



Water Wheel

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

—Gate of Sweet Nectar

Zen Center of Los Angeles / Buddha Essence Temple

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

FALL PRACTICE PERIOD

ZCLA Normandie Mountain ❁ Lincroft Zen Sangha
Valley Sangha ❁ Ocean Moon Sangha

October 4 to December 31, 2008
“Practice and work are not two!”

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Every Fall we undertake a Practice Period. This year, four sanghas will join together across the miles for this period of focused practice: the ZCLA Normandie Mountain Sangha led by Roshi Egyoku, the Lincroft Zen Sangha led by Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd in Lincroft (NJ); the Valley Sangha led by Dharma Holder Pat Shingetsu Guzy in Woodland Hills (CA); and the Ocean Moon Sangha led by Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen in Santa Monica (CA).

The Normandie Mountain Sangha has begun to explore the miraculous possibility of collective awakening—can a sangha all wake up together? Coming together for this Practice Period is a natural step. Those in the Southern California area may be able to sit in any of the different locations. If Lincroft folks find themselves in Southern California, or vice versa, let's be sure to practice together.

The three-month Practice Period is a time when each of us takes a moment to reflect on our *essential vow*. From this vow, we make a commitment to daily *zazen*, study with a teacher, and *one* other commitment in an area of our life. Please refer to the Practice Period Commitment forms (to be issued separately) for further information. For this Practice Period, we ask for a commitment from every member of the Sangha.



Daisies greeting Jizo Bodhisattva, sculpted by artist Tom Matsuda

A vow sets a direction for your life that goes beyond your self-interest. The Four Great Bodhisattva Vows

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Roshi Egyoku is Abbot and Head Teacher of ZCLA.

epitomize receiving the wholeness of life as the primary ground for living the Buddha Way. The Four Vows affirm that this life that we are living is all-together, all of the time, everywhere. Our essential vow shakes us out of our ego-centered ways and implores us to be upright, dust off the traces of self, and step into the reality of Life.

The ancient Zen Masters tell us that to live the essential vow is “neither difficult nor easy.” In the realm of practice, we are not concerned with difficult or easy—we are committed to just practicing.

The theme for the Practice Period is “practice and work are not two.” This is a variation on the Soto Zen teaching “Practice and study are not two.” Whatever area of life you have not integrated as practice can be said to be “not two” with practice. As you mature in practice, practice becomes integrated into all facets of your life. As Zen Master Dogen said, “All dharmas (*everything*) is Buddhadharma.”

Throughout the three months, Normandie Mountain will also include several Sangha-working-together events. These fushinzamu (*fushin*, together; *samu*, work) events

will include the Sangha working together in cleaning the gardens, the kitchen, and preparations for the Day of Dana food donations to neighborhood families. Working together makes visible the many hands and eyes of our mutual interdependence.

What can happen when a group of dedicated practitioners all-together decides to “forget the self” and serve the whole? As we explore “practice and work are not two,” along with collective awakening, we look forward to whatever possibilities that will open up for us.

I leave you with Stephen Mitchell’s translation of the famous verse by the enlightened Chinese lay practitioner, Layman P’ang:

*My daily affairs are quite ordinary;
but I am in total harmony with them.
I don't hold on to anything,
don't reject anything;
nowhere an obstacle or conflict.
Who cares about wealth and honor?
Even the poorest thing shines.
My miraculous power and
spiritual activity:
Drawing water and carrying wood. ■*

Become a Founding Member of The Legacy Circle

Join by December 31, 2008

ZCLA’s Legacy Circle is comprised of members and friends who have made a commitment to the future of the Center by naming ZCLA as a beneficiary. A bequest of this nature is one of the simplest ways to practice dana and extend generosity into the future.

Over the years, legacy gifts have made an important contribution to the continued practice and teaching of the Dharma here at Normandie Mountain. The Center is truly grateful for the foresight and generosity of the dedicated individuals who have made legacy gifts and commitments.

The following are a few of the ways in which you might support ZCLA with a planned gift:

- Include ZCLA in your will or living trust,
- Designate ZCLA as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy,
- Make legacy gifts of personal property,
- Designate ZCLA as a beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust.

We encourage you to consider putting your personal affairs and papers in order, which includes the making of a will. Once primary commitments to family and friends are taken care of, we respectfully request giving thought to leaving a part of your legacy to ZCLA.

All those who join the Legacy Circle between now and December 2008 will be named a Founding Member and recognized for their commitment to the continued teaching of the Dharma.

