks at Auschwitz. It's November. It's freezing, and in that moment, I was really into "Why did we come when it's so cold?" – which is part of the point. We sat by the selection site where they would send some people to the gas chambers and some to the barracks for work. We were reading aloud the names of all the people who died there, and what we had to do was simply be without our minds.

It was excruciating for me. But the more I sat, hearing the names, being with the legacy of all that evil and feeling the sorrow of all that loss, the more I started to think about all the beings throughout the world who have been or are being killed precisely because of the walls people build between themselves, because of the differences we fabricate and the things we assume. To see that each of us



*Planting a tree in honor of Sensei Faith-Mind's DharmaTransmission.*

is responsible for that is a real ass-kicking. Because, don't we do this every day, in our own small and subtle ways?

Dismantling these walls, made up of our opinions and preferences, is a radical move. At the Auschwitz retreat, I was able to do that in part by actually meeting German and Polish people, and listening to them, and learning to love them. One Polish woman my age and I took a long walk back into the forest behind Birkenau. I trembled as I shared how I was taught to hate Poles and Germans because my family's neighbors locked them in their barn and set it on fire – before the Nazis came. She stopped on the path. Her eyes full of tears, she took my hands and said she was there because her grandparents killed their neighbors the same way. We held each other as we sobbed and wailed.

We have the opportunity to do this on an everyday level, too. Not knowing is learning how to interrogate what we assume to be true. "I'm better than you" or "everybody should meditate" or "my stepsisters are so mean" – whatever the stories we happen to tell ourselves. This is how we do no evil.

What are your walls and how can you take them down? What does it mean to see everyone as yourself?

*"Just practice good, do good for others, without thinking of making yourself known so that you may gain reward.  
Really bring benefit to others, gaining nothing for yourself."*

– Eihei Dogen Zenji

*Sensei Kosbin is a cofounder and co-guiding teacher of the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care.*

# On Receiving Denkai

by Rev. Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert

Receiving Denkai is, in one sense, an “accomplishment,” but as we know, this practice is not about attaining anything, and certainly not about completing anything. Life is moment after moment. Practice is moment after moment, always making an effort to close the gap. But when I am consciously thinking, “Am I closing the gap?” we already know the answer. And so in looking at how this actualizes in my life, in the very process of considering the question, I am creating a gap between “me” and “my life.” It doesn’t mean that I should never reflect in this way on how things are going, but it does mean that I should understand that I am creating such a gap, and also that this type of reflection can allow my inner critic, the small self, to take the reins if I am not deliberate and intentional in my process.

The life of a priest is to serve. Of course, for anyone who has taken the Bodhisattva vows, we have vowed to serve others – all beings everywhere. But for

by Rev. Jitsujo Tina Gauthier

Every day during Den-kai week, we did a chanting service three times a day in our room at our personal altar, which included hundreds of bows to our Zen lineage and female ancestors. This was followed by jundo -- making offerings, chants, and bows to all of the ZCLA altars. I say “we” because it was Dharma Joy and I, but it was also our jishas, tenzos, teachers, partners, fellow residents, and ZCLA sangha at large that went through this week. The Dharma Transmission of the Precepts is a whole thing!

Denkai week started out as something that I, the little self, was going through. My mind had its usual complaints about how difficult bowing is: the heat, and the worry that the arising pain will last forever, fear that I cannot do this, that one of my knees will break off, or that my body will fail altogether. It was challenging doing some 90 bows in a row. It’s similar to riding a bike uphill—it’s best not to stop. So I just kept going, and through the burning sensation,

a priest, this is especially true, and service to our Sangha becomes a primary motivation for how I am living my life. How does that manifest? Because we are all individuals, it manifests for each priest in its own unique way. But that spirit of service, that setting an intention to live life in that way, is the underlying commonality. Whether you have received Denkai or not, the intention and direction remain the same. But having received Denkai, it “ups the game” a bit in my mind in terms of the methods through which I can carry out this service, since it empowers me to give the precepts to others.

The Denkai process has certainly made me feel more connected to ZCLA, to the Sangha, and to my vows of service. This fall, I will be leading the Precepts/Jukai class

series, and I am excited to explore the precepts with a new group of practitioners and to have the experience of having the precepts unfold within our lives together.



