

2024 ANNUAL FUND APPEAL



Dear Sangha and friends,

At the end of evening sitting, we chant this verse:

*Let me respectfully remind you:
Life and death are of supreme importance.
Time swiftly passes by, and opportunity is lost.
Each of us should strive to awaken! AWAKEN!
Take heed! Do not squander your life!!!!*

It is a regular reminder of the shortness of our lives, and re-centers our commitment to awakening, for ourselves and for the benefit of the whole world.

As I write to you, this admonition is particularly alive for me. One of my Dharma brothers, Sensei Gary Koan Janka, passed away this past Friday, joining Roshii Kodo and Senseis Ensho and Daishin from Roshii Egyoku's Dharma successors. These, among others, were the practice leaders at ZCLA as I was "growing up" here; how it is that they have passed away and left us as the "grown ups" is quite bewildering. I will always be grateful for the opportunity we had to practice together, and the incredible amount I learned from them, mostly not through any formal "teaching," but simply by being together, side-by-side, at this marvelous place of practice.

With another year having passed, we now come back and express our gratitude to you for your support of Zen Center of Los Angeles and respectfully ask that you continue it by supporting our Annual Fund Appeal. In order to support our ongoing operations, our goal is to raise \$108,000. This is a daunting sum, but these funds are essential for supporting the Zen Center's Dharma offerings: zazen in the zendo, sutra chanting and services in the Buddha hall, personal guidance from our teachers, monthly zazenkai, monthly days set aside to focus on the precepts, six sesshin each year, a 90-day Practice Period, Dharma Talks, numerous workshops and classes, council practice, and shared-stewardship training throughout the year. All of this as expressions of our vows of service to the world. None of this can happen without your continued support.

This past year, my first full year as abbot, has been a year of consolidation and growth. After a drop in paid memberships, we have begun to rebuild our member base, and we have had a tremendously diverse new group of practitioners join us, adding wonderful richness to our Sangha. We are adding classes and programs to help provide a path of practice to newcomers, and continuing with our commitment to hybrid programs as well as online-only classes to make our offerings available to interested people anywhere in the world. In my current Precepts Class series, we have an equal number of people in person and online during our class meetings – including one woman joining from Fiji! All of this cannot happen without your continued support.



With the strong support from our Board of Directors, we are re-centering our vision of the Open Palm School of Zen, which is framed by the unique culture and practice at Zen Center from the many streams that flow through here historically, as well as more directly from the teaching of Roshi Egyoku and her successors and senior students. The name of the school is inspired by the open palm, no fear mudra, and also the tall flexible palm trees that line the path to our temple gate. It reflects Maezumi Roshi's fervent desire that we, as his successors, develop an authentic Zen training model that is rooted in and speaks to our Western perspectives and values, including diversity, shared stewardship, and collective wisdom and awakening. We are also moving forward with plans to make ZCLA a destination training center where successors in Maezumi Roshi's lineage can come and train in the forms of practice that we offer. And we have revived our engagement in the Karma Sphere of service to others outside our temple gates. All of this cannot happen without your continued support.

With four teachers in residence, we are actively engaged in offering Face-to-Face meetings in person and on Zoom, and our offerings are richly extended through the efforts and teachings of several Dharma-Holders and Preceptors. All of this cannot happen without your continued support.

The life of Zen Center is constantly advancing, with new Jukai recipients, three newly ordained priests with several more aspirants sewing their kesas, new resident-trainees and new non-resident members. John Kyogen Rosania has just completed his year as Shuso, and Bill Tetsui Press has just begun his year as Head Trainee. All of this depends on your continued support.

The theme of our fall practice period is Prajnaparamita – Non-dual wisdom. Prajnaparamita practices lead to seeing the non-dual nature of reality and to accessing our deepest wisdom beyond all the dualisms that bring the world (and ourselves) so much trouble. We adopted this theme in recognition of the current tumults of the world, and as an extension of the Sacred Feminine workshop series that we are co-sponsoring with University of the West. We are committed to actualizing our stated vision: an enlightened world free of suffering, in which the earth and all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized and compassion flows unhindered. We invite you to join us in actualizing this vision through your practice, and through the practice of dana paramita, the perfection of generosity.

Approximately 25% of Zen Center's annual funds comes from voluntary donations, mostly through this year-end Annual Appeal, so it is truly the case that we cannot continue to offer our deep and varied programs and teachings to everyone, regardless of ability to pay, without the generous support of our friends. Time swiftly passes by, and opportunity is lost! Please help us to continue to actualize our vision.

Please take a few minutes right now to send in your gift by mail or electronically through our website; you can even scan the QR code below with your phone to donate! Your gift will be used wisely and effectively. Please give as generously as you are able.

In deep gratitude,

Dharma-Joy

Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert
Abbot & Head Priest/Preceptor



Hossen group photo for John Kyogen Rosania. October 20, 2024.