We will be mailing further information about the Legacy Circle to ZCLA members in the near future.

The Legacy Circle
Jeanne Dokai Dickenson
Development Steward
213.387.2352
developmentsteward@zcla.org

Sangha Photos

Celebrating “Buddhas recognizing Buddhas”



The Sangha celebrates the Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts for April True-Flower Ford at Normandie Mountain Wildlife Refuge.

Awaiting the Hungry Spirits



Each Sunday, the Sangha offers the ritual of *The Gate of Sweet Nectar* to feed the hungry spirits with food and Buddha wisdom. Once a year, we set aside a time when an abundance of offerings are given and Sangha ancestors also welcomed to feast and receive the teachings of *The Gate*.

The annual ancestor event features the reading of names from the Center’s *Book of the Past*, original calligraphed banners of the Buddha Families by Founding Abbot Maezumi Roshi, elements of Soto ritual and tradition, and drawings of hungry ghosts.

We thought you might enjoy seeing the altar shortly before it was devoured by the spirits. Thanks to all bodhisattvas for their loving set up of the altar. ■

On Training as a Head Trainee

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

From the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, practitioners have undertaken a three-month training period during the monsoon season (Spring/Summer), when travelling was difficult for mendicants. In our tradition, this period is called *ango*, or “peaceful dwelling.” It is a time of focused attention to all facets of monastic life, living together with no coming and going from the monastery.

At Normandie Mountain, we undertake a three-month Practice Period during the Fall. During this time, Roshi Egyoku, as Head Teacher, may designate a student whom she feels has the maturity to serve as the Head Trainee or *Shuso* (a priest-in-training serving as Head Trainee). Because most of our practitioners are employed outside of the Center and have family commitments, the Head Trainee now serves for a year, rather than for the customary three months. In this way, the position creates a structure for the person to be in her everyday life as *Buddhadharma* itself. Those serving in

this position have found it to be a deeply transformative undertaking.

In a Zen Buddhist temple, the head student is also the Officer in Charge of Purity (that is, the toilet cleaner). The Head Trainee is a “model” of practice for the Sangha, fulfilling the designated duties of the position throughout the year with commitment, constancy, presence, and service, without calling attention to himself. Duties include a formal *zendo* entry at dawn, regular face-to-face with Roshi, a workshop for the Sangha, and stepping in as needed without hesitation.

The year is bracketed by two important ceremonies, the Entering Ceremony and Dharma combat (*Hossen*). At *Hossen*, the Head Trainee gives her first Dharma Talk. *Hossen* is both a crucible and an empowerment of the student in that their understanding is tested by the Sangha, an enlivening experience for everyone. ■

Welcome to Margaret Jifu Gower, Operations Steward

This past winter, Margaret Jifu Gower joined the ZCLA staff as its new Operations Steward.

When, as an ordinary teenager born and raised in Texas and close to her local Christian Church, Jifu encountered *The Four Vows* gatha, she thought, “Gee, it’s too bad I’m a teenage girl, because otherwise I would be a Zen monk.”

Around the time her son was born, Jifu began to yearn for something more and started a home *zazen* practice from instructions in *The Three Pillars of Zen*. When she and her then-husband decided to move to a place of practice with a Zen teacher, they chose ZCLA and Taizan Maezumi Roshi. Jifu received the Precepts as a lay person and was ordained as a priest by ZCLA’s founder, Taizan Maezumi Roshi.

Jifu practiced as *Shuso* (Head Monk) in 1984, a time of turmoil and change for the Center. When the needs of family required that Jifu return to work, she attended and graduated from the USC Gould School of Law and went on to practice law for 18 years. For ten years, she led The Lone Star Zendo sitting group in her Santa Monica home.



Jifu

In 1995, Jifu was named a Dharma Holder by Roshi Bernie Glassman and in 1998, received *Denkai* (Preceptor) Transmission from Roshi Egyoku Nakao. “Then one day I realized I was 62 years old and that the time to resume formal full-time practice is *now*.”

“Sitting and practicing with others,” she says, “is what keeps re-establishing me in the Dharma. I feel deeply fortunate that the position of Operations Steward became available and that Roshi Egyoku and the Board have offered it to me.”

Zen Programs at Normandie Mountain

Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

Roshi holds FTF for members Wednesday evenings, Friday dawn, and Saturday and Sunday mornings. Changes to her schedule are posted in the DharmaFlash each week. On Saturdays, FTF meetings are rotated between Dharma-Holders Patricia Shingetsu Guzy and Gary Koan Janka. On Sundays, between Dharma-Holders John Daishin Buksbaze and Raul Ensho Berge. Please note that all of the Center's teachers, including Dharma-Holder Maggie Jifu Gower, are also available by private appointment.

