

Zen Center of Los Angeles, Inc.

MINUTES OF AN ALL DAY RETREAT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 26, 2013

The Board of Directors of Zen Center of Los Angeles, Inc., a California nonprofit corporation, held an all day retreat from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., January 26, 2013 at the home of Carol Moss, Malibu, California.

The following directors were present: Patricia Muso Giggans (President), Darla Myoho Fjeld, John Plum-Hermit Swanger (Recording Secretary), Thomas Dharma-Joy Reichert (CFO), Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown (Secretary) Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao (Abbot), Bob Swan, Cliff Shishin Collins, Dewayne Gojitsu Snodgrass and Deborah Faith-Mind Thoreson (Temple Director).

Sensei Gary Koan Janka served as a planner and the facilitator for this visioning retreat.

John Plum-Hermit Swanger served as recording secretary.

ZCLA Mission Statement

To know the Self, maintain the precepts and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism.

Board Mission and Vision Statement

In the Resource Sphere of All-Enriching Wisdom, the Board of Directors oversees all legal and fiduciary matters. We actively support the Mandala, Mission and Vision, Core Values and Core Practices of the Zen Center of Los Angeles / Great Dragon Mountain - Buddha Essence Temple. We maintain a place for practice, rooted in our Bodhisattva Lineage, and nurture the widest possible view.

1. Welcome, Zazen and Check In Round

Sensei Koan made introductory remarks and presented a proposed overview of the day. Sensei discussed the purpose of the retreat as an opportunity for the Board to engage in long-term visioning.

Roshi extended her's and the Board's appreciation and thanks to Carol Moss for hosting the retreat at her home. Carol was introduced to the Board and was presented with several gifts. Conversation followed.

Muso called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and made introductory remarks. The new Board members, Shishin and Faith-Mind (Temple Director), were welcomed. Thanks were extended to Sensei Koan for his preparations involving discussions with all Board members prior to the meeting and for facilitating the retreat.

Roshi expressed her appreciation to the Board and to Sensei Koan and made introductory remarks.

Everyone sat zazen and then did a check-in round.

2. Council Practice.

It was agreed to hold Council later during the retreat.

3. Review of Agenda

Not applicable.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Board approved the minutes from the November 4, 2012 meeting by e-mail prior to the retreat.

5. Review of Action Items

The revised November 4, 2012 list of Action Items is carried forward and included at the end of the minutes.

6. Abbot's Teaching and Guiding Role

Roshi discussed shifts that are occurring for her and her need to step out of all administrative and operational capacities. The appointment of Faith-Mind as Temple Director is an important part of this transition.

Roshi described the need to focus her energies on her Abbot and teaching roles with an eye toward the training of teachers and to a successor for her as Abbot. After 14 years as Abbot, there

is no current obvious successor to assume the Abbot's position. Roshi has no plans to retire as yet, but realistically the Abbot's position will likely change hands in the next 10 years. There was discussion of the current structure and process of Abbot succession as outlined in the ZCLA By Laws. (Attached document: By Laws, Article VI, Spiritual Leader).

Discussion included: Roshi's roles as Abbot, Head Teacher and Head Priest. Going forward the role of future Abbots may be re-imagined or another model may emerge. Roshi expressed her concern that with the current model of commuting priests, the adequate training of priests is difficult and will take much longer. She also expressed concerns about how a residential training model can be maintained in the future.

Important questions included: how to carry forward the many skillful means and practices that have evolved at ZCLA including Shared Stewardship, Collective Awakening and Wisdom, Council, as well as, foundational documents that express the practice culture of ZCLA? How to continue to identify the roles and rules of the organization that reveal the functioning of the organization?

Who are the people, collectives and circles that can embody, maintain and hold this culture up for others? How does this continue to be taught and practiced with new and old members? How is it reflected in all levels of the organization and in individuals' lives?

Roshi affirmed that her involvement with the Board will continue as it has been. She will continue to participate and be available for guidance. Roshi also stressed the need for the Board to continue to function and to expand into a larger view of visioning and leading ZCLA.

7. Council

The Board held council on personal reflections and Board related matters including topics introduced during the morning.

8. Lunch and Break Time

Lunch and refreshments throughout the day were generously provided by Enduring-Vow and Faith-Mind. Everyone had lunch, visited informally and enjoyed the warm, bright, vast ocean vistas.