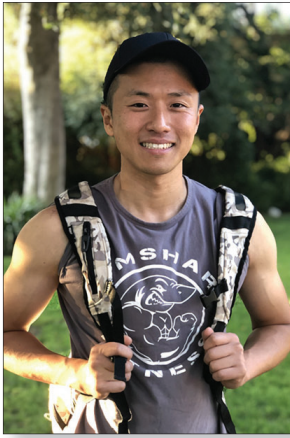
it occurred to me that I am doing one bow for one person’s entire life and devotion to Zen practice. All I had to offer in this moment was this bow. Syncing the breath with the bow, offering the posture with grace, and the mind with

benevolence became my practice.

The whole experience created more intimacy with my entire environment. A manifestation of Dharma became mirrored in all of you. I am grateful to all of the plants that were clipped for altar offerings, for my jisha who accompanied me, for the tenzos who cooked the meals, some of which brought tears of gratitude to my eyes, for all who supported the silence, paid membership fees, sat zazen, tended the buildings and grounds, brought treats, and made vows. I especially appreciate Roshi Egyoku and Roshi Seisen Saunders, along with all my teachers in the six realms, and those who continue to actualize the precepts and transmit the value of living an ethical life. May we all have the courage to continue this practice!

# Why Did Ryo Come to the West?

Interview by Burt Wetanson



In May of this year, a young Japanese Rinzai Zen priest named Ryo Asakumo – Dharma name Eryo – arrived at ZCLA for a one-year stay on Great Dragon Mountain, partly to practice and study in an American Zen community and partly to improve his English. Ryo's visit is being sponsored by the Zenkoji Scholastic Fund established by Roshi Takeda Kuroda.

WW: I understand you're here on a student visa. How long does that last?

RYO: To have the student visa, I go to LASC (Los Angeles Southwest College) for at least one year. Egyoku Roshi told me to go to that school. I'm studying English. Ryo, who celebrated his thirtieth birthday at ZCLA, grew up at his father's Rinzai temple in the small town of Oajima on one of the main islands of Japan.

WW: What does your Dharma name Eryo mean?

RYO: Eryo was the name of one of my relatives. My father was the priest of our family's Zen temple. It's called Ryuge-zan, Dragon Flower Mountain. When my father passed away, one of my brothers took over running our temple.

WW: You must have started studying Buddhism early in life.

RYO: Not really. I studied a little when I went to Hana-zono University for four years. That's a Rinzai Buddhist college in Kyoto. After graduating, I went to live and study at the Rinzai monastery of Myoshinji Temple for six and a half years. (Myoshinji is a famously strict Rinzai monastery located in Kyoto. Founded in 1337, Myoshinji is one of the largest Zen temples in Japan.)

WW: What are your impressions of ZCLA?

RYO: Amazing. In Japan, in my opinion, not many people are into Zen or practice zazen. Also, it's astonishing how many people who come to ZCLA are lay people.

WW: Are the grounds of your home temple similar to ZCLA?

RYO: My home temple is much bigger than ZCLA. It's about 400 years old and goes back to the time when there

were famous lords who had vast territory and fought wars with each other. In my home temple, lots of people come for the sake of community, like the elderly ladies who come to talk and relax. Myoshinji monastery is completely different. It's only for monks who are going to be priests.

WW: Myoshinji is a Rinzai temple, so you must have studied koans.

RYO: I worked on a lot of koans. I was surprised the ways they do things in Japan and here. In Japan, the Roshi gives a koan which we have to learn by heart. When we go to sanzen (dokusan), we have to say it and say the answer. If you got it, he would give you another koan. If not, Roshi just rings the bell. Here I think people can talk with Roshi Egyoku more. In the monastery, you talked to Roshi just about koan. If it's correct or not. If not, ring the bell.

WW: That's not too different from koan practice at ZCLA. But here the person might discuss how the koan relates to some aspect of their life and discuss that with Roshi. So that's one difference.

RYO: Not many temples in Japan are like ZCLA. Myoshinji is not a community. It focuses on training. At Myoshinji, we all have to go to sanzen. Nobody can skip it. If you're sick, maybe you can skip. It depends on the monastery. Monastic life is really hard. You have to endure. Especially you can't show expressions or smile. Nothing is allowed. No freedom. Just focus on koan. We arose at 3:00 a.m., sometimes 2:00 a.m.

WW: What benefit do you feel you got from practicing that way for over six years?

