



# Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

## How can you purify the undefiled?

by Katherine Senshin Griffith



*"The 50th patriarch was the priest T'ien-t'ung Rujing. He studied with Setcho. Setcho asked, "Mr. Jing, how can you purify that which has never been defiled?" The Master spent more than a year reflecting on this. Suddenly, he was awakened, and said "I have hit upon that which is undefiled."*

*—Denkoroku*

As we spring from the Year of the Tiger into the Year of the

Water Rabbit, we might be reflecting on how we might improve going forward. We make personal goals and the ZCLA board, staff and senior leadership attends a day-long planning meeting. The year of the Rabbit is said to be one where the seeds of our past efforts shall finally bear fruit whose sweetness is determined by the purity of our heart's intent.

But how can we measure the purity of our heart? And working with the question posed to Master Rujing, how might we look at our lives from a more profound viewpoint?

Master Rujing (1163-1228) was the 16th generation descendant of Huineng. Dogen Zenji found Master Rujing just as he was about to leave China in despair at not having found a true teacher. Always excelling in Zazen, Master Rujing is traditionally thought of as the originator of the terms *Shikantaza* (just sitting) and *Shinjin satsuraku* (casting off of body and mind). What would our Zen Practice be like today if Dogen Zenji had not found Master Rujing?

At age 17, Master Rujing abandoned doctoral studies to study Zen with Master Setcho's Sangha, where he asked to be the sanitation officer. This was a position of some bureaucratic importance in large Buddhist monasteries in Song China, where the number of residents could reach one or two thousand. The main duty of the manager was to oversee the emptying of toilet pots and the routine clean-

ing of the facilities. Master Rujing probably had strong ideas about how the job should be done.

Master Setcho asked, "Mr. Jing, how can you purify that which has never been defiled?"

"Jing," in Rujing's name means "like purity." Essentially, Setcho was asking Mr. Purity or Mr. Clean, "how can you purify that which has never been defiled? If you can answer that, then I will appoint you to be the sanitation officer." Master Rujing was at a loss, so Master Setcho was right on target! How can something that's never been soiled be cleaned? Master Rujing did not answer for more than a year! Master Setcho then told him, "If you can climb out of your old rut, you will be free. Then you will be able to answer!"

That inspired Master Rujing to investigate with all his strength and determination. Suddenly, one day, he was awakened. After a year of not getting it clarified, there was no more mind and body to shed. He went to his teacher and said "I have hit upon that which is undefiled." Even then, a spot of dirt appeared. So, before he finished speaking, Master Setcho hit him. Master Rujing broke out in a sweat, bowed and was approved. He had abandoned his body and truly realized he was intrinsically clean and had never been subject to impurity. This is why he later said, "The practice of Zen is the dropping off of mind and body."

Coincidentally, my Dharma name Senshin means "Purifying the Heart" and my name Katherine means "Pure"

*(Continued on page 2)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE ... and more!

- 3-4 The Four Bodhisattva Vows by Sensei Kaigen
- 5-6 On Breathing Practice by Dharma Holder Gessho
- 7 International Jukai
- 8-9 Thank You and Farewell, Mary
- 10 2022 Fall Practice Commitments
- 11 Does a Dog have Buddha Nature by Ellen Jagosz

## HOW CAN YOU PURIFY... *(Continued from page 1)*

and has been associated with the Greek *katharos*. Catharsis is the purification or purgation of the emotions that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension. Waking up to one's intrinsic nature is a huge spiritual catharsis.

I received jukai in 1994 at a weeklong sesshin in the New York Catskill Mountains. I sat with my name all week but didn't know the Japanese translation until the last day. Upon giving me my rakusu, my preceptor told me the meaning and asked if I ever felt impure. At that moment, I was so pure of heart that I answered with a fully felt "NO!" This made everyone laugh and threw off my preceptor who quietly added "well if ever you do, let this name inspire you."

---

### *What is the rut you need to climb out of?*

---

Of course, I, to this day, have many impure moments, numerous shortcomings I need to address, despite my intrinsic unstained nature. It's so easy to see what is unclean, the things needing "fixing." Maybe we are wired that way, because from early on that's what we notice. Little kids notice the one dirty spot on the rug. We don't notice all the ways our bodies function perfectly, just when things go awry. We have no problem dwelling on the defiled. News outlets try to out awfulize each other in their coverage of all the defilement in the world.

We want to fix things, clean up the mess, save democracy, stop the war, right the wrong, save the planet. Each of us might want to be the "sanitation manager" of our particular sphere. But it's a fine line between wanting to clean things up and thinking you are the One in control.

By giving his all, Master Rujing found his way out of his rut. Prince Shakyamuni leapt over his palace walls, leaving behind his privileged life to unrelentingly seek the Great Truth. What is keeping you from hitting upon that which is undefiled? What is the rut you need to climb out of, the nest you are too comfortable being in? What "stains" are you excluding from your Buddha field? What are you trying to control or what is it that you can't let go of?

Master Rujing's question is still so enlivening! To open us up, we might apply its paradoxical format to our own deluded constructions, such as: How can you free what has never been bound? How can you improve what is completely perfect? How can you cling to what can't be grasped? How can you silence what has no sound? How can you heal what has never been sick? How can you attain what is already yours? How can you be worthy of what you already are?

Whatever your rut or delusion is, try formulating it in a question within this Boundless aspect. You can even give yourself a name, when doing so, like Ms. Perfection, Mr. Know-it-all, Ms. Attached, Mr. Unworthy, Mr. Ritual Fundamentalist, Ms. Control Freak or the all-encompassing: He Who Thinks He's the Center of the Universe.

