



Water Wheel

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

—Gate of Sweet Nectar

Zen Center of Los Angeles
Great Dragon Mountain / Buddha Essence Temple

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Not Leaving Mara's Realm, Enter the Buddha's Realm

By Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd

Mara is one of the earliest non-human beings to appear in Buddhist writings. Sometimes called “the tempter,” he represents our conditioned existence with all of the passions and desires that ensnare and delude us. The Buddha’s realm is the realm over which Buddhas spread their influence, teach the Dharma, and manifest wisdom and loving-kindness. Mara’s realm is the realm of good and bad, right and wrong, want and don’t want. This is the conditioned existence of chasing happiness and never quite achieving it. The Buddha’s realm leaps clear of choices through an all-embracing wisdom and compassion.

Although we can speak of Mara’s realm and Buddha’s realm, there has been only one realm. We have become confused by our capacity to sense and feel and be aware of our human form. Experiencing all of the sensations and perceptions that come with our human body, we have thought ourselves to be something solid and specific. We have seen ourselves as separate and apart from all that we can perceive. It is understandable that we could have come to this conclusion about ourselves and about each of the millions of beings and things of the world. Through this same capacity for sensing and perceiving, we also have the subtle sense that our view of being separate and apart is not correct.

The capping phrase above, “Not leaving Mara’s realm, enter the Buddha’s realm,” tells us that in this dualistic world of what appear to be contradictions and oppositions, we are being asked to take a broader view of things. Though there is only this One life, we do not see



Every drop returns to the source.

this and do not live as if this were true. When we do not live in accord with this Oneness, all the millions of things we treat as separate suffer from our ignorance. When all is one, there is no “other” to meet, no “inside” to enter. And yet we are told, “Not leaving Mara’s realm, enter the Buddha’s realm.” What, where, when, and how do we enter? How do we enter the place where we already are? What kind of entry is this?

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Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd is Abbot Seat Holder for 2011.

When I was in elementary school, there was still a time of day called recess. We were released from classrooms at least twice a day, three times if we were very fortunate. Our play was supervised, but organized. We naturally sorted ourselves into a group of boys and a group of girls. The girls played the same circle games our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents had played, and we jumped rope.

When just learning, you stand mid-way between the rope turners. They begin to move the rope so that it taps your legs a few times in almost the same rhythm with which it will turn, and then they begin turning the rope as you jump. As we moved into first and second grade, we were expected to be able to do what was called "running in." At the beginning of recess, the turners began turning and sometimes didn't stop until the bell rang. The rope

"We arise by way of the stream we are entering. How will we enter? How will we meet one another, talk to one another?"

was long enough that almost the whole class of girls could fit between the two turners. Everyone could jump. Everyone was included. Sometimes, the last runner in called the next runner in, but really no one had to be told that they were included. It was already so. But in order to take advantage of this inclusion, you had to know how to "run in" to the already turning rope.

For a while, I could only watch because many girls had been doing this long before I could. It required a skill that I took some time to acquire. First, you had to stand at an angle just outside the turning rope, close to one turner or the other. Standing with one foot a bit in front of the other, you rocked back and forth to the rhythm of the turning rope. At just the right moment, having matched the rhythm of the rope and the rhythm of the other jumpers, you ran into the rope. This is how you entered the stream of jumping.

Even now, I remember the year that I became able to run in, to enter the turning rope. It was one of those satisfying accomplishments of childhood that makes the years of mastery such pure joy. At the time, what I felt was a great pleasure in a movement that was rhythmic, in sync with everything, and rewarded with complete inclusion.

I look back now at what entry required of me—a kind of bearing witness that meant forgetting about myself, my

arms, legs, and feet, forgetting that my classmates were watching, and forgetting about the possibility of messing up and stopping the rope-jumping for everyone. Playing children can come by such moments naturally, and yet children work hard at play when time allows. To be successful is to run into the rope without tripping on the rope, without bumping into another jumper, without missing a beat. Being one with rope and turning and jumpers and playground noises. In tune with everything, you just run in.

When we enter that which is already us, we must be attentive and aware. We want our entry to be smooth. We do not want to cause a hitch in the flow of things. We want to do no harm. For our entering to be non-entering, we must enter in accord with the movement of what is already so.

