

March 26, 2010

Dear Sangha members:

This Transition Memo #2 is to update you on the process of Many Hands and Eyes-Collective Wisdom and Awakening (CAAW), which is stewarding the transition process towards my sabbatical, which is scheduled from January through December 2011.

What has happened since the February 4th Transition Memo #1? Gathering Ingredients and creating the Guiding Questions.

Gathering Ingredients: Listening and Bearing Witness. During February and March, the members of CAAW engaged in meetings with the Day Group, the Resident Sangha, and Sangha members to surface, gather, and listen to the ingredients arising around my sabbatical year 2011. Ranging, in the words of one of our members, from the "picayune to the grand," these ingredients, which are all posted in the Members' section of the Zen Center's website, were carefully sifted through and were incorporated into the Guiding Questions document, which is part of this posting.

The ingredients most often raised were the following:

- Who will be in charge while Roshi is on sabbatical?
- How will the teaching and program needs be addressed?
- What is the financial impact of the Abbot's sabbatical?
- How do we address the drop in participation when Roshi is away?
- Will people take responsibility for their own practice and realize the impact of individual practice on the collective Sangha?

CAAW members wish to thank those of you who offered ingredients. We are especially grateful to those who are keeping the process of inquiry going beyond the meetings, thereby deepening the investigation into the Zen Center mandala and into how personal practice impacts the Sangha and the Zen Center. CAAW members also found the suggestions relating to how the Zen Center can function

better to be very helpful and also were heartened to hear the expressions of appreciation for what the Zen Center offers and how it operates.

During the March 21st Board of Directors meeting, several CAAW members gave a report to the Board on the work of CAAW to date and also arranged a meeting between CAAW and the Board during the May Board meeting.

Roshi also had a helpful conversation with ZCLA Allies John Ott and Rose Pinard on the organizational dynamics of spiritual authority and sangha empowerment and the skills needed to develop conversations in organizations. We may engage in this exploration after the immediate concerns have been addressed.

Creating the Guiding Questions. The Guiding Questions, which is the primary document for directing the work of CAAW, incorporates the main ingredients that have surfaced by Sangha members, by me through my ongoing attention to the Zen Center Mandala, and through CAAW's conversations among its members and with the Sangha. CAAW has moved into the guiding questions phase of the process, with an emphasis on exploring the Abbot's Seat and how to best fill it during the 2011 sabbatical year.

In addition to the important ingredients raised by the Sangha, you will see from reading the Guiding Questions that other areas have come to light. Most notably, a broader framework is coming into view that may reflect the need for future organizational and structural changes. While the immediate concerns around the year 2011 as raised by the sabbatical are CAAW's top priority, the movement created by the sabbatical will continue to inform our unique organizational practice.

The Abbot Seat Holder. Coined by the Zen Peacemakers in formulating their organizational mandala, the term "seat holder" refers to persons who best exemplify the teachings and dynamics of the spheres of the Mandala, such as the Spiritual, Study, Resources, Relationship, and Service Spheres, and can also be applied to those who exemplify the teaching and dynamics of particular areas within each Sphere, such as the Sangha, Residency, or Resources.

In considering the term "Seat Holder," it might be helpful to look at how the term "Steward" came to be used at the Zen Center. This movement began in 2002, when we undertook an exploration into Shared Leadership, an attempt to consider how the Zen Center could be organized both on solid principles of Dharma practice and sound organizational management. The word "leadership" morphed into "stewardship" because stewardship better captured the fundamental sense of "caring for" that underlies the "not causing harm" principle that is essential to Zen Buddhist life. We use the word "stewards" to refer both to all individual members of the Sangha and also to those who assume primary responsibility for particular circles, such as the Steward of the Executive Circle, or areas of responsibility, such as the Samu (Work) Steward.