In the preface to the Women's Lineage, we chant:

*The lovely and the holy Perfection of Wisdom gives light.  
Unstained the entire world cannot stain her.  
She is a source of light and from everyone in the triple  
world, she removes darkness.*

How can you purify that which is so Unstained the entire world cannot stain her? Is this what Master Rujing grocked? Like Prajna Paramita, did he find the clear knowledge of his own being of all Dharmas? All dropped away. No stained, unstained. Just This.

We can still look at these two aspects of this one Life: the unstained and the stained. The "do you ever feel impure?" "NO!" and the "well, if you do let this inspire you." This seeming dichotomy is reconciled through our Bodhi-sattva vows. It takes the Unstained, Numberless, Inexhaustible, Boundless, Limitless, Unsurpassable dimension and unites it with the myriad beneficial actions we need to take. Messes will happen over and over again. There will always be more to clean and improve upon. And at the same time, things are perfect just as they are right now. When we resonate fully with this endless dimension of our True Nature, then we have the spiritual stamina to be as beneficial as we can no matter what, moment by endless moment, fully accepting that it is an ongoing commitment – lifetime after lifetime.

Master Rujing's dedication to Zen was his way of repaying his debt to the ancestors. He always encouraged people to just do zazen, utilizing that commitment in everything they do; and to make the truth foremost, not getting caught up in the fashion of the times, but continue to investigate the ancient style. He said, "The important thing is to be committed to the Way when you practice Zen."

Let's all renew our full-hearted commitment, reflecting on the words Master Rujing spoke while setting the flames to Elder Yi's funeral pyre:

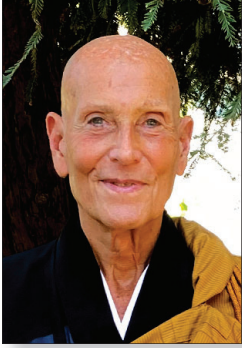
*How rapid the flames rise in the passing wind, into the Great  
Potential – worlds innumerable, as every dust, without reciprocation.*

---

*Sensei Daiki Senshin is the ZCLA Head Teacher.*

# The Four Bodhisattva Vows

by Jonathan Kaigen Levy



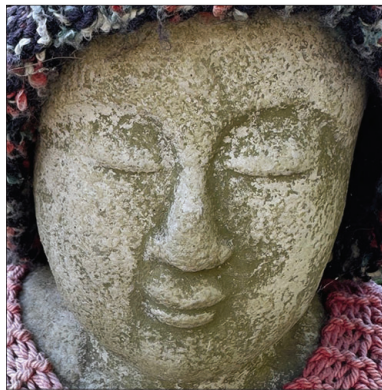
*"A bodhisattva is a person who lives by vow instead of by karma. As we grow up, we learn a system of preferences and values from the culture around us, which we use to evaluate the world and choose action. This is living by karma. In contrast, a bodhisattva lives by vow. Vow is like a magnet or compass that shows us the direction toward the Buddha."*  
—Living by Vow, Shohaku Okumura

Numberless beings, I vow to serve them.  
Inexhaustible delusions, I vow to end them.  
Boundless dharmas, I vow to practice them.  
Unsurpassable Buddha Way, I vow to embody it.

I have chanted these Four Bodhisattva Vows countless times throughout years of Zen practice. This year, I decided to offer a series of four classes in which participants would chant the vows both in English, and in Japanese. We investigated each vow through dharma teachings and discussions, the aim being to uncover the ways our individual feelings and beliefs form concepts about how we would like the vows to operate in our personal lives. And, since these ideas and personal stories may often remain hidden from ourselves, they still manage to color our vows. Our focus was how these self-created concepts actually work to separate us from the Oneness of the bodhisattva path.

What follows is a description of what we encountered in our classes:

The Four Great Bodhisattva Vows probably originated in China in the sixth century. They may have derived from what is believed to be the oldest Buddhist manuscript in existence, *The Astasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, or Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines. Concerned with the conduct of a bodhisattva, the sutra stresses the realization and attainment of the Perfection of Wisdom, the realization of "thusness" or "suchness," and the abandonment of self-serving views and attachments to any phenomenon – the realization of emptiness.



1) *Shu jō mu hen sei gan do*, translated from Japanese - Numberless beings, I vow to save/serve them.

Immediately a question is thrust before us: Just how will we go about saving all these numberless beings? The class thought it sounded like a foolishly impossible task. They asked, "If we already know the futility of it, then why on earth would we do it?"

Buddha's answer: *"And though I thus liberate countless beings, not a single being is liberated. And why not? Subhuti, a bodhisattva who creates the perception of a self, or a soul, cannot be called a bodhisattva."* —The Diamond Sutra translated by Red Pine

"Not a single being is liberated? If that's true, then what is the first vow really about?" they asked.

Wow. The quote really stirred things up for the class. That's good.

Chan Master Dajian Hui-neng explained, *"Good friends, please recite after me: The beings in my own mind are infinite; I vow to liberate them. The beings in the mind are delusion, deception, immorality, jealousy, malice; these states are all beings. Liberate yourself through your own essential nature; this is called 'true liberation.'"*

This shook the class up even further. "You mean to say that it's all in my mind, all those numberless beings? What about my family, my boss, the insect, the tree? All in my mind? It sounds so self centered," they replied.

Master Hui-neng answered: *"You are saving them all in your own mind. No matter how numberless, it isn't Hui-neng, or you who does the saving. Every being you can think of saves themselves with their own enlightened nature. Those who are saved like this, are truly liberated. This is the power of vowing."*

2) *Bon nō mu jin sei gan dan* – Inexhaustible delusions, I vow to end them.

