



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

Peace of Mind

by Katherine Daiki Senshin Griffith



Bodhidharma Pacifies the Mind

Bodhidharma sat facing the wall. His future successor Eko, the second Zen ancestor, standing in the snow, cut off his arm and said, "Your disciple's mind is not yet at peace. I beg you, Master, please pacify my mind."

Bodhidharma said, "Bring your mind to me and I will pacify it for you."

Eko said, "I have searched for the mind but have never been able to find it." Bodhidharma said, "Now your mind is pacified."

— Mumonkan Case 41

The legendary first ancestor of Zen, Bodhidharma was said to be fierce and unphased, sitting nine years facing a cave wall. His teaching emphasized no attachment to words and looking directly into your mind to see your true nature.

A popular misconception of a Zen Buddhist is that nothing ever gets to them. No matter what happens, they are always "chill." But what's the real deal?

It's also said of Bodhidharma that when he found himself falling asleep in that cave, he pulled out his eyelids to keep awake. That does not sound peaceful.

When there is no peace in the world, it is challenging to find peace in our own minds. To pacify means to bring or restore to a state of peace or tranquility, quiet or calm. Various translations of Eko's request are: "please put my mind at rest," "please silence my mind," "give it peace," "give it a rest." We may say of our own minds: "my thoughts and feelings are driving me crazy—please make it stop! Set me free!"

That's also the way we may feel about all the wars and conflicts around the world and in this country, "please give

it a rest already," "make it stop!!" I can still hear Rodney King's heartrending plea, "Can't we all just get along?"

In reflecting on what it takes to find true peace of mind, I found four themes emerging: seeing as is, grounding in non-dual wisdom, avoiding fundamentalist thinking, and embracing the boundless nature of the Bodhisattva Vow.

Seeing As Is

Destructive forces are an inherent aspect of life. The basic elements of earth, wind, water, and fire all can create havoc and take life, via storms, floods, earthquakes, melting icecaps, volcanos, raging wildfires, avalanches. Animals, insects, and microorganisms also kill. And when we get into the area of machines we've invented going awry, it's amazing any of us manage to stay alive. I think the reason so many of us lose our cool behind the wheel of a car is that even the slightest mishap could end in death.

Violence erupting amongst humans can be a physical cry indicating something needs to be paid attention to. Unresolved trauma or mental distress can cause people to do self-harm by cutting themselves, picking a random fight, or shooting up large groups before killing oneself. Racist violence and hate crimes reveal the unaddressed shadow sides of our culture. Ruthless leaders attacking other countries reveal the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. Eko so wanted to show Bodhidharma how serious was his desire to find peace of mind, he cut off his arm while standing in the snow. The whole world can seem like it's in trauma—individually, nationally, globally, and

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PEACE OF MIND *(Continued from page 1)*

even our very planet, whose changes in climate are telling us to pay attention.

All these are clues to what needs to be addressed. It's important not to engage in spiritual bypass, but to do so can seem overwhelming. There may not be more suffering than ever, but our advanced means of communication gives us endless exposure.

When is it time to bear witness? When is it time to turn the news off? We can't solve all problems, but we can commit to not contributing to the harm. The alive question for each of us is what is most beneficial moment by moment?

And how do we not take sides? It's perfectly natural to have a broken heart for all the lives lost—but it is only one aspect. From a non-dualistic viewpoint, how do we include in our hearts those who are causing harm? Intense emotions can make it difficult to think carefully about the implication of one's actions. So again, we're back to the desire for peace of mind.

One major way to find peace is to fully see what is, wholeheartedly acknowledge that the situation or suffering exists, with all its myriad ingredients. This is the peace of deep acceptance—not permanent acceptance—but right here, right now THIS IS. Yes, this is happening, and I am it. If we don't start from there, our churning thoughts will just keep avoiding reality. We can't make change, if we can't see as is. I hear so often the phrase, "I can't believe that..." If you catch yourself saying that often, look closely at your worldview.

Does this acceptance mean there is no hope?

I recently heard a Palestinian peacemaker admit he felt hopeless but it's out of hitting bottom that new hope can arise. American historian, playwright, and socialist thinker, Howard Zinn says:

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.

What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

Grounding in Non-Dual Wisdom

This brings us back to Eko's plea. Where is the mind that needs to be pacified? What happens when we drop all subject-object dichotomies? Where is the mind then? Just sorrow. Just fighting. Just working for peace. At one with all the pain of the world. To paraphrase a koan: to execute every action of our lives with "empty hands."

There is often confusion over what we mean in Buddhism by emptiness, which is a loaded word in Western thought. It does not mean nihilistic detachment, empty of feeling or thought. For Buddhists, it means empty of inherent existence. Nothing stands alone or is outside the big equation, as I like to put it. Everyone and everything are interconnected. And cannot be otherwise!

