

*DRAFT: STATEMENT RE PRISON PROGRAM TRANSITION 7-3-2008*

*[Please note: The words above are a heading for the statement below. They are not the title of the statement. The heading will not be circulated as part of the statement. There is no intention of communicating to intended recipients (i.e., prisoners) that the Center necessarily has a "program" as such, since we are in transition with respect to that issue as a whole, as well as specifics of any program we might have.]*

The Zen Center of Los Angeles Buddha Essence Temple is committed to the spiritual liberation of all beings, including incarcerated men and women. As part of this commitment, volunteers from the Zen Center community regularly visit jails, prisons and detention centers to offer inmates Zen meditation instruction and to conduct liturgical services. These visits provide an opportunity for study and practice together, as well as to discuss the inmate's own experience of meditation and spiritual development.

The Zen Center is currently considering what we may offer in the future to former prisoners who are interested in beginning or continuing meditation practice after release. We are in the process of developing ways to integrate former prisoners into Zen Center programs and practices.

Thank you for bearing with us as we go through our process of exploration and transition. You have our best wishes, and our commitment to consider the possibilities seriously and thoroughly.