These are the passions that disturb and distress us. Again, the second vow is all about our own minds; and it expresses our aspiration to "cut off the mind road," to stop the incessant chatter of "me, my, mine." In the silence that follows, we turn naturally to the well-being of others.

But, what if our deluded minds aren't a barrier to enlightenment?

(Continued on page 4)



## FOUR BODHISATTVA VOWS (Continued from page 3)

"The ultimate paradox of Zen liberation is said to lie in the fact that one attains enlightenment only in and through delusion itself, never apart from it. Enlightenment consists not so much in replacing, as in dealing with or negotiating delusion."

—*Dogen on Meditation and Thinking: A Reflection on His View of Zen*, Hee-Jin Kim

What if our delusions are the very path to enlightenment?

Courageously, the bodhisattva studies his/her delusions, and how they present in their body and mind. Awakening is about not being obsessed by them, or acting them out. Then, we can shed light on the shadows of our conditioned self, and we can act in the light of helpfulness to all beings. Those who take the bodhisattva vow make one simple commitment: Put others first, holding nothing back for themselves, even one's own enlightenment, all for the sake of others.

Sometimes the blankets come off my wife at night. There is no thought in my mind that she is cold, yet, I just reach over and pull the blankets back over her. It's almost an impersonal affair in that this is what needs to happen in the moment. It's just an instinct to take care of her. But, if I am carrying into the situation something that is extra: this idea that I'm the one who's going to be helpful, I've already created separation.

3) *Hō mon mu ryō sei gan gaku* – Boundless Dharma gates, I vow to enter them.

These teaching "gates" are infinite opportunities for us, to play within the diversity of dharma openings that occur every moment in our everyday lives. When we can be open to them they provide us countless opportunities for endless realization of the bodhisattva way. The sounds of the rain tapping on the roof, smiling at the sight of a golden flower, the touch of a loving partner, the whole universe itself, all become chances for liberation; but only if we are ready to completely lose ourselves, to disappear. We enter these gateways to awaken to our delusions, this is the process of fully knowing ourselves. This is devotion to the creative joy and art of the bodhisattva, engaged in endless play, expressed in the practice of vow.

4) *Butsu do mu jo sei gan jo* – Unsurpassable Buddha Way, I vow to embody/be it.

Finally, we vow to walk the Eightfold Path of the Buddha as vigorously and as nobly as he did. This is the Way that begins with right views: clear insight into the insubstantial nature of the self and all things, and extending to the uniqueness of each individual being.

So, the Buddha's Way is unsurpassable, and yet, we foolishly keep vowing to become it, even when we get it wrong. And yet, this path contains everything we need, nothing is lacking. We practice it with our entire being, and that is why we can say "we vow to be it." And we can honestly and wholeheartedly say this because we are already Buddha, right from the start. Universal Buddhahood, Interdependence, and Radical Nonduality; this is our faith.



Dogen Zenji said, "There is no need to change our existing body and mind, for the direct realization of the Way is neither to be bound by old viewpoints, nor to create new ones. The Buddha Way is to not look aside. It is to be with whatever we encounter right here now."

At first, we may see the path as merely placating our personal struggles and our pains, but as we proceed a deeper understanding grows of the depth, the mystery, and the wonder of the Way. We learn that it is not about "me," but about a magnificent "us" that encompasses the whole world.

In this very moment we have the opportunity to fulfill our Bodhisattva vows. After making this Great Vow, you, the Bodhisattva, belongs to the entire universe. The vow itself possesses cosmic significance; the vow itself is a cosmic force.

Are you ready to taste the flavor of truth, to take the vow to enter every experience, every dharma gate? I can't tell you what you'll encounter, but I suspect it won't contain any of your old ideas, things, or people. You will discover life itself, vividly appearing to you. And you will know for yourself, like the Buddha, that you, and I, the great earth, the stars, the moon, and all beings, are naturally and simultaneously awakened.

Master Dogen said it best: "This is the mindset that Buddha after Buddha has transmitted. We together with all beings, are now receptive to hearing the true Dharma, accepting the true Dharma, and attaining the Way. Surrender, surrender to the Vow."

*Sensei Kaigen is a ZCLA priest who recently moved to Prescott, AZ.*

# On Breathing Practice

by Lorraine Gessho Kumpf



When we take the Introductory class at ZCLA, we start with posture and breathing. In my early experience at ZCLA, I saw our various practices as a progression through a curriculum: you start with counting the breath, then follow the breath, a teacher starts you on Mu, then dharmakaya koans, then the various other koan texts, etc. I expressed this once to Dharma Holder Goshin

Naylor, who challenged my linearity by telling me, “You know of course, that for hundreds, probably thousands of years before there was koan practice or other practices we use, there was just breathing.” Of course, a study curriculum does exist, but breathing, he said, is also a complete practice, and one that is really limitless. This comment led me to ask, What kind of breathing practice did Shakyamuni Buddha teach his bhikkhus?

*The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*<sup>1</sup> is part of the Pali Canon, the oldest records we have of the Buddha’s life. It contains the Buddha’s “Anapanasamyutta,” or “Connected Discourses on Breathing.” The first fascicle is titled “ONE THING,” and the first part is called “The One Thing.” Thus I get the feeling something fundamental is being taught. Here is a very short excerpt:

At Savatthi, there the Blessed One said this:

“Bhikkhus, one thing, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit. What is the one thing? Mindfulness of breathing. And how, bhikkhus, is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit?