Realizing THIS, this emptiness does not lack heart. Quite the opposite: realizing our connection to everything without exception—opens us up to the deepest compassion. How expansive can you be? How capacious and inclusive is your great heart?

There is no inside-outside, no us-them. We are not separate from any conflicts or suffering since the beginning of time. Keeping that in mind, our recitation of the Gatha of Atonement should always be deeply sincere.

Avoiding Fundamentalist Thinking

When witnessing harm, it's easy to see things in clear-cut non-nuanced categories, or negate the ingredients you don't jive with. Though it can be clear that what you are witnessing is causing great harm, it is often less clear on how to dismantle and unravel the causes. The fear aroused by the complexity of the situation can lead to extreme viewpoints on all sides.

Fundamentalism or rigid righteousness is extremely dangerous, with its ideas of purity, exclusion, and uncompromising perfectionism. This does not mean one can't take a strong stand. But doing that can take many forms when you are freed from rigid thinking. A staunch fanatic might say "always speak out," or "never speak harshly," or "stick to your view no matter what." A freely functioning awake peacemaker is alive and available for whatever is needed. There are many different ways we can say STOP it. Solutions come with the ability to look closer and deeper at all the ingredients and all the causal conditions. We should look inside ourselves for our own rigid thinking.

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The Preceptor Path

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



Over two days from December 7th to 8th, 2023, Nem Etsugen Bajra, Elizabeth Jiei Cole, Rosa Ando Martinez, and Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher, received Preceptor Empowerment in separate ceremonies. These empowerments are punctuation marks after years of Zen training and, in particular, the completion of two years of intense precept examination and reflection.

The three legs of Zen are sila, samadhi, and prajna—ethical living, one-pointedness, and non-dual wisdom. You are familiar with three-legged incense holders and with the three-point body posture—three provides stability. The Preceptor Path emphasizes sila, the navigational tool that guides our use of samadhi and prajna. As Preceptor Faith-Moon expressed, “Without this navigational tool, samadhi and prajna become like fools gold.” Without sila, samadhi and prajna do not function in a life-giving way.

In our koan lineage, the precept koans are examined after one has trained with five essential koan collections. Our main precept text is the Yasutani-Harada precept koans. As Zen Buddhist practice takes root in the West, the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts are introduced early on. It takes many years to penetrate the “inconceivable and wondrous self-nature” of the One Body and the subtleties of The Three Treasures, the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Grave Precepts. Hence, the precepts are studied in the beginning, the middle, and the end, in a continuous spiral throughout one’s life. Study is one aspect; embodiment is another.

ZCLA, one of the pioneering Sanghas in the West, has undergone painful upheavals. In the early years, samadhi and prajna were emphasized. In my view, the upheavals illuminate the lack of sila training. Along with this, was the lack of Sangha development. Maezumi Roshi’s teaching life at ZCLA was a short 27 years during which he accomplished remarkable things. He emphasized, however, that Zen evolution in this country would depend on American Zen practitioners deepening in wisdom and developing the skillful means for their time and place.

The White Plum Lineage is evolving in an interesting way. In the Japanese Soto School, only priests receive the Precept and Teaching Transmissions. After Roshi Bernie Glassman had trained students for several decades, it

became clear that some of his senior lay students would make excellent dharma teachers. Maezumi Roshi completely supported this development, although he himself did not give Teaching transmission to lay students. As Roshi Bernie’s lay teachers began to teach, their students requested Jukai, the ceremony of receiving the precepts. Although these lay teachers were empowered to teach, they were not empowered to give the precepts, so who would do this?

It’s interesting to note that lay teacher Roshi Robert Atiken himself had confronted this situation. We are very much in the early days of American Zen in that students gather around teachers and identify with them and not so much with a lineage or Zen school. In responding to the needs of his students, Roshi Atiken conferred with Maezumi Roshi. Consequently, Maezumi Roshi asked his first disciple Bernie Glassman to instruct Aitken Roshi on how to give Jukai to his students.

As Roshi Bernie pondered the situation with his lay teachers, he decided to empower some of them to also give the precepts. First one became a lay teacher and then one became a lay preceptor. The evolution that has occurred at ZCLA is that very senior lay students who have not yet, or will not complete the koan and Dharma transmission curriculum, have been invited onto the Preceptor Path and, upon completion of formal study, have received empowerment as Preceptors. I decided to empower priest and lay Preceptors in this way because I believe that this will help ground and strengthen the Sangha. It will also hold one’s feet to the fire, providing an impetus for the preceptors themselves to further mature.