During our morning service here on Great Dragon Mountain, we chant the "Song of the Jewel Mirror Awareness" and say, "Merging is auspicious; do not violate it." We arise by way of the stream we are entering. How will we enter? How will we meet one another, talk to one another?

For many years, a Sangha has practiced here on Great Dragon Mountain. For nearly ten years now, we have looked deeply at, and into, the most fundamental characteristics of Sangha—its harmony, its all-embracing and collective nature. We have called it Shared Stewardship. We also call it Collective Awakening and Wisdom. To give our practice these names is to name it as it already is—the living of Oneness in all its messy and wondrous harmony. We are so deeply immersed in it that some of us say it has stopped, even as their complaint runs right through the middle of it. Confused by form and sense, perception and awareness, we may call it messy and deny its harmony even as that harmony is the source of our irritated response. What we may call messy is merely the life work of uniqueness entering its own Oneness.

Often we do not notice that the whole Sangha-net is constantly changing, and with each change, we are made different by the new way in which we must come together. We do not always appreciate the freedom of arising new in every moment and in response to the constant change of this One circumstance. When we do not notice that we must change and cannot rely on old and fixed views, it is difficult to take advantage of such complete freedom. If in every breath and moment we can be different, we are not obligated to wear an old story of who we are. We can constantly change our minds. In every moment, the so-called same person is a new person and can be different in accord with the circumstances, and, therefore, offer a wise and compassionate response to whatever is happening. Being One means transcending contradictions and

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Finding Peace On The Inside

By Sensei Gary Koan Janka

My partner, Jill, recently gave me a book entitled *Breakfast With Buddha*, an enjoyable fictional account of a New York book editor's travels to North Dakota with a Tibetan Rinpoche. At one point in the story, over breakfast, the Rinpoche decides to give the protagonist a teaching. He removes a small handful of soil from his robe, pours it into his tumbler of water and stirs it up. He then explains to his traveling companion that the mind is like this. When we do something that harms ourselves or others, use drugs, become angry, and so forth, our minds are stirred up and become cloudy. In order for us to see life clearly, it is essential that we learn to meditate—to settle and clarify the mind—and to conduct ourselves in a wholesome fashion.

I like this simple demonstration and have begun to use it when offering zazen instruction at the County Jail where a group of us works each Friday. Certainly, many of the men and women we see have “stirred up” minds. They speak of their inability to focus or to settle down, their crazy minds going in all directions, and of being caught up in endless repetitive loops of thought. When we speak of the “monkey mind,” they smile, knowing well what that means in terms of the seemingly endless stream of internal chatter.

Much of the endless mental chatter and repetitive thinking causes them great suffering. The anxiety of uncertainty about their case, the guilt and shame for what they have done, and the always-present threat of violence, can lead to hopelessness, fear, and despair. In short, there is suffering. A critical point I try to make is that, until they get a grip on their minds, they will never know any peace. And by “getting a grip,” I don't mean a hard, forceful grasping, but rather an ability to see what is happening clearly, and to hold it in a spacious, gentle, and open way.

In response to this suffering, what we offer is *zazen*. As the men and women we work with begin to devote themselves to the practice of *zazen*, their ability to be present and to observe what goes on in their minds



Sensei Koan

becomes stronger, and they are able to see more clearly how their minds become cloudy and stirred up. At some point, if they stick with it, they can begin to see and appreciate various aspects of mind.

For example, there is Reactive Mind, the mind that quickly judges, evaluates, and gives meaning to thoughts and events. A Greek philosopher, Epictetus, was known for saying, “It is not events themselves that trouble men, but rather their thoughts about them.” Until we are able to see how we give meaning to events, can separate the event from our thoughts about them, and take responsibility for our reaction to them, we will always be at the mercy of other people's actions. One of the great gifts of *zazen* is the ability to observe (and to not get caught up in) what is going on in our minds.

One of the ways Reactive Mind manifests is through Angry Mind. Anger is one of the Three Poisons and certainly no stranger to most of us. The split-second reaction of anger is also the reason so many men and women are in jail. Many of them know they have “anger issues” and are often eager to find a way to work with them. The Buddha taught that the antidote to anger is patience, not only with others and events, but patience with ourselves. Here again, the practice of *zazen* is critical to the development of patience. As our practice deepens and we begin to settle on the inside, our reaction times begin to slow down as well, and a gap arises between the

Sensei Gary Koan Janka received Dharma Transmission from Roshi Egyoku Nakao in 2010. He is Steward of the Angulimala Prison Circle and is also the Center's Resident Steward.