RYO: Honor – not just not to cheat and lie. It's different. Endurance. Confidence. There are lots of monasteries. Myoshinji is really strict. I can endure anything and be able to respond to all kinds of things. It's difficult to explain. Nothing is allowed. No television. When we cook, we can't use gas. Just wood. We keep the old traditional way.

WW: So they must use the keisaku to keep people awake.

RYO: They use the keisaku very hard and a lot. At Myoshinji, it's like sesshin all the time.

Looking into the future, if Ryo decides to follow his family tradition, he will have to find and serve another community as the priest of its Rinzai Zen Buddhist temple.



# Charles Duran: An Independent Spirit Passes On

by Lorraine Gessho Kumpf



Charles Duran, a resident member of ZCLA for some 40 years, passed away on July 23, 2019, at the age of 90. Charles was known for his ability as an electrician and a skillful jack-of-all-trades who had worked faithfully at the upkeep of the Zen Center through his eighties. He was a truly unique individual with a vigorous curiosity, especially in areas of the mind, philosophy, history

and politics. We in the sangha knew him for his sense of humor and his wide-ranging conversations: he read and questioned deeply. Also, Charles maintained his loyalty to and support of ZCLA throughout his years at the Center, which was much appreciated by all who have been concerned with ZCLA's continuity. What follows are some comments on my experience with Charles as he neared his death. I had the privilege of being close to him much of this time, as a friend and as the steward of a group of residents who took on Charles's care in the last eight weeks of his life: Robert Diaz, Jitsujo Gauthier, Mukey Horner, Heart-Mirror Trotter, and Taikan Zamora. Additionally, I want to recognize those who took on the care of organizational and legal matters during this time—Sensei Faith-Mind Thoresen, Mary Rios, and Pine-Ocean Cleary.

Charles had heart surgery about six years ago, and at the same time was diagnosed with emphysema. He gradually lost stamina. In addition, about two years ago he was diagnosed with cancer. At that time he decided not to have any treatment. As these conditions affected his daily activities, Charles expressed his interest in an end-of-life choice: he wanted this process to be rational and intentional; he explored aid-in-dying programs and ultimately chose to follow California's "End of Life Option Act." This is the California law, passed in 2015, that permits terminally ill adult patients with the ability to make medical decisions to be prescribed an aid-in-dying medication (the so-called "cocktail"). Certain rigid criteria must be met: in short, the person has to be seen by different doctors multiple times in the process of verifying the patient's terminal condition, evaluating the patient's cognition (that is, the ability to make a medical decision on one's own), verifying that the decision is voluntary, and showing that the patient is able to self-administer the prescribed drugs—to handle and swallow them. The process takes a minimum of three weeks, and at any point the patient may halt it. A full description of the End of Life Option Act is at Coalition for Compassionate Care California: [coalitionccc.org/end-of-life-option-act](http://coalitionccc.org/end-of-life-option-act).



Even as Charles became less mobile in his last months, he continued to be strong in mental acuity and actively conversational. As he weakened and became bedridden, he still expressed the intention of seeing the protocol through to the "cocktail." At the same time, he knew his capacities were slipping. Hospice nurses had been visiting twice

a week for about a month when, on July 21, his breathing was so troubled that I called the nurse, and twenty-four hour care was begun. On the next day, his doctor verified that Charles was not able to continue the protocol; he was not coherent and was not physically able to swallow the prescribed drugs. Just over a day later, at 8:50 PM on July 23, he passed away. He had been gasping for breath, but in the last hour, both breath and body had become very quiet.

Charles died just as a day of sesshin was ending. When his passing was announced to the sangha, a bedside service was also announced for 9:30 that evening. Roughly 30 people came, cramming into Charles's studio apartment and out the door. Together we read the lovely Bedside Ceremony, which addresses Charles directly, urging him to fearlessly go forward in love and peace to his original home. I found the words and our voices very touching; several people, including the nurse, said that they were especially moved by the recitation. Afterward, some of us hung around the Nilotpala courtyard, sharing stories and remembrances of Charles. Then we went on to arrange the main altar of the Buddha Hall for Charles's memorial. On that first day, we placed his plaque, picture, tool belt, hat and other articles on the altar. We later found the stole he received as a Sangha Guardian of ZCLA and draped it around his picture; we also added a picture of his beloved cat, Samantha, who had died just a couple of months before. Charles's picture, stole and plaque remained on the altar for the traditional 49 days of mourning. A memorial service was held for him around the end of that period, on Sunday, September 8th.