The transformational effects of the transmission week and ceremony are profound. The week-long practice includes chanting and bowing to the lineage followed by altar rounds three times a day. The heart of the transmission itself is the empowerment of the new preceptor as Vairocana Buddha, the Buddha of Formless Forms from which the precepts arise. The new lay Preceptors are empowered to manifest as Vairocana Buddha and confer the precepts in the ceremony of Jukai. I wish them an excellent journey as they live into their vows in Vairocana’s realm.

Roshi Egyoku is the Senior Dharma teacher at ZCLA.

New Preceptors Reflect



During the week of Rohatsu Sesshin 2023, Roshi Egyoku empowered Dharma-Holder Nem Etsugen Bajra, Elizabeth Jiei Cole, Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher, and Rosa Ando Martinez as Preceptors. Special thanks to Sensei George Mukey Horner and Tom Yudo Burger for helping to create the red silk lined room in the Buddha Hall and for Roshi Kipp Ryodo Hawley for serving as Preceptor. Here are some of their reflections.



Nem Etsugen Bajra

The Denkai ceremony provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my Zen practice. I am grateful to Roshi Egyoku, Roshi Ryodo, and all the teachers at ZCLA for their guidance on my Zen path over the last 16 years. I vividly remember that my journey commenced with 'Just Sit.' For

an entire year, no matter what question I posed during my Dokusan with Roshi Egyoku, her response was consistently 'Just Sit.' I often wondered where this would lead me. Then, one day, it dawned on me that it wasn't about moving from one point to another; it was about being intimate with myself. Subsequently, Roshi instructed me with the words, 'Just be Etsugen.'

Bowing holds a significant role in the Denkai process. As I engaged in hundreds of bows to our ancestors each day, I felt a profound sense of love from them. With every bow, I sensed gratitude for having a practice and a vow to live by. Observing the Kechimyaku, the lineage chart I created with red ink, I felt a sense of oneness with all of them, connected in a circle from Shakyamuni Buddha to Roshi Egyoku and myself.

During my Jundo, moving from building to building on the ZCLA grounds, I invoked the Buddhas, Ancestors,

Protectors, and Guardians, seeking protection for everyone and every object on the grounds. Simultaneously, I felt supported and loved by everyone and everything therein. My ability to practice is indebted to the ZCLA Sangha and temple grounds. I've realized that the unconditional love from everyone has been the driving force behind my practice all these years—a journey filled with uncertainty, surprises, love, and personal growth.

One of the surprises is that I now find myself instructing my sitting group students, most of whom are business owners, with the same words, 'Just Sit.' For individuals in business, where 'Time is money' and active business pursuits are the norm, sitting quietly for 30 minutes daily poses a challenge. My Denkai experience reassured me to persist in encouraging them to 'Just Sit.' I hope to extend to them the same kind of love that I have received from ZCLA Sangha members. Wish me luck! May benevolent bodhisattvas accompany us on our endless journey.



Elizabeth Jiei Cole

I am not often speechless. My upbringing and teaching career has been somewhat overabundant in gathering words to dispute, to elucidate (or so I thought), to persuade, to rouse to action or changed perspective. But now invited to talk about my experience in becoming a preceptor, I am almost at a loss for words, or at least a loss for linear coherency. What to say?

Most of my life I have been preoccupied with issues of personal and collective integrity and ethical struggle. With something of that spirit, I happily accepted Egyoku Roshi's invitation to join the preceptor class. I found it

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PRECEPTORS REFLECT (*Continued from page 4*)

wasn't about the struggle after all. Instead, I found re-grounding in this: Self-nature is inconceivably wondrous and the everlasting Dharma, the ungraspable Dharma, the Dharma of equality is the place that stills all argument. Some alchemy in perfect ordinariness does its work in this and I don't know how.

In our culminating rite of passage, the four of us going through preceptor transmission bowed, chanted, made offerings three times daily at twelve altars on the temple grounds while Rohatsu sesshin carried on around us, and we within it. Particularly and intimately powerful for me: sitting with Maezumi Roshi's voice going through me in the zendo, my old teacher and I together again. After all my years running away, here we were and are—laughing together again.

With all this bowing and offering, this feels especially clear to me: it's not only that we bow to the founders, women ancestors, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, expressing our gratitude. It's also that they bow as us. So too our family ancestors, the creatures we have been, the selves we have lived, all the beings of the earth bow as us all together.

Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher

I'm grateful for the good fortune of being part of the ZCLA sangha and the opportunity to study the precepts in depth with Roshi Egyoku and my classmates Jiei, Ando, and Etsugen. We explored how to integrate our conduct with what is happening right now. I learned so much about myself as manifestation of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

When I asked Roshi what does being a Preceptor mean in terms of my role in the Sangha, she said "Come as you are." What could be more fundamental than that? This two-year study of the precepts has been an exploration of how simple yet extraordinary it is to be transparent and open—to come as I am.