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action and the reaction. In that gap, it is possible to come back to the breath and remember “Don’t bite the hook!”

There is also Blaming Mind, the mind that externalizes the cause of our suffering. Unfortunately, the conditioned response of the mind is to pin the blame on someone or something else: the cause of their suffering is their case, the District Attorney, the Sheriff’s Department, their “homies.” Once the cause is externalized, the goal becomes controlling those external forces. And, as we know, we will never have enough power or skill or “smarts” or money to do so. It’s a fool’s game. An important part of our practice is to accept full responsibility for our lives and to give up trying to control everything, opening ourselves instead to the full range of human experience, not blocking or avoiding anything.

This acceptance and openness sets the stage for Atonement and Forgiveness. When those in jail are able to be “at one” with their actions and the content of their minds, there is no longer any need to defend. Things are what they are, what is done is done. They can begin to move on, and an essential part of that moving on is the act of forgiveness, the forgiving of self and others. This can result in an enormous sense of freedom and feelings of peace. Over time, one result of this process that I have seen is a decision on the part of some inmates to quit fighting their situation, to own up to their actions

“An important part of our practice is to accept full responsibility for our lives and to give up trying to control everything.”

and “take their lumps,” and to accept the best deal they can get and move on. In these instances, what has struck me is that the decision always arose from a place of great inner peace, a deep acceptance of the reality of their situation.

Another step towards finding peace on the inside is the awareness of Preferential Mind, the mind that wants things to be certain way, the mind that knows how things should or need to be for us to be happy. In the Verses of the Faith Mind, we read: “To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.” This disease seems to infect us all, and, at the same time, there is a lot on the inside to dislike, from the food to the noise to the

sometimes brutal treatment of both inmates and staff. Still, the Buddha taught in the second Noble Truth that the source of our suffering is desire, the desire to have things we don’t, to not have things we do, and the desire that things be other than they are. While I would never counsel an inmate to stop resisting injustice or trying to improve his or her condition, I do counsel them to accept that, *at the moment*, things are as they are, and there is nothing to be gained by being agitated over something they can’t change.

Again, the practice of *zazen* is fundamental. In our practice, we learn that as thoughts, feelings or sensations arise, we simply let them go. When the mind wanders and we become aware of it, we let go of the thought and come back to the breath, back to now. This practice of letting go over and over again is what allows us to let go when conditions don’t meet our desires or expectations. As our minds settle, we can begin to see the desire that is at the source of our discomfort. Letting go, we can be at peace.

As I reflect on my experiences, and the experiences of those in the Prison Circle, I am very moved by how the most simple and basic teachings of the Buddha are so powerful in effecting transformation and change among those who apply them: that desire (preference and expectation) is the cause of suffering, and that the practices of acceptance, atonement and forgiveness can transform this suffering. It is possible to find peace on the inside. I offer my gratitude for these teachings and my admiration for those who apply them under very difficult circumstances. The Dharma works.

One of the ways the Dharma is manifesting right now is in the number of requests we are receiving for group meditations. It began a few months ago in one row in the high security module and has since spread to another, with requests now from two more. That is about seventy men who want us to lead a meditation for them. My fantasy is that, at some future time, the guards will ring a bell each morning and evening over the speaker system and say, “All right, men. It is meditation time. The next thirty minutes will be in silence.”

While I have been writing of those in the County Jail and of those of us who work there, the lessons we can draw from these experiences are equally valid for those of us on the outside. In many ways, the distinction is a made-up one. As the title of Bo Lozoff’s well-known book says, “We’re All Doing Time.” If it’s not within the confines of a jail or prison, then it’s in the jail of our own making. Please continue to sit well and reflect on these teachings. ■

Relationship and Community

By Patti Muso Giggans

At some point in my work life, I realized that I wasn't "at" work but rather that I was "with" work. This realization came to me after I had joined ZCLA, started studying the Precepts, and received Jukai. I understood that, for me, work was not something that I went off to do every day, but that my work was very much part and parcel of my everyday life and, indeed, had become my work in and with the world. There was no separation between my doing my work and being my work.