Dharma Training Fund

Through the generosity of the Sangha, the **Dharma Training Fund (DTF)** is available to all Zen Practitioners to supplement program fees. No one is ever turned away for lack of funds. If you find yourself in financial need for a particular program you wish to attend, please do not let finances keep you from attending. Inquire with Dokai in the office for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to practice and study the Dharma!


See our calendar at www.zcla.org for the daily program schedule and for additional program details and updates.

 Please register in advance. Contact the office at info@zcla.org to register.

Fall Practice Period

Fall Practice Period. October 4 to December 31. Led by Roshi Egyoku at ZCLA Normandie Mountain, Sensei Kodo Boyd at Lincroft Sangha (NJ), Sensei Daishin Buksbaze at Ocean Moon Sangha in Santa Monica (CA), and Dharma Holder Shingetsu Guzy at Valley Sangha in Woodland Hills (CA). Please complete your commitment form and return it by September 30, 2008. Check the calendars and Practice Period Commitment Form for schedule details.


Practice Period Entering Ceremony and Head Trainee Entering Ceremonies. Saturday, October 4, at 9:00 a.m. Please join us as we officially open the Practice Period and install Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson as the Head Trainee for the 2008-2009 training year. Please attend.


Sangha Meals: Thursday eve and weekends. On Thursday eve, supper is available at 6:15; Saturday and Sunday buffet breakfast at 7:00; (no silence). All members may join. Members may find weekend breakfasts especially conducive to your schedules. No fee for meals: Please sign up for meals in advance. 

Practice Period Commitment Agreements

All members are asked to make practice commitments for the Practice Period. You will be receiving your Practice Commitment booklet and form at the end of August. Please send a completed copy to the office by September 30, (Attention: Roshi), so that we can list your name on the Training Board. The Valley, Ocean-Moon, and Lincroft Zen Sangha members may return their commitment forms to their teachers.

Zazen Programs

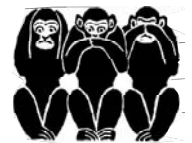
Tangaryo.* Saturday, September 13, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All members are encouraged to come to this silent and restful day of unstructured zazen; no bells, no teacher. You set your own schedule. Silent, informal lunch will be provided. If you are a member who has not yet sat Tangaryo, contact Lorraine Gessho Kumpf through the office. (All members are required to participate in one Tangaryo.) Fee: Dana 

Autumn Sesshin.* From Sunday evening, October 5, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) **to Saturday, October 11, 9:00 p.m.** Led by Roshi Egyoku. "Sesshin" means "to collect one's heart and mind." It is highly recommended for deepening one's practice. The schedule includes zazen, chanting, face-to-face meetings with Roshi, Dharma talks, work, rest, and three vegetarian oryoki meals daily. Overnight accommodations available. \$240; \$450 for nonmembers, plus housing; daily fees also. 

***Note:** Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva precepts will take place on **Saturdays, September 20 and October 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Open to everyone. **September 20** will be led by Rosa Ando Martinez on Precept # 10: Not speaking ill of the Three Treasures;



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October 25 will be led by Evi Gemmon Ketterer on Precept #2: Non-stealing.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, October 16, at 7:30 p.m. During this ceremony of renewing the vows and precepts, we each have an opportunity to bear witness to our conduct in thoughts, words, and actions. Everyone is welcome to participate. Those who have received the precepts are asked to attend on a regular basis. Officiated by Dharma-Holder Shingetsu Guzy.

Classes and Workshops

Conversation About Practice. Sunday, October 12, 11:00 a.m. to noon. This new offering will be led by a member of the Teachers Circle. We will engage in a conversation about practice with topics posed by the facilitator and/or participants.

Jukai (Receiving the Precepts) Class Series. This series is being offered both at ZCLA and at the Valley Sangha as follows:

At ZCLA (Tuesday evenings):

7:30-9:00 p.m. September 16 (Roshi) & 23 (Ensho)

At The Valley Sangha (Monday evenings):

7:30-9:00 p.m., September 15 and 22 (Shingetsu)

This two-class series is for those who wish to receive the precepts. Class 1 is on the Ceremony and Rakusu; Class 2 is on the Lineage and Bowing. The Precepts Series is a prerequisite for these classes. Tuition: \$70 for members. Please get in touch with the Program Steward at programsteward@zcla.org for more information, including discounted packages available, and registration. ☎

Practice Period Commitment Circle. On **Saturday, October 4, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Everyone is welcome to attend the Commitment Circle and share and discuss with others your practice commitments for the Practice Period. Learn how each of us are intentionally practicing for the three months.