I wish everyone the best in the coming year! Thank you for your practice—it's really incredible that there are people who take time out of their busy lives to sit in the "one seat" and vow to save all beings. I'm a fan of you all.

Rosa Ando Martinez

It's been over two years since I moved to Ohio, so being back at Zen Center felt like a homecoming, especially that this particular occasion was for my preceptorship study and ceremony.

Of the various practices we performed throughout the day, bowing and making offerings at the various altars on the Center grounds grew my deep gratitude and appreciation for our collective practice. Additionally, when I'm at the Center, I make it a point to stop and visit the various trees planted in the garden in the name of Roshi Bernie, Senseis Ensho and Shingetsu, and many others whose dedicated practice maintained the Center so that we can pass it forward.

During the services and bowing for the lineage and women ancestors, I felt especially appreciative of them too, for their kindness and compassion in dedicating their lives to protecting and maintaining the Buddhist tradition. I never imagined I'd have the opportunity to add my name to the lineage chart next to Roshi Egyoku my teacher. I thank her for the years of training and support during my 18 years of residency at Zen Center of Los Angeles and onward.

I bow deeply to the Zen Center, for your welcoming and openhearted hospitality. Palms together to my fellow Preceptors with whom I shared the week. To one, I owe an apology. Even as she was assisting me with my offering at the Manjusri altar in the Zendo, I managed to bring a critical voice to the occasion. And there I was, the same old me. I bow to her kindness, and I renew my vow not to harm.



For the 2023 Day of Dead, endangered animals were honored with pictures created by April True-Flower Ford. Carrying the animal portraits from left to right are Jitsujo Gauthier (Tiger), John Kyogen Rosanio (coordinator), Jack Kuykendall (Black Rhino), Katherine Senshin Griffith (narrator), Tim Taikan Zamora (Scarce Yellow Sally insect), Brian Sotetsu Huff (Blue Whale), Glenn Gikai Davis (Lemur Leaf Frog), True-Flower (Bornean Orangatang), and Sacha Josbin Greenfield and Byron Lynch (Regent Honeyeater Birds).

The First Weekend Wander at ZCLA

From September 29 to Sunday, October 1, seven people from Zen Center and the greater Los Angeles Sangha participated in the first Weekend Wander, a practice inspired by Street Retreats led through the Zen Peacemakers.

Bearing witness to life on the streets, each day, we walked, ate at soup kitchens, sat zazen, rested, talked to those we met, practiced council, chanted, and engaged in begging practice. Each night, we returned to ZCLA to sleep outside in the garden. We simply brought our presence as an offering to all that we encountered. Money raised from the wander was donated to the organizations who supported us on the street.

As the Three Tenets recognize, from Not Knowing and Bearing Witness, Compassionate Action may arise. Since this Wander, we've volunteered at soup kitchens, organized the Zen Outside the Gates Neighborhood Clean-ups, and created the Winter Clothing Drive. We'll see what comes forward next!

Below are reflections from three of those who participated:



Jenny Jusen Bright

I wrote a narrative of the weekend's events for the people who supported my mala, but realized I missed the point. The point was not the events, but the interactions those events provided.

Experiencing for myself, and witnessing others experience, the incredible kindness and spiritual generosity of the people who ran the soup kitchens was eye-opening. Watching them walk amongst the dinner tables or down the line of people waiting to eat, greeting each person, checking in with them. They were so kind, asking nothing of the people they were serving except for them to share what they wanted to share: a greeting, a request, or nothing.

Then there was the openness of our group leaders. They had planned a minimal, fluid structure for the weekend: eat at St. James Friday night before they closed at 5:30, wander over to St. Francis under the freeways on Saturday morning for breakfast which started at 8:30, meander over to Skid Row mid-day, find lunch, hold a Gate of Sweet Nectar service, beg for flowers for the service, and for dinner, head back 4 miles to ZCLA to sleep on the grounds. Within that container was total flexibility to let the day evolve, with plans thwarted or blossoming as they happened.

Everything was shared: every experience, every food, every decision. I experienced a different way to interact: to show up and let things play out, instead of trying to direct them. To see their playing out as life, a shared experience.



Craig Genji Miller

A weekend spent street-aware was concluding with a circular affair.

As we sat on the ground, Ross came around.

Attracted by our candlelit curiosity in openair, and despite plaza security's scrutinizing glare, when Ross slid into our circle to

share, we welcomed him there.

Ross spoke of great patents to which he is heir: extraordinary concepts only certain beings know or care.

With no abode Ross abodes here and there. Sorrow be that when in the recesses of ghostly alleys and hungry lanes, Ross' actions become preordained. Drawn to sharp steel like a malevolent magnet burrowed in the brain, Ross must spike each good morning by way of lung or vein.