9. Ingredients and Priorities

Sensei Koan presented an extensive list of ingredients and areas of interest for discussion that he culled from meetings with each individual Board member prior to the retreat. (Attached

document: Focal Points for Discussion. Faith-Mind will keep the 3 large pages of handwritten ingredients in the ZCLA office for future reference).

The main theme that emerged was sustainability and the way that touches on finances, facilities, staffing, stewarding, carrying forward ZCLA culture and Abbot succession.

Sensei Koan led the Board in a collective process to select priorities for further discussion.

The areas identified were: **1) Financial Sustainability / Development Plan, 1-5 years. 2) Master Plan / Facilities. 3) Abbot Succession. 4) Urban Training-Practice Center or Other Future Model? 5) Service in the Community.**

Financial Sustainability / Development Plan: How does a larger conversation take place between the Development Circle, the Board and other Circles? How does the Board have a wider conversation about development and financial sustainability? The importance of linking, education and cultivating the field, along with being informed by the field, was discussed. Maybe the Board leads this conversation and education on development in the Sangha? What is the dharma ground and teaching for each circle that supports its function and activity?

Areas to be funded include: Facilities master plan; Staffing needs; Support for priest and teachers in training; IT systems including software, hardware and website.

Master Plan: (Updated Master Plan and Bids documents are attached). Begin to explore building a new Zendo and the costs involved. Architects involvement and estimated per foot costs for new construction. Plan for expanding the Dharma Hall to provide a larger, open space for councils, classes and dharma talks. This also needs architects involvement and cost estimates.

Abbot Succession: Because this was discussed earlier and due to limited time the Board moved on to the other two remaining topics.

Future ZCLA Model: What form or model of practice and training might ZCLA take on in the future? The importance of supporting in depth priest and teacher training was discussed. Without this, what do you have? What role does the residential community have? To what extent does the monastic model still inform the current model? New forms continue to be developed and evolve. These forms may be offered to the wider community.

Service in the Community: How to ‘get outside the gate’ and serve the larger community was discussed. How to effectively integrate this with fundamental dharma teachings? New forms of practice include; Bearing Witness days (like the recent combined Day of Reflection and Dr. Martin Luther King Day, with reading and sharing together); Combined Obon and Day of the Dead ceremony; New Years Eve and Atonement ceremonies and celebrations; Days of Loving Action which emphasize service in the community. These and other forms relate to service in the community, as well as, possible future training and practice models for ZCLA.

Closing

Group Photograph on the Beach.
Check-out Round
Chant the Four Vows.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Recording Secretary.

Attachments to the minutes, which were distributed to the Board: 1) ZCLA Mission, Vision, Core Values and Core Practices. 2) Board Mission and Vision Statement. 3) Focal Points for Discussion. 4) By Laws, Section VI. 5) Master Plan. 6) Master Plan/Bids List. 7) ZCLA Mandala.

2013 Board Meeting dates:

Saturday, January 26, All Day Retreat, 9:00 – 4:30

Sunday, January 27, Lunch with Residents

Sunday, March 24, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, May 19, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, July 14, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, September 22, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, November 10, 1:30 – 4:30

Approved

Date: March ____, 2013

Patricia Muso Giggans (President)

Date: March ____, 2013

Thomas Dharma-Joy Reichert (CFO)

Date: March ____, 2013

Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown (Secretary)

ACTION ITEMS FROM JANUARY 2013 MEETING

General Procedures

Current Board reports and signed minutes from the previous meeting will be given to Mary Rios/Business Manager as soon after the meeting as possible.

Myoho/EC Steward will report Board decisions and other necessary information to Mary/Business Manager as soon after the meeting as possible.

Notification of decisions and information will be given to those effected (i.e. Residents, Teachers, Circles, Staff, etc.) prior to posting Board minutes.

Decisions and votes of the Board will be stated and recorded as resolutions.

Action Items: (Carried forward from November)

1. Muso – Continue Board discussion of designating a portion of bequests to the Endowment – On-going.
2. Muso – Continue Board discussion on developing a ZCLA Loan Policy – On-going.
3. Dharma-Joy – Work on revisions to the ZCLA Protocol for Former Inmates – On-going.

SOMEDAY

1. Dharma-Joy – recommendations regarding financial support for Abbots in retirement