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CHARLES DURAN *(Continued from page 7)*

Charles left us a good lesson: he had been diligent in designating his wishes and making arrangements long in advance of his final illness. It's a good example for us all! He wished to be cremated, and the agency taking care of that received his body soon after his death. Pine-Ocean took charge of these arrangements and received his cremains, which he later brought to ZCLA, where they were placed on the Buddha Hall altar. During ZCLA's priest retreat in August, the priests placed a tablespoon of the cremains in the Sangha Urn. After the September 8th memorial service, Pine-Ocean will scatter rest of the cremains. Not one for "fuss," Charles desired not to have a ceremony or visitors at the cremation.

During the time that Charles was bedridden, he had many visits from sangha members, and he received people as much as his strength would allow. Some people dropped in just to say good-bye, others sat with Charles for a more extended time. In the final two days, when it did not appear that he was conscious of his surroundings, fewer people came, though some sat with him to bear witness to his passing.

During this time, I considered how to practice The Three Tenets with a person who is passing away. For me, in bearing witness, there was no possible "knowing mind" at Charles's bedside. But because of the many ingredients involved, I couldn't say that one approach is correct in general. In addition to changing physical conditions, there are differences in family and faith traditions. Just a short time before, I had experienced the dying process of a family member. My family engaged the senses of that loved one, through voice, prayer, touch, music, and so on; the belief is that this envelops the dying in love and creates the best, the sacred, conditions for the journey.

A different approach was taken by Charles's hospice nurse. When Charles was clearly passing, the nurse said to his friend Pine-Ocean, "He's going. Come close and talk to him!" At that moment, talking somehow seemed intrusive to me. I asked for input from Roshi Egyoku and others on Buddhists' understanding of the proper attitude at the time of death. I learned that, from the perspective of our practice, a quiet and respectful presence is most basic—there should be no distractions. This enables the dying person to center all energies on the transition that he or she is experiencing. Chanting is fine—unlike ordinary talk, its energy supports the journey rather than distracting. Roshi Egyoku also mentioned that people taking care of us at ZCLA need to be aware of our Buddhist approach to dying. Even when one "knows" the proper demeanor, it may be difficult



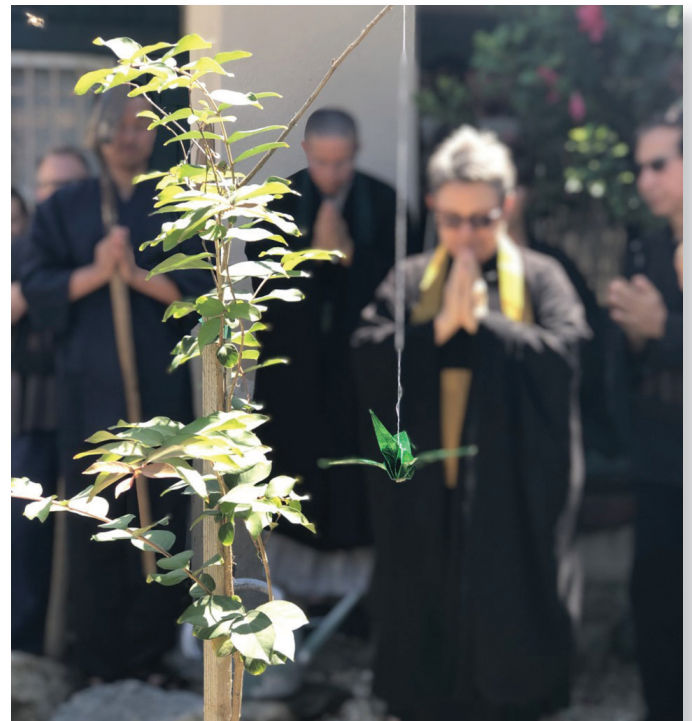
to maintain: for example, the person in attendance may struggle with emotions. (In fact, I did so at times.) In my opinion, it is very helpful to have the practitioner(s) present who can take charge of the situation and guide those in attendance on how to respect the transition.

Over time, as Charles's form changed and he started the transition between this life and what comes next, I experienced him as softening and showing great compassion. Throughout, the sangha responded to Charles with whole-hearted generosity and love. For some of us, his approach to dying, the decisions he made, and the physical changes we saw in him, heightened our awareness of our personal

condition, and gave us input regarding our own intentions and decisions. It was an honor to be close to the whole of this situation, to be with Charles's energies and to see the Sangha Treasure manifest itself.