So, Ross takes a brief adieu from our gentle milieu. Unfurling the tinfoil, he can no longer delay this ritual toil.

Returning to our circle now a cumulus cloud, he passes out beside us—breathing; thank God Ross is still Breathing Aloud.

Seven wanderers, seven neighbors, seven friends of Ross, left him a blanket some food and socks—so he'd know we weren't just a pipe dream borne of delusional powders or rocks; to say to Ross that we know he too is real, and that the suffering befalling this city of angels and demons is suffering we see and can feel.



Sarah Ford

I have never thought of a bird as homeless. Reminded of the strength of birds and how they move between environments, from the tree to the trash on the street. They adapt to conditions and bridge different dimensions. We often think about birds "leaving the nest" or "nesting" in idioms that describe

a bird's way to home and "un-home." They glide past our everyday lives without notice and so often choose when to be seen and heard. Grateful for their guidance in bridging the dimensions between my home, others' homes, and no homes and returning to my practice of Not Knowing.

Ecodharma News

by Christina Tchoren Carvalho



On the first week of September (Independence holidays here in Brazil), I lead a retreat named ECODHARMA: Mother Earth, Presence and Resilience. It was held at Via Zen (www.viazen.org.br), in the south of the country, where thirty participants had the opportunity to enjoy a lot of meditation, walks in nature, Council sessions, all in a rustic,

beautiful, mountain setting.

It was a nice mix of participants: many long-time practitioners, some fairly new and a few who were completely neophytes in Buddhism. Five of my students (Empty Hands Sangha) were able to join, some with scholarships from our own Social Fund. We were also able to offer scholarships for a couple of BIPOC persons from the south (no need for expensive plane tickets) interested in experiencing a Buddhist retreat for the first time.

Preparations included forming a whatsapp group (Brazilians are crazy about it!), where each participant introduced themselves by mean of a manga-inspired avatar. This activity mobilized and energized everybody in excited anticipation of our meeting in person. I put together a coloring book of 20 Brazilian endangered animals (a few I had to draw myself) for people to choose one, color it as a meditative activity, and bring it to share in the retreat. Some people gathered kids and grandkids and colored the whole book!

The inspiration for this four-day retreat was a parallel drawn between Joanna Macy's four-step spiral process and the Prayer of the Four Immeasurables: "Gratitude," together with our fervent wish that all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness; "Honoring our pain for the world," together with our wish that all beings are free of suffering and the causes of suffering; "Seeing with new eyes," together with our wish that all beings may never be separate from the bliss that is sorrowless; and "Going forth," together with our wish that all beings may live in equanimity, free of attachment and aversion.

Each day was focused on each specific theme as an invitation to deep reflection. The four-day progression flowed naturally, in the end, into the celebration of the Gate of Sweet Nectar. This celebration was carefully planned and explained as an enactment of our aspiration to feed and heal the Hungry Ghosts, which includes all of



Thirty participants attended the Ecodharma retreat.

us. The opening and the final verses were kept in English so as to keep the beautiful melodies created by Ram Dass, but the rest had to be translated into Portuguese.

As most people were not familiar with ZCLA's Gate, it took some time on each evening for people to get acquainted with the text and chants, as well as with the purpose and meaning of a somewhat shamanic ritual. The intention was that all would develop an understanding of just how empowering such a ritual can be, in order to unleash our imagination and strengthen our purpose to help living beings in these times of social-and-environmental (these cannot be pulled apart) collapse. In fact, rather than just the one "human hungry ghost" mask, we had two other masks produced by artists from the south sangha: one for the animals in danger of extinction, and another for the vegetation realm.

After the ceremony, as we reconvened for our final Council, it was apparent that most people were deeply moved, not only by the perhaps cathartic effect of such a ritual, but also by the energy produced by our enacted collective wish to actually nourish and heal all beings, including ourselves.

All in all, I believe the retreat was a great success. May these efforts somehow benefit all beings already on the grip of the social-and-environmental collapse.

Dharma-Holder Tchoren coordinates the Empty Hands Circle (Campinas, San Paulo, Brazil).

Revised Bylaws Embody Zen Center's Core Values and Practices

by Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert



In September, with the support of the Sangha, the Three Seats, and the Board of Directors, Zen Center adopted a revised version of its Bylaws, the document that sets out the organizing principles and rules of operation of Zen Center as a legal entity. The revised Bylaws reflect the new leadership structure of ZCLA (the Three Seats Model), clarify the respective roles and

responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Three Seats, revise voting membership criteria, and make necessary changes to comply with the California Corporations Code and take account of such developments as online voting and remote meetings.