“Here, bhikkhus: a bhikkhu, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down. Having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body, and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindfully he breathes in, just mindfully he breathes out.

“Breathing in long, he knows ‘I breathe in long;’ breathing out long, he knows ‘I breathe out long.’ Breathing in short, he knows ‘I breathe in short.’

“He trains thus: ‘Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out.’ He trains thus: ‘Calming the bodily

formations, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Calming the bodily formations, I will breathe out.’

“He trains thus: ‘Experiencing rapture, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing rapture, I will breathe out.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing happiness, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing happiness, I will breathe out.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing mental formations, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing mental formations, I will breathe out.’ He trains thus: ‘Calming mental formations, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Calming mental formations, I will breathe out.’

“He trains thus: ‘Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Experiencing the mind, I will breathe out.’

[This pattern repeats with]

“He trains thus: ‘Gladdening the mind...’

“He trains thus: ‘Concentrating the mind...’

“He trains thus: ‘Liberating the mind...’

“He trains thus: ‘Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe in.’ He trains thus: ‘Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe out.’

[This pattern repeats with]

“He trains thus: ‘Contemplating fading away...’

“He trains thus: ‘Contemplating cessation...’

“He trains thus: ‘Contemplating relinquishment...’

“It is, Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way that it is of great fruit and benefit.”

These breathing meditations concern the Four Contemplations: Contemplation of the Body (whole body, calming the body), Contemplation of Feelings (rapture, happiness, mental formations), Contemplation of Mind (the mind itself, gladdening the mind, concentrating the mind, liberating the mind), and Contemplation of Phenomena (the processes of extinguishing or ending life—impermanence, fading away, cessation, and relinquishment).

If we look at the Four Contemplations (body, feelings, mind, phenomena) from the standpoint of the Eightfold Path, they map onto Right View, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. Thus this breathing practice guides the intention of practitioners: it plants and cultivates the seeds of right understanding, and trains the body-mind to be directed toward, and to habituate

<sup>1</sup>*The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000. Chapter X, 54 “Anapanasamyutta” (“Connected Discourses on Breathing”), Wisdom Publications, pp.1765-6 and ff.

(Continued on page 6)

## ON BREATHING PRACTICE *(Continued from page 5)*

oneself to, the fundamental teachings of the Path. It leads one away from “unwholesome states.” The Discourses continue to expand on this beginning text, explicating what exactly are the great fruits and benefits of the practice, along with other aspects of the meditation.

The amount of repetition in these discourses (which is barely represented here) may seem mind-numbing. But consider: these teachings were not written down. These sacred words were repeated over and over, generation after generation: it is the content of training. Also, all spiritual traditions use repetition so that the sacred words become embedded in the mind and bones of practitioners. Repetition impresses on people that something powerful is being said. Finally, in this, as in other preliterate societies, there is an affinity for memorization. So memorizing the many fascicles of these teachings was a main mode of study.

---

*If you completely follow your breath, each breath is the real life of everything.*

---

What do we understand of these teachings? It’s a huge task to translate the words we attribute to the Buddha’s teachings. I’d say it’s impossible even for scholars to know about the context and lived experience of the ancients. All words as we use them have a feeling tone as well as a field of meaning and usage, and the properties of word meaning and grammar are constantly changing, even in contemporary usage. What we have with the Discourses is centuries of translation through many different societies. Even the earliest texts we have are distant from the context of the Buddha. For example, Shakyamuni Buddha himself did not speak Pali—it is speculated that he spoke some version of Magada dialect—and it was approximately 300 years after the Buddha’s death before his words were written down.

Yet for all the traps of time and translation, the ancient breathing practice works for us. “Experiencing the whole body, I breathe in” is as fundamental as our physiology. It works because we live the same basic life, the same basic suffering, generation after generation. Practices of the ancients resonate for me because it is my life.

One modern Zen teacher, Vietnamese teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, used practices that are reminiscent of the Buddha’s method. His mindful breathing guided meditations were central to his teaching, as I learned from having attended practice periods with him.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s form of breathing meditation could be traditional, such as “Experiencing the whole body, I breathe in. Experiencing the whole body, I breathe out.” As you may know, he also spent his life as a peace-

maker, working to counter violence and hatred. He used his form of mindful breathing to address social and psychological needs, for example: “Breathing in, I know that anger is in me. Breathing out, I take good care of my anger.” or “Seeing my father as a suffering child, I breathe in. Seeing my mother as a suffering child, I breathe out.” or “Contemplating a person in hatred, I breathe in. Seeing the suffering of that person, I breathe out.” Thich Nhat Hanh translated the form into what he saw was needed.

Here is another approach to breathing practice, illustrated in a story from India (5th Century B.C.E.), of Bodhidharma’s teacher Prajnatarā<sup>2</sup>. Prajnatarā was known as a master teacher, and she<sup>3</sup> was invited to visit the ruler of a southern Indian kingdom. This ruler had a strong aspiration to practice Buddhism, and he wanted her to come and chant the sutras, so she came with her attendant.

But when the time for chanting came, only the attendant chanted—Prajnatarā didn’t open her mouth. Later, when she was asked about it, she said that she’d been concentrating on her breathing: when she exhaled, she became one with exhalation; when she inhaled, she became one with inhalation. And in this way she was expounding the Dharma. She had practiced deep samadhi with her breathing—as she said, “the way breathing should be practiced. This is the same as chanting the sutras the way they should be chanted.” Prajnatarā’s breathing was a complete practice. If you completely follow your breath, each breath is the real life of everything: by just breathing, Prajnatarā was expounding the Dharma perfectly. On the surface, the function of breathing practice here seems different from the Buddha’s, but perhaps it is not—what do you think?