The agency I work for, Peace Over Violence, is 40 years old this year. I have been involved with the organization for 30 years: first as a volunteer, then as a program coordinator, and for the past 26 years as its Executive Director. My involvement has been personal, political, and professional. It grew out of my feminist activism in the 1960s and 1970s, when the issue of violence against women was "discovered" and exposed. At first, the cause of my involvement was choosing to deal with justice and equality issues; later, I recognized that working with trauma and violence was very personal as I got in touch with issues of violence within my own family and my own witnessing violence as a child. The intervention and prevention of domestic and sexual violence became my profession.

Along the way, through life lessons learned, Buddhist teachings, and Zen provocations, I was able to experience a shift from viewing my life as a human being with spiritual tendencies to seeing myself as a spiritual being in human form. The teachings about interconnectedness and non-separation have had great influence on my life and my life's work. So now, I would describe my work as personal, political, professional, and spiritual. With little distinction.

The organizational spirituality work that we undertake here at ZCLA has been very rich for me. I have always been an "organizational junkie" of sorts. I am fascinated by how people relate in groups: families, organizations, institutions, etc. As a karate sensei, I started a school for women and children to practice martial arts in a less threatening environment than the traditional dojo



Muso Giggans

provided. It was then that I learned that my students had a lot to teach me. At Karatewomen School, instead of bowing to the sensei in front of the class, the students wanted to change the form to a circle with everyone bowing to each other in a circle of respect. It fundamentally shifted the relationships and the learning environment. It is through relationships that we have the opportunity to know ourselves better. The feedback loop of relating, connecting, and all that goes along with coming together and coming apart, is critical information, ripe to be worked with as we study the self. I don't think we can study ourselves by ourselves no matter how much time we spend quietly and alone on the cushion. Our family, friends, partners, coworkers, teachers, and students can help us wake up and we can help them.

In my work practice of being a leader, I have found much guidance from the ZCLA shared stewardship model. It is a process form enabling contributions to come from the many and not just the few, with the responsibilities to be borne by the many and not just the one. Herein lies the value of relationship and community.

"Back in the day," Peace Over Violence started as a collective made up of a few people with a horizontal organization practice, collective decision-making, equal pay, etc. The classic collective model. It soon evolved and incorporated vertical (hierarchical) decision-making, categories of jobs, pay differentials, etc. The agency is an "evolving organization" that attempts to balance the

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Patti Muso Giggans is President of ZCLA's Board of Directors. She is the Executive Director of Peace Over Violence, an organization dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual, domestic, and interpersonal violence.
www.peaceoverviolence.org

horizontal and vertical in healthy, effective ways. This model tries hard to see people as fully equal human beings, not masked entities fitted into little boxes and stereotypes.

It is through the influence of ZCLA that I credit some of the leadership tone that I adopted in the process of changing the organization's name to Peace Over Violence. The process required great space for everyone to weigh in on this major change. As a leader, I had to model holding that space. It tested my capacity for patience. I had to lead from a spacious place and allow the time and opportunity needed for careful consideration (including sometimes tedious repetitions) by everyone invested in, and anyone impacted by, the decision to make the change. The process led to a very successful organizational transformation, and I was able to keep my pledge "to not lose one victim/survivor, one volunteer, one staff member, or one donor in the process." Our board and staff made the decision to choose a name with an expansive view with no separation between the mission and the vision of the organization. We have organized our ways of working together into a color-coded mandala consisting of organization, intervention, prevention education, and advocacy.

The Three Tenets continue to be fundamental to my practice. I work them and they work me. Working in a non-profit crisis center brings its own set of challenges as we work with the Three Tenets. Each day, I probably have ten thousand opportunities to practice with them. As Hakuin Zenji said, "Zen practiced in the midst of activity is superior to that pursued within tranquility." Each day, I get to practice spaciousness, equanimity, and compassion. Or not! I get to observe my reactivity and to breathe while bearing witness. Or not! Skillfully work at honing my responses. And hopefully from time to time perform right actions. Or not!