While Bylaws documents can seem obscure and technical, they often reflect and reveal much about an organization and its history. For example, in some Sanghas, the bylaws impose the traditional, top-down model where the abbot has all the authority. In other instances, based on

historical misconduct by an abbot, the bylaws place most of the power with the Board of Directors, with the abbot serving a limited, fixed term or at the pleasure of the Board. The variations are numerous and, in a well-functioning organization, ideally the bylaws reflect the Sangha's core values.

Here, this is the second revision to the bylaws since Roshi Egyoku returned in 1997 (the first revision was adopted in 2008). The first revision shifted us from the traditional, top-down model and began to reflect the Shared Stewardship model of Zen Center, as it explicitly included the Buddha Sphere (the abbot), the Dharma Sphere (the Board), and the Sangha Sphere (the Sangha, as represented by those persons who had been sufficiently connected to Zen Center to be entrusted to participate in making major decisions about its future) in the decision-making structure. The most recent revision explicitly adds the Three Seats model and clarifies the relationships and responsibilities between the Board and the Three Seats; in doing so, it reflects a significant maturing for ZCLA organizationally and offers a guide for other Sanghas, both in the West and beyond.

Sensei Dharma-Joy is the Abbot of ZCLA.



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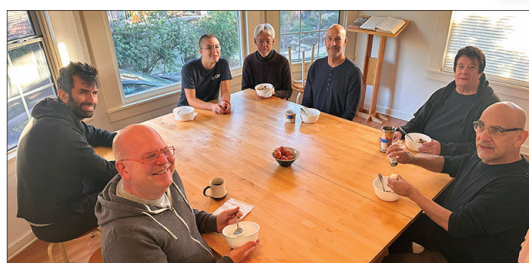
1. Kyogen receives his fan. 2. Jitsujo fanning the sutras. 3. Halloween with Sensei Dharma-Joy and Don. 4. Jitsujo cooking with Masumi. 5. Thursday breakfast. 6. Taikan's Hossen. 7. Kaizen's Hossen. 8. Gikai's Tokudo



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2023 Fall Practice Commitments

We acknowledge with gratitude the following 127 practitioners who made formal practice commitments for the 2023 Fall Practice Period.

ZCLA

Alan Taigen Turton
 Alexandra Derderian
 April True Flower Ford
 Ben Ehrlich
 Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran
 Bill Tetsui Press
 Chris Carrowiano
 Chris Daian Fields
 Chris Genzan Hackman
 Conrad Butsugen Romo
 Corey Ryūjin McIntyre (& SLO)
 Darla Myoho Fjeld
 Dave Fushin Watson
 Dave Taian Goodsmith
 David Shealy
 DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass
 Diane Enju Katz
 Diane True Joy Fazio
 Dominique Ward
 Dylan Bantō Neal
 Ellen Jagosz
 Frank Genku Martinez
 Galina Slavova
 George Mukey Horner
 Geri Meiho Bryan
 Glenn Gikai Davis
 Hannah Seishin Sowd
 Jack Kuykendall
 Jacque Rabie
 Jacqueline Kyojaku Drummond
 Jane Radiant Joy Chen
 Jenny Jūsen Bright
 Jerry Grenard
 Jessica Oetsu Page
 Jim Jindo Hagar
 Jitsujo Angyo Gauthier
 John Kyogen Rosania
 Josh Cretella
 Julia Seirin Norstrand
 Karina Myoki Beltran-Hernandez
 Katherine Senshin Griffith
 Kathy Myoan Solomon
 Kipp Ryodo Hawley
 Lorraine Gessho Kumpf
 Mak Muan King
 Martin Nakell
 Mary Frankos
 Masumi Yoneyama
 Matt Sullivan
 Michael Jinsen Davis
 Nem Etsugen Bajra

Pam Myoetsu Smith
 Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher
 Rachel Belash
 Rebecca Wall
 Reeb Kaizen Venners
 Richard Taishin Schulof
 Roberta Myodo Brehm
 Robert Harinam Jagosz
 Rosa Ando Martinez
 Sacha Joshin Greenfield
 Sandra Seiju Goodenough
 Stephen Harris
 Tim Taikan Zamora
 Toby Keido Rider
 Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert
 Tom Yudo Burger
 Tony WonderMan Ly
 Tracy Lin Payne
 Wendy Egyoku Nakao
 Yoko Gyokuren Bajra

**Bambushain Zen-Center
 (Aachen, Germany)**
 Petra Clever
 Eva Jiun Neumann (& ZCLA)
 Andreas Seijun Rampelt
 Christian Rōthleitner