*Note: On Sunday, September 8th, Roshi Egyoku gave Charles Jukai during his 49th-day memorial service. His Dharma name is Jinko (Jin is Benevolence, Humanity and Ko is Light).*

*Gessho is a Resident Member of ZCLA.*



*Thank you to all those who helped plant Sensei Faith-Mind's Transmission Tree.*



## Zen and Art

by Robert Kanzan Swan



*The art lies in the consciousness of doing the thing, in the attention to the happening, in the sacramentalization of everyday reality, the God-worship in the present conversation, no matter what.*  
Allen Ginsberg, *Visions of the Great Rememberer*



The question has been put to me: How does your Zen practice influence and affect your practice as a painter? The answer, for me, is that my Zen practice and my Art practice are not separate in that one is over here influencing the other over there. Instead, they are the same practice.

There is the same suspension of time.

There is the same fading of self.

There is the same immersion in the present.

There is the same release of both past and future, though Zen/Art embraces the flow of ancestors, teachers, and those-who-went-before.

There is the same absorption into the Great Quiet (that hears all).

There is the same sweet interior joy of attendance.

There is the same solitude and community existing simultaneously.

My art was the first introduction to the Zen/Art practice. I felt a great relief and familiarity when I was subsequently introduced to Zen in particular and Buddhism in general. I felt as if I had been in a warm home territory for a long while. I now had new names for this practice, more teachers, deeper history, a wider arena for being here, all of which freed me from the anxiety and grasping for my location

of spirit and heart. Indeed, I had a new reason for my Zen/Art practice: to extend my understanding/presence/absorption into the Great Matter. Daido Roshi quotes D.T. Suzuki in his Zen Art Book:

*"The arts of Zen are not intended for utilitarian purposes or for purely aesthetic enjoyment but are meant to train the mind, indeed, to bring it in contact with ultimate reality."*

*Kanzan is a ZCLA practitioner and a member of the Board of Directors.*



June 23, 2019: Congratulations to our new Baby Buddhas (from left) Brian Sotetsu Huff, Robert Kanzan Swan, Roshi Egyoku, Gemma Soji Cubero del Barrio, and Christiaan Ekan Manno.



September 15, 2019: Congratulations to our new Baby Buddhas (from left) Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez, Erin Joyful-Heart Moore, Sensei Faith-Mind, Harlan Jindo Pace, and Lina Keiju Bahn.

# How Meditation Helps in the Workplace

by Nem Etsugen Bajra



I introduced meditation to my company five years ago and have been sitting in weekly meditation with my employees for the last three years. I now want to sit with people from outside of my work and discuss how meditation can help in the workplace. I was very excited when I got permission to lead bi-weekly meditation sessions at ZCLA. The sessions

include meditation, a work-related topic, discussions, and the Four Vows, followed by tea and cookies.

Not knowing who, if anyone, would show up for the first session, I was a little anxious. Five people showed up. After meditation, I introduced the Five Buddha Mandala and their corresponding elements of Foundation, Study, Resources, Relationship, and Action. The participants found the mandala to be helpful. One person was feeling anxious and not confident about her new business. She learned in the session which area of the mandala she wanted to work on. Another participant mentioned he felt confident about his capacity in the Study and Resources area, but not so much in the Relationship area. A third person wasn't sure which classes he should take when going back to college. Now he knew which ones to take.

In our next session, I introduced the material and spiritual aspects of work – meaning, we not only strive to earn a livelihood, but also to experience fulfillment from our work. One person couldn't imagine any spiritual aspects of work while another mentioned both the possibility of it, as well as its importance, yet he saw difficulty in discussing spirituality at the workplace. A self-employed individual who had a deep sense of fulfillment in his work, had difficulty with the financial (material) side of it.

In recent sessions, I have been introducing precepts which people have found could be related to everyday work. I noticed that discussions often start with different minds – Work mind, Success mind, and Zen mind. Work mind finds meditation boring. Success mind wants the best way to make money. Zen mind takes no interest in economic value. Yet, at the end of the discussion, they all seem lighter. They tell me that they simply appreciate the peaceful space of the Dharma hall. Regardless of the topic, all the participants have been fully engaged in discussions.