Breathing practices in India and in the subsequent Buddhist traditions can appear in different forms and through the lens of different cultures. The practices seem to be fundamental as means for quieting the mind and developing concentration. In *Connected Discourses on Breathing*, the Buddha’s methods give explicit guidance in the core teachings and aspiration toward right understanding. Though other teachers’ breathing practices may look different, all use the breath as an entryway to the harmony of body, breath, and mind.

---

<sup>2</sup>Osasa, Koryu. 1976. “Bodhidharma’s Pacifying the Mind,” in Maezumi, H.T. and B. Glassman, eds. *On Zen Practice*, Zen Center of Los Angeles, ch.6, p.73.

<sup>3</sup>Prajnatarā has been referred to as a woman and as a man. There is apparently no definitive record.



## International Jukai

This fall, two of Roshi Egyoku's recently transmitted preceptors held their first Jukai ceremonies. Preceptor Christina Tchoren Carvalho gave her first Jukai at the Empty Hands Circle in Campinas, Brazil. Sensei Eihei Peter Levitt gave Jukai to his students for the first time through our lineage at his Salt Spring Zen Circle on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, Canada. They share their reflections.

### Jukai on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada

by Eihei Peter Levitt



*Left: Sensei Eihei Peter Levitt, his wife, Shirley Graham, Seien Toji Pure Garden Compassionate Companion, and between them Compassionate Stream Winter Stillness Jiryū Toshī, Illuminating Way Peaceful Sky Shōdō Heikū.*

A beautiful post sesshin powerful day of Zaike Tokudo—Staying at Home, Attaining the Way—as I conveyed Vows and Precepts to two other bodhisattvas dedicated to freeing beings from suffering in our troubled world. Dogen wrote, it takes a buddha and a buddha, and today's confirmation of these students' dedication to live awake and in service to the lives and freedom of all beings was just wonderful. I feel so grateful to be able to fully complete this process of intimate study and practice together with my students. It is no small thing. The heart of zen found just right there. May they all live long and serve well.

### Jukai in Campinas, Brazil

by Christina Tchoren Carvalho

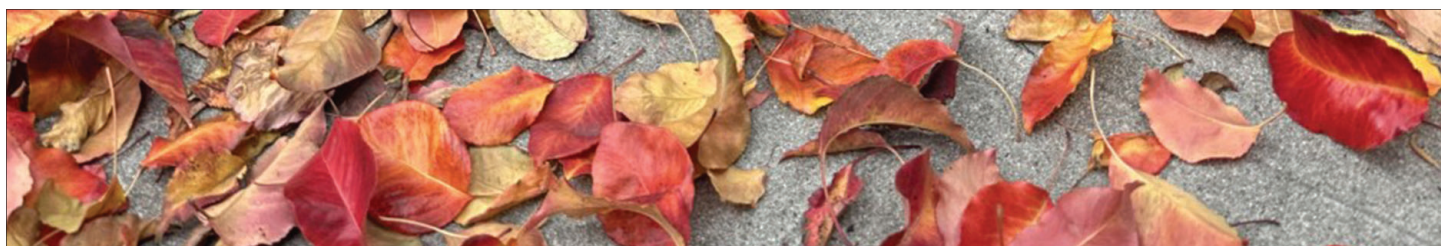


It happened in November on two consecutive days, as we had two distinct groups: four people who were already preparing before the pandemic hit, and three people who joined during the pandemic (online for 2 years and hybrid now).

Preparations were a challenge that made me wonder how the teachers “of old” started a Sangha from scratch in a different country... Having to translate all documents; teaching the forms single-handedly; pondering about the absence of many ceremony accoutrements (which my government all but forbids to import).

We have reflected together through our “Precepts and Climate Crisis” course last year, then a shorter “Precepts Review” this year.

New baby buddhas Kōun, Kakuon, Gyokuzan, Seikai, Hongaku, Myōkan, and Soitchi are happy, committed, and humbled by the deep sense of genuinely joining a spiritual lineage.



# Thank You and Farewell, Mary!

*Business Manager Mary Rios recently retired after 21 years of devoted service to the Zen Center. Mary arrived at the time when Shared Stewardship was being established and her position as*



*Business Manager was created. She has been instrumental in countless ways in maintaining the safety and integrity of the buildings and grounds of the Zen Center. Through the years, she has been a caring mentor and caretaker for Sangha members. Her serene and practical advice has been sought and appreciated by all in our community. Sensei Senshin interviewed her for the Water Wheel.*

**WW:** What first brought you to ZCLA?

**Mary:** My close friend and work colleague Robert Yanez invited me and my daughter Kathy to his jukai, where he was given the dharma name Heart Mountain by Roshi Egyoku. Then later on I went with him to Roshi and Eberhard's commitment party in 2000. Both times, I was very impressed with the energy of this place and also the positive effect Zen practice had on Heart Mountain.

**WW:** How did you become our Business Manager?

**Mary:** Heart-Mountain died suddenly on December 31, 2000. The Zen Center was one of the beneficiaries of his trust and I was his executor trustee. Roshi Egyoku, Dokai Dickenson and Ensho Berge were wonderful in handling all the funeral arrangements.

At that time, the Zen Center had just started the Executive Circle and was working towards getting more structure and formal protocols in the financial sphere. I was asked to apply for the position of Business Manager. I had a lot of the experience needed for the job. I had been an office manager with an insurance company, had dealt with mailings and postal regulations, taken accounting

classes, run my own businesses, and had been a secretary in a legal department of a big organization.