The hardest for me is not knowing. It isn't so easy giving up those fixed ideas and small views that appear to be the right response to a problem or person at hand. That's why we call it practice. As the executive director, I am often put in the role of the one who is supposed to know. Indeed, I am sure I am seen as the resident "know it all." My staff laughs when I tell them that I long to be the resident "not know it at all." They look at me funny, wondering what I am talking about. Keeping the Three Tenets front and center helps me turn work into spiritual practice, whether it's doing my jobs of supervising staff, developing programs, fundraising, or policy advocacy. At the office, at the end of a cacophonous ADHD-attention deficit hyperactivity day (which is every day)—after yet another conference call, another meeting that went too long, with another deadline looming, and a hundred

issues coming from ten directions, I have been overheard whispering under my breath the mantra: "peace over violence, peace over violence, peace over violence...." More fuel to practice with!

The staff and volunteers I work with are true bodhisattvas, whether or not they know or use that word. They are dedicated and committed to relieving suffering through their own compassion and self-less-ness in service to the victims/survivors who come to us. And they are committed to preventing suffering through the violence prevention teachings that they deliver out in the community. They bear witness to others' experiences of trauma and loss from violence, and through their witnessing and listening and openness are able to be "intimate" with another. Through this relationship, the victim/survivor is able to find intimacy within themselves and reconnect. That's how healing happens at the crisis center. I can't think of time better spent all these years!

How grateful I am to have been able to embody my work, enjoy it, and find it meaningful and creative. The opportunity to practice this life is everywhere—on and off the cushion, at home, at work, and everywhere in between, including being stuck in LA traffic. Deep bows to our ZCLA Sangha and my family and my work sangha for consistently supporting and challenging me. Deep bows to life itself! ■



Participants in the Buddha's Birthday Levity Laboratory in line behind Moshe "Mr. YooHoo" Cohen as he offers the sacred mischief version of the "no fear" mudra of Jizo Bodhisattva. Mr. YooHoo is the founder of Clowns Without Borders-USA, which brings performances and workshops to refugee camps and conflict zones worldwide. His latest projects have taken him to the Sudan, Haiti, and Burma/Myanmar.

Zen Programs at Great Dragon Mountain

Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

When she is on campus, Sensei Kodo will offer Face-to-Face meetings for members Wednesday evening, Friday dawn, and Saturday and Sunday mornings during scheduled zazen. Members of the Teachers Circle will offer Face-to-Face meetings on Saturday and Sunday mornings for members and non-members. Their specific schedules will be posted in the weekly Programflash.

Dharma Training Fund

Through the generosity of the Sangha, the **Dharma Training Fund** is available to all Zen practitioners to supplement program fees. No one is ever turned away for lack of funds. If you wish to take part in a particular program, please do not let financial difficulties keep you from attending. Inquire with Senshin in the office for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to practice 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.*

Zazen Programs



Zazenkai.* Friday, June 11, 7:00 p.m. to Saturday, June 12, 5:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Shingetsu. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this

silent and restful day of zazen, service, work, meals, Dharma Talk, and Face-to-Face meetings. Open to everyone. Fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. ☎

* Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts will take place on **Saturdays, May 21 and June 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

May 21 will be led by Gessho Kumpf on Precept #5, Not Being Deluded.

June 18 will be led by Faith-Mind Thoresen on Precept #7, Not Elevating Myself and Blaming Others. Open to everyone.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, June 16, 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. Those who have received the Precepts are asked to attend on a regular basis. Sensei Shingetsu will officiate.

Dharma Chats. Held on the last Sunday of most months at 11:00 a.m., Dharma Chats are led by Sangha members on various topics of interest. **Sunday, May 29,** is led by Bonnie Myosen Chignell on "Taking One Breath." **Sunday, June 26,** is led by Heather Faith-Spring Chapman on "Owning Your Practice."

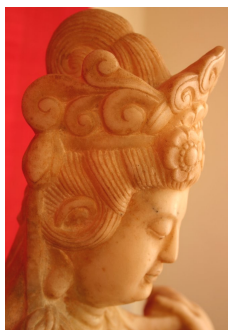
Annual Observance

Maezumi Roshi Memorial Service. Saturday, May 7, 8:30 a.m. Sensei Kodo will officiate at the morning service dedicated to the memory of ZCLA's beloved founder, Taizan Maezumi Roshi, on the 16th year since his passing. Everyone is welcome.