By the time we moved to the Sangha house for tea and cookies, we have let go of our particular mind and become curious about the other minds. The Work-minded person

asks how he can attend the Sunday meditation program. The Zen-minded person starts asking about financial matters. We are fully energized and ready to engage in conversation, as though we had just been reunited with “long-time-no-see” friends.

I appreciate the opportunity ZCLA gave me to witness such small but positive shifts. I see that people aren't necessarily expecting the perfect solution to their challenges. They just need a space or container where they can share and unburden their minds and hearts, even for an hour. I see that the Dharma hall itself presents such a space for all of us. Now I ask myself where will I go from here? What else could I offer? Am I doing it the right way? I don't know for sure. What I do know is that I wish to keep introducing meditation to working people.

## About Etsugen

*Born in Nepal, Etsugen received a scholarship to study engineering in Japan. After working in Nepal and studying further in the Netherlands, he came to the US, worked as a software engineer for 15 years, and established his software skills. He started his own software company and experienced a steady growth in business. Faced with a setback in his business after 9/11, Etsugen sought the advice of expert consultants. Unable to find satisfactory answers, Etsugen studied Inamori management principles and began Zen meditation. Based on the Inamori principles and sitting together with employees, he was able to make his company profitable while turning it into an employee-managed-and-owned company. Inspired by Roshi Bernie Glassman's work at Greyston, Etsugen has made his company a certified B-Corp with service to the community as its mission.*

*Etsugen is a practicing member at ZCLA.*



*Thank you to our Flower group that takes care of our altar flowers: (Left) Hugh King, Diane Enju Katz (Steward), Kathleen Sullivan, Cathy Jikan Sammons, and Anna Josenhans.*



## 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 **Dharma Holder Katherine Senshin Griffith** for leading the Bearing Witness Council;

To **George Mukei Horner** for the ongoing Zendo Protocol Trainings;

To **Sensei Faith-Mind Thoresen, Senshin, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Jitsujo Tina Gauthier, and Mark Shogen Bloodgood** for offering Dharma talks;

To **Nem Etsugen Bajra and Yoko Gyokuren Bajra** for leading the ongoing Meditation for Career Fulfillment classes;

To **Betty Jiei Cole, Gemma Soji Cubero del Barrio, and Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran** for leading the Day of Reflections and Councils;

To **Roshi Kipp Ryodo Hawley** for leading the Just Summer Sesshin;

To **Sensei Koshin Paley Ellison** for his talk on Wholehearted: Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures of Awakening, Receptivity, and Community;

To **Darla Myoho Fjeld** for stewarding the Development Circle meeting;

To **Roshi Egyoku** for holding Public Face-to-Face interviews;

To **Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert** for leading the August Zazenkaï;

Denkai/Preceptor & Priest Completion Week for **Rev. Dharma-Joy** and **Rev. Jitsujo**;

To **Roshi Egyoku** as Preceptor;

To **Myoho** and **Mukei** for serving as Jishas;

To **Mukei, Myoho, Sensei Faith-Mind, Bob Doetsu Ross, and Robert Diaz** for the Denkai room set-up;

To **Sensei Faith-Mind** and **Geri Meiho Bryan** for cooking meals all week;

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

To **Soji** for heading up the Summer Garden Film Series;

To **Kristie Valdez-Guillen** for leading the Dharma Chat on Trauma & Centering the Body in Practice;

To all those involved with the Ceremony & Planting of the Transmission Tree for Sensei Faith-Mind;



*John Kyogen Rosania*



*Peter Ryugen Sample*



*Tim Taikan Zamora*



*Gemma Soji Cubero del Barrio*

To **John Kyogen Rosania, Peter Ryugen Sample, Tim Taikan Zamora, and Soji** for their Personal Practice talks (center photos);

To **Dharma-Joy** for leading the Precept Class series;

To **Diane Enju Katz** for stewarding the Altar Flower Group meeting with members **Hugh King, Cathy Jikan Sammons, and Anna Josenhans**;

To **Etsugen** and **Jane Radiant-Joy Chen** for leading the Tenzo Practice Introductory class;

To **Gessho** for leading Tangaryo;

To **Rev. Sensho Watanabe**, our Guest speaker from Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, for his Dharma Talk;

To **Lawrence Shainberg** for speaking and reading from his book *Four Men Shaking*;