Fushinzamu (Working-Together Practice). Friday, October 17, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and **Saturday morning, October 18, 11:00 a.m. to noon, Wednesday through Friday** during Practice Period. We will care for the Center's gardens, grounds, and buildings. Fushinzamu is a wonderful opportunity to express our zazen as samu and group practice. It is also a chance to work with people who might have different jobs and thus to bring the Sangha closer together. Led by Faith-Mind Thoresen and Koan Janka. You may contact Faith-Mind or Koan through the Center's office, or just show up!

Sangha Council for Members. October 19, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. The Many Hands and Eyes Circle leads a follow-up conversation about its efforts regarding the Angulimala Prison Project as well as educating ourselves about sexual violence.

Special Events

High HolyDay Services. Monday & Tuesday, September 29 & 30, and Wednesday & Thursday, November 8 & 9. Led by Rabbi Don An Shalom Singer, Sensei. Services will be held at The Village Church at 343 S. Church Lane in Westwood, Los Angeles. For more information and registration, contact rabbidonald@mac.com or go to www.shirhadashcommunity.org

Practice Period Sesshin

The Sangha is encouraged to attend all or part of sesshin.

Autumn Sesshin

October 5 to 11

Enlightenment (Rohatsu) Sesshin

December 5 to 13

End-of-Year Sesshin

December 26 to 31

Dress Etiquette For Zendo, Dharma Hall, and Buddha Hall

When you attend any Zen Center functions in the Zendo, Dharma Hall, and Buddha Hall, please remember the Center's dress etiquette:

- Cover yourself up. This means no shorts or miniskirts—keep your legs covered. No sleeveless or tank tops, low cut tops, casual tee shirts. This includes during the summer heat.
- Refrain from bright colors, dizzying patterns, or tee shirts with slogans.
- No perfumes or fragrant lotions. There are many folks with serious allergies.
- No noisy jewelry.

Remember, the practice halls are not places for casual attire and attitudes. Please respect the Sangha and dress appropriately. Thank you.

Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt Thank You!

Please let our staff know of the many bodhisattvas to appreciate. Have we missed anyone?

Brown-Green Group, **George Mukei Horner, Heather Faith-Spring Chapman, Nelida Cartolin, Larry Barber** for efforts toward ZCLA being named a "Certified Wildlife Habitat";
Mukei for Normandie Mountain Wildlife Refuge photography exhibit;
Bill Red Pine Porter for a copy of P'u Ming's *Oxherding Pictures & Verses* for the Center Library;
John Heart-Mirror Trotter, Nelida, and Reiju Wasserman for producing and mailing Water Wheel;
Evi Gemmon Ketterer for leading the Caregivers Retreat and the Rakusu sewing class;
Burt Wetanson for editing Caregivers Retreat literature;
Co-Tenzo Coordinators, **Jill King** and **Elizabeth Bryer**, for coordinating deep cleaning of the kitchen, and to cleaners **Yudo Burger, Nelida, Lynda Golan, Gemmon, Robert VanKirk, Jisen Reybin, Kaizen Venners, and Jotai Webb**;
Koan Janka and **Jifu Gower** for caring for and returning orphaned dog Coach to his rightful owner and to all Sangha members who cared for Coach;
Conrad Butsugen Romo for devoted and consistent coordination of Dharma Chats;
Yudo for cleaning windows and screens of Buddha Hall;
Koan for beautiful new pathway leading to the Wild Space;
Gemmon for Zendo and Buddha Hall haishiki covers;
Dokai, Koan, Gemmon, Yudo, Jotai, Gessho, Roshi for creating the beautiful altar for Obon and **Gemmon** for preparing the hungry ghost banners;
Roshi, Ensho Berge, and Shingetsu Guzy for leading the Precept Series at ZCLA and Valley Sangha, respectively;
Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert for assuming the position of Assistant Chief Financial Officer to the Board;
The new Board Finance Committee: **Patti Muso Giggans, Mark Shogen Bloodgood, Dharma-Joy, Bob Swan, Darla Myoho Fjeld, and Margaret Jifu Gower**.

Hearty welcome to new members **Chris Fields**, theater director and teacher; **Josh Herman**, writer; **Thomas Meier**, doctoral student at UCI and magician; **Perry Self**, high school teacher, theater event organizer, father of two teenagers; and **Alan Turton**, business analyst and musician.