**Empty Hands Circle
 (Campinas, SP, Brazil)**
 Bruno Kōun Fernandes
 Camilla Kakuon Abbehausen
 Carmen Jion Ferreira
 Christina Tchoren Carvalho (& ZCLA)
 Daniel Soitchi Guerreiro
 Diego Barbosa
 Emily Myōshin Walsh
 Evelyn Horn
 Geraldo Gyokuzan Fonseca
 Guilherme Domingues
 Igor Vieira
 Ligia Daikan Bizarro
 Lucas Schuster
 Maria Myōkan Vargas
 Maristela Shinmyō Schmidt
 Sebastiao Hongaku Ferreira
 Tania Palhares

**Monday Night Meditation
 Group (Pasadena, CA)**
 Anna Keim
 Betty Jiei Cole (also ZCLA)
 Erin Joyful-Heart Moore (& ZCLA)
 Jan Rutiz

Marsha Cifarelli

San Luis Obispo Zen Circle (CA)
 Amber Harmon
 Bryce Cape
 David Zoller
 Deborah Fuku-an West
 Derek Ó Corraín
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PEACE OF MIND *(Continued from page 2)*

There is no Utopia, no idea of a perfect person. Just things as they are now. As it says in Hakuin's *Song of Zazen*:

At this moment, what more need we seek?

As the truth eternally reveals itself,

This very place is the Lotus Land of Purity,

This very body is the Body of the Buddha

Muddy water is the lotus land we live in. Not separate from the muck, the lotus is amazingly resilient, as it lightly floats above the muck, offering color and joy. When Bodhidharma cut off his eyelids, it is said that where they fell, tea bushes grew. So, his legend claims he not only brought the Dharma but also tea to China.

Embracing the boundless nature of the Bodhisattva Vow

I often say that Bodhisattvas don't need all to be right and peaceful in the world to offer our own peace of mind. However, the world manifests itself, we have a job to do. As we often chant, we live to "to stop all evil, to practice good, to liberate all beings, and to accomplish the Buddha way." The Buddha way reveals the larger picture, the boundless totality of it all.

Nearly twenty years ago, I attended the memorial of lefty activist Irja Lloyd. She was the subject of the documentary *Sunset Story*, about the free-spirited seniors of Sunset Hall, a Los Angeles retirement home (now closed), who didn't let advanced age stand in the way of their voicing their concerns about social and political topics. The wheelchair bound Irja often joined Sensei Myoho's former organization Coalition L.A. in many political rallies and demonstrations. On the program for her memorial was the following prayer that was found in her desk. I haven't been able to locate the author, but the words have been written on my heart, ever since. It echoes the best in humanity that Zinn (and Zen) refers to.

A Prayer for Our Troubled Times

1. I bow to the sacred in all creation.
2. May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder.
3. May my mind seek truth with humility and openness.
4. May my heart forgive without limit.
5. May my love for friend, enemy, and outcast be without measure.
6. May my needs be few and my living simple.
7. May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others.
8. May my hands never harm a living being.
9. May my steps stay on the journey of justice.
10. May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful.

11. May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry.

12. May my life's work be a passion for peace and nonviolence.

13. May my soul rejoice in the present moment.

14. May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility.

15. And may I risk reputation, comfort, and security to bring this hope to the children of our world.

Every line is a shining jewel and reflects beautifully the boundless ongoing nature of the Bodhisattva peacemaker. But the words "patient discontent" have always particularly stood out for me. Discontent—yes, I am broken-hearted and absolutely not satisfied with all the harm and suffering in the world. Patient—I am endlessly on the path to freeing all from the poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance that contribute to that suffering. I am at peace with that discontent, urgently in it for the long haul, lifetime after lifetime ever awakening to new possibilities.

After Eko transmitted to his successor, he lived a layman's life for his last 30 years, working with the poor and outcasts. When asked why, he answered, "Why do you trouble yourself with the affairs of others? I do this for the sake of my soul."

I'll end with this Buddhist prayer for peace:

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses. May those frightened cease to be afraid and may those bound be free. May the powerless find power and may people think of befriending one another.

Sensei Senshin is the ZCLA Head Teacher.



Hands... potential for great power.
Power to love, to soothe, to heal;
Power to harm, to steal, to damage;
Power to plant, to grow, to harvest.
May all fists be opened.
How can a closed fist receive?
A closed fist knows neither receptivity nor generosity.
May all fists be opened.

-Tara Jihō Sterling *(Jiho is a former ZCLA resident.)*

Corner of Disorder

Dharma Words – Jitsujo Angyo (with Dharma Friends asking questions)*
Roshi Bernie's Annual Memorial Service
November 4, 2023



Lots of renovations happening on Normandie Mountain
 persimmons galore, day of the dead, lamps and mirrors outside the Nilotpala,
 and a tiny caterpillar in Action Alley
 Midge the dog will cross the rainbow bridge tomorrow.
 Buster the cat may follow.
 We don't know.