**WW:** What have been the highlights of your time here?

**Mary:** The people! Especially the ones who have passed. Like Reiju Wasserman. I can still hear her laughter. And Charles (Duran), Senseis Daishin (Buksbaze), Kodo (Boyd) and Ensho (Berge). I think of all the lessons I learned from the ones I was close to. It's a reminder that the relationships between people are so important.

**WW:** You were considered one of our "essential workers" during the Pandemic closure and commuted all the way from your home in Hemet to keep things running. How was that for you?



*Robert Diaz, Sensei Faith-Mind, and Mary busy taking care of the ZCLA grounds and buildings.*

**Mary:** Of course, it was hard not seeing the rest of the staff. It was like a war zone. I didn't know what would happen to the Zen Center. But we skillfully shifted to Zoom, and our wonderful members paid even more to help sustain us. The staff worked harder than ever, and we even launched our new website. And I applied for the government's non-profit PPP grant and that really helped.

**WW:** What makes ZCLA special?

**Mary:** The members first and foremost. The physical grounds have an energy that comes from the intention of all who practice here. You can feel the energy when you come through the gates that is very uplifting.

Twice we have had firefighters who have come to check on things and they were really drawn in by that energetic. They've asked to come inside. Once a housing inspector asked if he could eat his lunch in the yard. That feeling of oneness that the practitioners bring in stays behind.



*Roshi Egyoku acknowledges Mary at the 2006 Sangha Appreciation event.*

*(Continued on page 9)*



## THANK YOU, MARY *(Continued from page 8)*

**WW:** How do you see the future of ZCLA?

**Mary:** It's a natural process to turn things over, to pass the baton. The senior students have a lot of knowledge they need to pass on. We have a lot of new younger students who have a lot of energy and things to offer. It's important that ZCLA stay vibrant and not outdated.

**WW:** How do you see the new division of your position into three, with Robert Diaz, Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez and our current remote bookkeeper Bedford Lally taking over what you used to do?

**Mary:** I am very grateful to the Zen Center and the Board for making the decision to work with people we already have on staff and training them in new responsibilities. I think they all will be great.

Both Robert and Myoki really care what happens to ZCLA and want to see its continued success. I tell them that the



*Program Steward Katrina Myoki Beltran (left) will work an additional day as Administrator/Office Support. Facilities Supervisor Robert Diaz (right) will have added management responsibilities as Property Manager.*



*Day Group 2006. Front row: Tom Yudo Burger, Ty Jotai Webb, Roshi Egyoku, Mary, Rev. Gary Koan Janka; Back row: Rev. Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Rev. Evi Gemmon Ketterer, and John Plum-Hermit Swanger.*

Zen Center is an entity that needs to be protected. To be on staff here is about more than just the salary. And they both have that spirit.

**WW:** We are so grateful for your many years of kind, diligent, and dedicated service.

**Mary:** I am grateful to everyone at ZCLA, especially Roshi Egyoku and the Board for giving me the opportunity to be the Business Manager. It has been a real pleasure and my good fortune to work at a place every week with people who feel such goodwill towards everyone. Unlike in politics or big corporations, everyone here is working for the benefit of all human life and sentient beings. Working here has been a very enriching experience.

**WW:** Do you have any plans for retirement?

**Mary:** No. I'm just letting myself make this change. I'm catching up on things at home. I just want to be still and see what comes up.

**WW:** You sound very Zen!



*Executive Circle 2009: Mary, Rosa Ando Martinez, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Tom Pine-Ocean Cleary, and Darla Myoho Fjeld.*



*Deceased Sangha member and donor Robert Heart-Mountain Yanez who was instrumental in bringing Mary to ZCLA.*

## 2022 Fall Practice Commitments

We acknowledge the following 144+ practitioners who made formal practice commitments for the 2022 Fall Practice Period.

### ZCLA

Alan Taigen Turton  
 April True Flower Ford  
 Arun Narecode Radhakrishnan  
 Baisen Plum River Alexa Klein-Mayer  
 Ben Ehrlich  
 Beth Hanna  
 Beverly Brown  
 Bill Tetsui Press  
 Bob Kanzan Swan  
 Carol Ann Flowing Mountain Schmitt  
 Conrad Butsugen Romo  
 Cynthia Romanowski  
 Darla Myoho Fjeld  
 Dave Fushin Watson  
 David Shealy  
 Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen  
 Diane Enju Katz  
 Donna Jakuen Buell  
 Dwanna Ekan Willis  
 Eberhard Konin Fetz  
 Elise Gibney  
 Ellen Jagosz  
 Fernanda Myōkan Schwartz Hughes  
 Frank Genku Martinez  
 Gemma Soji Cubero Del Barrio  
 George Mukei Horner  
 Geri Meiho Bryan  
 Glenn Gikai Davis  
 Hannah Seishin Sowd  
 Jack Kuykendall  
 Jenny Jusen Bright  
 Jessica Andrea  
 Jessica Oetsu Page  
 Jim Jindo Hagar  
 Jitsujo Angyo Gauthier  
 John Kyogen Rosania  
 Jonathan Kaigen Levy  
 Julie Getsuan Suhr  
 Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez  
 Katherine Senshin Griffith  
 Kathy Myoan Solomon  
 Lorraine Gessho Kumpf  
 Maggie Agbo  
 Mak Muan King  
 Mark Gensha Miller  
 Marley Jakuan Dowling  
 Matthew Archer  
 Michael Jinsen Davis  
 Mike Radice  
 Nan Reishin Merritt  
 Patti Muso Giggans  
 Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher  
 Rebecca Waldorf