Congratulations to ZCLA as new member of Zen Peacemaker Sangha; to **Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran** as Head of the Field Office for California, Nevada, Hawaii for Sierra Club.



Sangha Rites of Passage

Receiving the Precepts (Jukai)
From Roshi Egyoku Nakao
August 17, 2008
April True-Flower Ford

New Members Entering Ceremony
August 2, 2008
Chris Fields . Judy Frisk
Josh Herman . Thomas Meier
Perry Self . Alan Turton

Civil Partnership Ceremony
Plymouth, England
August 8, 2008
James Soshin Thornton &
Martin Goodman

Zen Peacemaker Sangha
Zen Center of Los Angeles

ZCLA-Affiliated Sitting Groups*

The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)
led by Dharma-Holder Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

The Ocean Moon Sangha (Santa Monica, CA)
led by Sensei John Daishin Buksbizen

The Lincroft Zen Sangha (Lincroft, NJ)
led by Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd

The Laguna Hills Sangha (Laguna Hills, CA)
coordinated by Helen Daiji Powell

The San Luis Obispo Sitting Group
(San Luis Obispo, CA)
coordinated by Mark Shogen Bloodgood

Contact us at info@zcla.org for information.

*ZCLA-Affiliated Sitting Groups are led by independent Dharma Teachers (Senseis) or practitioners who are actively practicing at ZCLA. Those interested in leading a ZCLA-affiliated sitting group may apply to the Teachers Circle.

Resident Training and Guest Residencies. Occasionally, space is available for longer-term resident training and shorter-term guest stays. If you are interested, please inquire at info@zcla.org and you will be directed to the appropriate contact person.

The *Water Wheel* is published by the Zen Center of Los Angeles / Buddha Essence Temple, which was founded in 1967 by the late Taizan Maezumi Roshi.

The ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple mission is to know the Self, maintain the precepts, and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism. **Our vision** is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized, and compassion flows unhindered. **Our core values** are available upon request.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi
Abbot Emeritus: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao
Staff: Mary Rios, Business Manager; Margaret Jifu Gower, Operations Steward; Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward. *Water Wheel*: Editor, Dokai Dickenson; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson. Photographers: Tom Yudo Burger, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, and Dokai. The *Water Wheel* is published bi-monthly in paper and electronic formats.

Contact the Editor at (213) 387-2352 or dokai@zcla.org. The *Water Wheel* is also available through electronic distribution.



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Address Correction Requested

From the Board of Directors

By Patti Muso Giggans, Interim Board President

The Board of Directors recently paid tribute to the five-year continuous service of Gary Janka as co-president of this circle. Both Koan and Raul Ensho Berge, his co-steward, recently stepped down from the Board. We invited them both back to the July meeting so that we could honor their service and appreciate all that they have contributed. Their care and commitment have served the sangha well. We continue to benefit from the practices that have been put in place through their leadership. I am currently acting as Interim President as the Board continues its outreach and commitment to bring on two or three new members by the end of this year.

One of the main functions of the Board is to provide nurturance and oversight to the Center's finances. To that end, we have re-energized and expanded the finance committee. An organization as complex as ZCLA has many financial obligations and the due diligence that this requires, when done well, ensures that our practice place will continue into the years ahead. We know that we are in difficult economic times, and it is in times like these that our due diligence is required more than ever.

Pilgrimage to Northern China

From October 23 to November 7, 2008

The ZCLA-sponsored Buddhist Pilgrimage to Buddhist, Ch'an, and Chinese historical sites will be the first Western group to participate in the annual ceremony commemorating Bodhidharma at his burial temple and to visit the ancient dharma seat of Moshan, the woman Zen teacher of the Tang Dynasty. Pilgrimage guides Andy Ferguson and Bill Red Pine Porter are both highly experienced guides and scholars to Buddhist China. Open to everyone. For more information, registration, and videos: www.southmountaintours.com.

A deep appreciation to the current members of the Board: Mark Shogen Bloodgood (Chief Financial Officer), Darla Myoho Fjeld, Tom Dharma -Joy Reichert (Secretary and Assistant Chief Financial Officer), Hillary Radiant-Vow Stephenson, DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Robert Swan (Investment Portfolio), and Roshi Egyoku Nakao for their loving attention to ZCLA. The work of the Board is largely unseen, but it is an ongoing and mindful practice of deeply committed people working together. ■