Hey Bernie,
 What's the deal here???!! What's really going on?!
 Israel- Palestine, Ukraine-Russia, East Africa (Ethiopia-Somalia-Sudan)
 Wars between "US" and "THEM"—colonizing this, colonizing that
 a sangha in conflict.

Many are experiencing tremendous suffering, and fear, from increasing attacks locally,
 nationally, internationally, and within our own being.
 We buy stuff, eat stuff, drink stuff, smoke stuff, and watch stuff to numb and avoid the pain.
 A Zen Peacemaker asks: "How do we bear witness to what feels unbearable?"
 Are the Three Tenets the answer?
 You said: there is little energy in answers so what ARE some good questions?

1. Hey Bernie—Is it still "just your opinion man" in the next realm? (*asks Taikan)
2. Hey Bernie— What is this life? (*asks True Flower)
3. Hey Bernie—What do I do if I forget my clown nose at home? (*asks Joshin)
4. Hey Bernie—Do you think privilege has something to do with being able to show up unorganized?
 (*asks Kyogen)
5. Hey Bernie—Is the answer to the "Great Question" of "Life, the universe and everything" REALLY 42?
 (*asks Myoki)
6. Hey Bernie—How do I find the thru line when the thru line is not apparent? (*asks Daian)

WHoooooooooooooooooooo—Paaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.....

"More precisely, it's about living a questioning life, a life of unknowing. If we're ready to live such a life, without fixed ideas or answers, then we are ready to bear witness to every situation, no matter how difficult, offensive, or painful it is. Out of that process of bearing witness the right action of making peace, of healing, arises."

– Prologue to *Bearing Witness: A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace* (1998)



A Heartfelt “Thank You!”

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To our Day of Reflection leaders: **DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, Nancy Teiju Marquez, Jacqueline KyoJaku Drummond, Glenn Gikai Davis, Brian Sotetsu Huff, and Jenny Jusen Bright;**

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To **Roshi Kipp Ryodo Hawley** for leading the July Sesshin and the Three Steps to Mindfulness workshop;

To **Dharma-Holder Lorraine Gessho Kumpf** for leading the Tangaryo, November Zazenkaï and for doing the Day of Dead altars;

To **Jessica Oetsu Page** for leading the 12-Step and Zen Buddhism workshop;

To **Sensei Katherine Senshin Griffith** and **Conrad Butsugen Romo** for leading two AWAKE Death Circles;

To the **ZCLA Board** for leading the Sangha Forum on the new by-laws;

To **Sensei Senshin** and **Sensei George Mukei Horner** for leading the Precepts Class Series;

To: **Diane(s) True-Joy Fazio** and **Enju Katz** for stewarding the Encountering the Sutra Study;

To **Corey Ryujin McIntyre, Craig Daigetsu Brandau, Dave Fushin Watson, and April True-Flower Ford** for their Personal Practice talks; and to **True-Flower** for creating the Endangered Species art for the Day of Dead;

To **Reverend Jistusjo Gauthier** for leading the Buddhist Chaplain Endorsement Ceremony; and Weekend Wander with **John Kyogen Rosania;**

To **Roshi Ryodo, Sensei's Mukei, Dharma-Joy, Senshin, and Myoho; DH Etsugen, DH Gessho, Rev. Jitsujo, Laura Burgess, Rev. Kosai Ikeda, and Betty Jiei Cole** for their **Dharma Talks;**

To **Sensei Senshin** for leading two Practice Period Circles, a Public Face-to-Face, the Year-End Sesshin and co-leading the October Sesshin with **Sensei Myoho;**

To **Sensei Dharma-Joy** for leading the August Zazenkaï and the Bearing Witness Council; and co-leading Rohatsu Sesshin and Hidden Lamp Study with **Sensei Senshin;**

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To our New Year's Eve Stewards: **S. Senshin** (Council), **S. Myoho** and **S. Dharma-Joy** (Officiants), **Rev. Jitsujo** (Sutra Revolving and Fire Ceremony), and **Myoki** (bell-ringing and cake and cider)■

Sangha Rites of Passage

New Preceptors

Nem Etsugen Bajra

Elizabeth Jiei Cole

Rosa Ando Martinez

Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher

Preceptor: Roshi Egyoku Nakao

New Members

Bruno Darko, Byron Lynch,

Michael Panico, Eve Sigall,

Joey Sulkowski, Rebecca Wall,

Deborah Fuku-an West

Tokudo

Glenn Gikai Davis

Preceptor: Roshi Egyoku Nakao

New Residents

Sensei Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert

Don Adove

Sensei Katherine Senshin Griffith

Sensei Darla Myoho Fjeld

In Memorium

Helen Daiji Powell

September 12, 1922 - August 6, 2022

Midge the Dog

November 11, 2023

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