To our 3rd Quarter Tenzos: **Roberta Myodo Brehm, Rosa Ando Martinez, Diane True-Joy Fazio, Nan Reishin Merritt, Taikan, Kane Buzen Phelps, Julie Getsuan Suhr, Conrad Butsugen Romo, Jiei, Hanna Nelson, Radiant-Joy, Doetsu, Gessho, Gyokuren, Meiho, Chris Daian Fields, and Pedram Esfandiary**;

To our 3rd Quarter Buddha Hall Service Leaders: **Reeb Kaizen Venners, Harlan Jindo Pace, Taikan, Dharma-Joy, Brian Sotetsu Huff, Myoho, Meiho, and Gessho**;

To our 3rd Quarter Jikidos: **Soji, Sotetsu, David Randall, Sarah McCarron, Doetsu, Thomas Seishin Gardner, and Daian**;

To our Day Managers **Myoho, Mukei, Dharma-Joy, Jitsujo, Ando, Shogen, Taikan, Kaizen** and **Senshin**;

To **David Randall, Gessho, and Hilda Bolden** for preparing Saturday snacks;

To **Doetsu** for making cabinet doors for Roshi's kitchen cupboard;

To **Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown** who served on the ZCLA Board of Directors as Board Secretary for many years;

To our Disaster Preparedness team: **Jitsujo** (Steward), **Jindo, Dylan Neal, Robert Diaz, and Jessi Rosania**;

To **Gessho, Kaizen, and Taikan** for acting as Zendo Steward while Mukei was away;

*We would also like to thank all those whose names were forgotten or left unsaid.*

## ZCLA Affiliated Groups

### The Lincroft Zen Sangha (NJ)

led by Roshi Merle Kodo Boyd

### The Monday Night Meditation Group (Pasadena, CA)

coordinated by Betty Jiei Cole

### The San Luis Obispo Zen Circle (CA)

led by Dharma Holder Mark Shogen Bloodgood

### Santa Barbara Zen Center (CA)

led by Sensei Gary Koan Janka

### Wild River Zen Circle (Nevada City, CA)

led by Sensei Jeanne Dokai Dickenson

### The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)

coordinated by Marc Dogen Fontaine and  
Michael Jishin Fritzen

### The Westchester Zen Circle (CA)

led by Roshi Kipp Ryodo Hawley

## Outreach Groups

### CMC Buddhist Fellowship Group

### California Men's Colony (CMC)

(San Luis Obispo, CA)

led by Dharma Holder Mark Shogen Bloodgood

*Contact [info@zcla.org](mailto: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 training and resources for realizing the oneness of life, to maintain the precepts, and to embody the Three Tenets of Not-Knowing, Bearing Witness, and Taking Action. **Our vision** is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony with each other and the earth, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized and compassion flows unhindered.

*Founding Abbot:* Taizan Maezumi Roshi

*Abbot 1995-1999:* Roshi Bernard Glassman

*Abbot Emeritus 1999-2019:* Roshi Egyoku Nakao

*The Seats:* Abbot, Sensei Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen;

*Head/Resident Teacher,* Roshi Egyoku Nakao

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## Sangha Rites of Passage

### New Members

*David Shealy*

*David Watson*

*Erin Joyful-Heart Moore*

*Fernanda Schwartz-Hughes*

*George Vamos*

*Hanna Nelson*

*Jacqueline Drummond-Lewis*

*Kenton Buck*

*Lina Keiju Bahn*

*Ryan Emslie*

*Sacha Greenfield*

*Trevor Tavares*

### Shared Stewardship Entering

*Gemma Soji Cubero del Barrio - Intro to Zazen Instructor*

*Geri Meibo Bryan - Intro to Zazen Instructor*

*Harlan Jindo Pace - Disaster Preparedness Circle Member*

### In Memoriam

*Sensei Sister Rose Mary Myoan Dougherty, SSND*

*1939 - February 28, 2019*

*Charles Jinko Duran*

*March 7, 1929 - July 23, 2019*

### Denkai

*August 17, 2019*

*Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert*

*Jitsujo Tina Gauthier*

### Jukai

*June 23, 2019*

*Bob Kanzan Swan*

*Brian Sotetsu Huff*

*Christiaan Ekan Manno*

*Gemma Soji Cubero del Barrio*

*September 8, 2019*

*Charles Jinko Duran*

*(Posthumously)*

*September 15, 2019*

*Erin Joyful-Heart Moore*

*Harlan Jindo Pace*

*Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez*

*Lina Keiju Bahn*

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