Reeb Kaizen Venners  
 Richard Taishin Schulof  
 Roberta Myodo Brehm  
 Robert Dharma-Gate Evans  
 Rosa Ando Martinez  
 Ryan Sozan Schneider  
 Sacha Joshin Greenfield  
 Sandra Seiju Goodenough  
 Steve Larson  
 Tim Taikan Zamora  
 Toby Rider  
 Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert  
 Tracy Lin Payne  
 Wendy Egyoku Nakao  
**Bambushain Zen Center  
 (Aachen, Germany)**  
 Andreas Seijun Rampelt  
 Christian Rōthleitner  
 Diana Mowat  
 Eva Jiun Neumann (also ZCLA)  
 Stephan Jackobs  
**Empty Hands Circle  
 (Campinas, SP, Brazil)**  
 Bruno Fernandes  
 Calebe Costa  
 Camilla Abenhousen  
 Caroline Cunha  
 Christina Tchoren Carvalho (also ZCLA)  
 Geraldo Fonseca  
 Gustavo Foschini  
 Igor Vieira  
 Jacqueline Cabrezio  
 Jion Carmen Ferreira  
 Lucas Souza  
 Maria Vargas  
 Sebastiao Ferreira  
 Soitchi Daniel Guerreiro  
 Tania Palhares  
**Lincroft Zen Sangha  
 (New Jersey)**  
 Hank Steinberg  
 Mark Hougetsu Buede  
 Jimmy Abercromby (also ZCLA)  
 Kathy Koshin Novack (also ZCLA)  
 Marinel Mukherjee  
 Peter Nyodo Ott (also ZCLA)  
 James Ryushin Carney  
**Monday Night Meditation Group  
 (Pasadena, CA)**  
 Anna Keim  
 Betty Jiei Cole (also ZCLA)  
 Erin Joyful-Heart Moore (also ZCLA)  
 Jan Rutiz

### San Luis Obispo Zen Circle (CA) & California Mens Colony (CMC)

Earl A. (CMC)  
 Benjamin Ballard  
 Mark Shōgen Bloodgood (also ZCLA)  
 Edward C. (CMC)  
 Sal C. (CMC)  
 Mark Seishin Cadiz (San Quentin)  
 John Chastain  
 Harry Hōetsu Heck  
 Joe Johnston  
 Freddy L. (CMC)  
 Corey Ryūjin McIntyre (also ZCLA)  
 Derek Ō Corrain  
 Geoff Kanjō O'Quest  
 Anthony P. (CMC)  
 Christopher P. (CMC)  
 Michael R. (CMC)  
 Rachael Rayburn  
 Russel Rinkai Rayburn  
 Mark Shefrin  
 Salvatore Kusala Solorio  
 Steve Sumi  
 Michael Tevlin  
 Clé Van Beurden  
 Deborah West  
 Gary Kōshin West  
 Jeffrey Y. (CMC)  
 David Zoller  
**Westchester Zen Circle  
 (Los Angeles, CA)** (all also ZCLA)  
 Craig Daigetsu Brandau  
 DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass  
 Jacqueline Drummond Lewis  
 Julia Seirin Norstrand  
 Kipp Ryodo Hawley  
 Lane Kyojin Igoudin  
 Martin Nakell  
 Nem Etsugen Bajra  
**Wild River Zen Circle  
 (Nevada City, CA)**  
 Alexa Hauser  
 Janis O'Donnell  
 Jeanne Dokai Dickenson (also ZCLA)  
 John Martin  
 Kenneth Watanabe  
 Latisha Sullivan  
 Laurence Aitken  
 Lisa Stein  
 Peter Ramsey  
 Tony Yep  
 Viktor Yakovlev



## Does a Dog have Buddha Nature?

by Ellen Jagosz



Recently, I heard some dharma talks that stimulated questions in me. Does a dog have Buddha nature? How does an animal process trauma? What common ground is there between us and other living beings? This memory shed some light for me.

Many years ago, my son had a beautiful white shepherd/coyote mix puppy named Foxy. Full of spirit, she always found ways to escape our backyard. One fourth of July, frightened by the fireworks, she escaped and didn't come back. Upon discovering her disappearance the next morning, we made every effort to find her: asking neighbors, posting missing pet flyers, visiting animal shelters, and driving around the neighborhood. After three weeks, I made one last visit to a nearby shelter. After such a long time, I thought it unlikely that I would find her, but hoped she would have found a new home if she wasn't there.

At the shelter, I recognized Foxy with other dogs behind a chain-link fence. Dirty and thin, she still had her red mesh collar and dog tags, along with a dingy white



*Foxy*

nylon rope tied around her neck. She was next to the fence but when I called her several times, she just stared off in another direction. Not acknowledging her name or me, she seemed detached from what was going on around her. I kept talking to her and calling her name, until finally she looked at me and her eyes changed. She started to whimper and then let out a long howl. She continued to howl and soon had all the dogs howling with her. Once released, she was quiet and insisted on sitting on my lap the whole way home.

We were grateful that we found our dog alive. But we could only guess what she experienced in the three weeks she was missing. The dog that returned home with me had changed. She was very fearful and never left the yard without us again. On every Independence Day for the rest of her life, she was with us and always insisted on climbing onto our laps when the fireworks began.

This experience "poked a hole" in the idea of separation between myself and other living beings around me.