Since the announcement of my sabbatical, the term Abbot Seat Holder has come into view and has been used to raise the question of "How will the Abbot's Seat be filled during Roshi's sabbatical?" In June, 1999, Roshi Bernie Glassman formally Descended the Mountain as the 2nd Abbot of ZCLA and passed the temple seal to me as I Ascended the Mountain, becoming the Zen Center's 3rd Abbot. I am currently the Abbot and, therefore, the Abbot Seat Holder of the Zen Center. While I am on sabbatical, I will remain as the Abbot of ZCLA. During this time, someone else will take the Abbot's Seat and receive the teachings inherent in that Seat. This is somewhat reminiscent of how Shakyamuni Buddha (not that I am comparing myself to the Buddha!) would share his seat with another buddha or with a disciple.

A Seat Holder holds the broad view of the Sphere and its relationship to the other spheres and the Mandala as a whole. In the case of the Abbot Seat Holder, the seat holder holds the Spiritual Sphere and is both informed by and informs how the Dharma teachings of that Sphere permeate all the other Spheres of the Mandala, or the whole of the Mandala. Representing the widest possible view and a keen understanding of the interconnectedness of our lives, the seat holder position is an invitation to receiving the teachings of that Seat. This is in contrast to leading by filling a position with specific tasks, although there are specific areas of overview for the Abbot Seat Holder. A Seat Holder supports the existing programs and organizational structures to function well by offering teaching guidance, and may, from time to time at the Seat Holder's discretion or at the request of others, become hands on in a specific situation.

This underlying approach of receiving the teachings that come through by being in the role or position is also true for all the stewarding roles/ positions at the Zen Center, whether in service, the Zendo, as tenzo, on the grounds, and so forth. What teachings are these positions extending to us? Occasionally, a concern is raised that the Abbot Seat Holder will be a figurehead during my sabbatical or that the Sangha will be "on hold" during this period. Rest assured that whoever takes the Abbot's Seat during this time period will have the capacity to receive the teachings of the Seat and to guide the Sangha with the person's own unique imprint. One "holds the seat" by becoming fully immersed in it. As for the Sangha holding its breath for a year, that makes for an amusing picture!

The movement to an emphasis on teaching and programs for the Abbot Seat Holder implies a re-balancing in other areas of the Zen Center organization. These possible organizational changes are raised in the Guiding Questions and may provide opportunities for members to become leaderful and for experienced practitioners to integrate more fully into the Zen Center Mandala.

Abbot Seat Holder timeframe. CAAW is presently exploring how best to fill the Abbot's Seat during 2011. Hopefully, arrangements will fall into place over the next few months and an announcement can be made to the Sangha in late May. We appreciate that some of you are anxious about this, and I encourage you to remain grounded and to allow this process to fully unfold.

Questions for Roshi. I responded to specific questions about my sabbatical during the Sangha Council. For those who were not present, the questions and responses are covered here.

- Will Roshi return from sabbatical and when? Yes, January 2012.
- Are there times or events for which Roshi might return during her sabbatical year? I will return for major events such as a devastating earthquake or a death of a Sangha member. I will also return from time to time to attend to my annually scheduled medical appointments.
- Will Roshi be available to Sangha members during 2011? I will continue to be available to those Sangha members who are experiencing serious health

situations. At this time, I have not given consideration to any other situations.

Note: Members' Website link. Please refer to the Members section of the ZCLA website for the following documents:

- Transition memo #1-February 4, 2010
- Ingredients-Day Group
- Ingredients-Residents
- Ingredients-Sangha Council
- Process Diagram.

In addition, this Transition Memo #2 and The Guiding Questions will also be posted.

For those who may not know how to access the Zen Center documents on the Members' section of the ZCLA website, here is a brief guide. Go to www.zencenter.org and click on Members. Enter your email and password in the appropriate sections. Once you enter the Members' site, click on Circles and Groups, go to Relationship Sphere of Mandala, click on Many Hands and Eyes Circles, click on Many Hands and Eyes Collective Wisdom and Awakening Circle.

Appreciation. Thank you all, once again, for your response to the invitation that my sabbatical presents. Please feel free to contact any of the CAAW members, who are listed below, with your comments, questions, or concerns.

Roshi Egyoku, in gassho and appreciation

CAAW members:

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Attachment: The Guiding Questions

Please go to the Members' section of the ZCLA website for all other documents.

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