---

*Ellen is a ZCLA member.*

## A Heartfelt "Thank You!"

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

To **Sensei Katherine Senshin Griffith** for leading the Fall Practice Period Circle and Public-Face-to-Face;

To **Sensei Darla Myoho Fjeld, Sensei George Mukei Horner, and Rev. Jitsujo Gauthier** for leading the Founders Services;

To **Roshi Kipp Ryodo Hawley, Sensei Faith-Mind Thoresen and Dharma Holder Lorraine Gessho Kumpf** for leading the Autumn Wind Sesshin; and to **DH Gessho** for leading Tangaryo and fixing the lunch;

To **Dylan Banto Neal, Chris Genzan Hackman, Nancy Teiju Marquez and Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez** for their Personal Practice talks;

To **John Kyogen Rosania, Erin Patrice Joyful-Heart Moore, Tim Taikan Zamora, and Gemma Soji Cubero** for leading the Day of Reflection;

To **Roshi Egyoku** for officiating John Daishin Buksbazen's memorial;

To **Sensei Myoho, Byakuren Judith Ragir, and Sensei Senshin** for their Dharma talks and the beautiful quilt donation to the Zen Center from **Byakuren**;

To **Sensei Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, Sensei Jonathan Kaigen Levy, Dharma Holder Nem Etsugen Bajra, Sensei Myoho, Rev. Jitsujo, and Sensei Senshin**, for leading the Wednesday Exploring Your Practice;

To **Sensei Mukei** for officiating the Ceremony of Atonement; To **Roshi Egyoku and Sensei Senshin** for leading Rohatsu Sesshin;

To **Sensei Mark Shogen Bloodgood** for leading the Year-End Sesshin and for being Sensei Dharma-Joy's Jisha during his transmission week;

To our Intro to Zazen leaders **Frank Genku Martinez, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Sandra Seiju Goodenough, Soji, Dan Ejo Wilner, and Banto**;

*Continued on page 12*

## ZCLA Affiliated Groups

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

**The San Luis Obispo Zen Circle (CA)**  
*led by Sensei Mark Shogen Bloodgood*

**Empty Hands Circle (Campinas, SP, Brazil)**  
*coordinated by Christina Tchoren Carvalho*

**Wild River Zen Circle (Nevada City, CA)**  
*led by Sensei Jeanne Dokai Dickenson*

**The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)**  
*coordinated by Marc Doge Fontaine and  
 Michael Jishin Fritzen*

## Outreach Groups

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

**redrosiD fo renroC**

*The Water Wheel is published quarterly by the Zen Center of Los Angeles, 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 Wendy Egyoku Nakao*

*The Three Seats: Abbot Sensei Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen,  
 Head Teacher Sensei Katherine Senshin Griffith, and Head Priest  
 Sensei Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert*

**Water Wheel:** *Editor: Sensei Katherine Senshin Griffith; Associate Editor:  
 Sensei Darla Myoho Fjeld. Production Artist: Tom Yudo Burger.*

Zen Center of Los Angeles  
 Buddha Essence Temple • Great Dragon Mountain  
 923 South Normandie Avenue  
 Los Angeles, CA 90006  
 info@zcla.org • www.zcla.org • 213-387-2351



Now On Instagram:  
 @zencentroflsanjeles

## Sangha Rites of Passage

**Dharma Transmission (Denbo)**

*Tom Baiten Dharma-Joy Reichert*

*December 7, 2022*

*From Roshi Egyoku Nakao*

**New Members**

*Garrett Clough*

*Peter Gannini*

## A Heartfelt “Thank You!”

*(Continued from page 11)*

To **Ben Ehrlich** for leading the Tuesday night Zazen during Ango;

To **Betty Jiei Cole** for preparing Wednesday breakfasts during Ango and for preparing the noodles for New Year's Eve Celebration;

To **Yudo** for the many years of directing parking on the grounds and as the Samu leader during the Year-End Sesshin;

To **Sensei Dharma-Joy** for leading Closing the Gap: Living the Precepts and The Hidden Lamp Study with **Sensei Senshin**;

To all those who helped with the Day of Dead/Obon especially **Sensei Senshin** and **Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez** (stewards); **Conrad Butsugen Romo** for leading the Awake Grief Café and extra clean-up; **DH Gessho** (altar flowers and offerings); **Jacque Rabie**, **Nan Reishin Merritt**, and **Caitlyn Brady** (Saturday prep); **Robert Diaz** (altar set-up); **Chris Carrowiano** (tenzo); **Hilda Bolden** (Mexican hot chocolate and some kitchen clean-up); **Taikan** (clean-up); **Sensei Myoho** (officiant); and **Rev. Jitsujo**, **Kyogen**, **Taikan**, **Anne Josenshaus**, **Sacha Joshin Greenfield**, **Genku** for the Social Justice Ritual;

To **Kathy Myoan Solomon** for leading the Basket Weaving class;

To **Sensei Mukei** for his endless service and training others as Zendo Steward;

To our New Year's Eve service officiants: **Sensei Faith-Mind** (Annual Members Memorial), **Sensei Shogen** (Atonement Ceremony), **Rev. Jitsujo** (Revolving the Sutra Service) and to those who filled the many positions: **Sensei Dharma-Joy**, **Sensei Senshin**, **Sensei Myoho**, **Sensei Mukei**, **Corey Ryujin McIntyre**, **Kaizen**, **Yudo**, **Taikan**, **Jenny Jusen Bright**, **DH Gessho**, **Myoki**, and **Joshin**;

To our Buddha Hall service leaders **Kaizen**, **Ben**, and **Yudo** (backup);

To our Jikidos **Craig Genji Miller**, **Ben**, **Myoki**, **Joshin**, and **Jusen**.