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STUDY TOPIC

The study theme for May-July is Bodhisattva Archetypes. Bodhisattvas are beings who are dedicated to the universal awakening of everyone. Archetypes are universally understood



energies, symbols, and patterns of acting and being in the world. Our talks will explore the Bodhisattva energies of wisdom, compassion, and activity appearing in the world, and in the daily life of our practice. Among other texts and teachings, we will refer to Taigen

Dan Leighton's book *Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and their Modern Expression*; an earlier edition is titled *Bodhisattva Archetypes*. Both are available in the ZCLA Bookstore.

Classes and Workshops

Vimalakirti Sutra Study Class. Saturdays 1-3 p.m.: May 28, June 25, July 30, and Sunday, Sept. 11, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Led by Sensei Kodo. A four-part class series on the Vimalakirti Sutra, an early Mahayana text that focuses on lay practitioner Vimalakirti. Although requested by the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas feared visiting Vimalakirti because of his superior understanding of the Dharma. In this sutra, we meet his wit and playful mocking of the heaviness we can often make of Zen practice. Sensei invites us “to explore the freedom and levity of emptiness” together. No fee, but please sign up or register in office. Required text: *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (Burton Watson translation). Copies available through the ZCLA Bookstore.

Sangha Forum. Sundays, 1:30-4:00 p.m.: June 12, July 10, and August 14. Come and see the exact shape of this Sangha-wide gathering as it unfolds. Convened by Sensei Kodo, our coming together will offer a forum for everyone to learn about the rich and varied working and teaching life of the Center. Let’s talk, share, and publically review the good work of the many groups and circles forming ZCLA’s Circle of Life. Here’s an opportunity for Sangha members to share with each other what’s going on around the Center. Part town hall meeting, part feedback loop, come join us as we practice with not-knowing to co-create this gathering of the Sangha.



2011 Sesshin Schedule

July 17-23	Summer Sesshin
October 16-22	Autumn Sesshin
December 2-10	Rohatsu Sesshin
December 26-31	Year-end Sesshin

2011 Precepts & Jukai Series

Led by Sensei Koan Janka

We encourage interested members to enroll in these two series of classes. The Precepts can be taken from any of the Center’s preceptors, regardless of who has led the classes.

Zen Precepts Study Series

Saturday: 9:45 to 11:15 a.m.

June 11, 18 and 25

July 9, 16 and 30

This series of six classes will explore deeply the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts. Any member may take this series regardless of whether one decides to formally receive the Precepts or has already done so. However, the series is a prerequisite for all those who intend to receive the Precepts (Jukai). Tuition: \$175 for members; \$300 for nonmembers. ☎

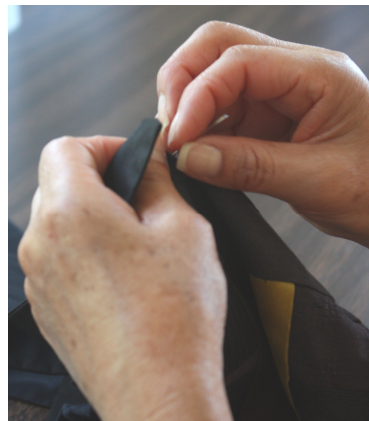
Receiving the Precepts (Jukai) Class Series

Saturday: 9:45 to 11:15 a.m.

August 13 and 27

This two-class series is a prerequisite for those who wish to receive the Precepts. Class topics include the Lineage, bowing practice, the Jukai Ceremony, the Rakusu (the Buddha’s robe), and the mudra of Gassho. Tuition: \$70 for members; \$120 nonmembers. ☎

Register through the Zen Center office. Contact Senshin for information about a combined class package with reduced fee.



Breathtaking Transformation

Bodhisattva Staff member Nina Reiju Wasserman first walked through the gates of Great Dragon Mountain more than 27 years ago. Over the years, first as a commuter and then as a resident, she has offered her service and self to the Sangha in the capacities of Office Manager, Bookstore Manager, and in many other ways, seen and unseen. Now, as Reiju steps away from her long-time managing of the Bookstore, we celebrate her devotion and keen sense of humor. In this interview with Dokai Dickenson, we asked her about her experiences and shapeshifting through the years.

Water Wheel: Who were you before you came to Los Angeles and ZCLA?

Reiju: I was a 27-year-old college student from Chicago who came to help out after a death in the family. It was a fortunate move because my life was in an absolute shambles. I was emotionally in turmoil and terribly confused.

I finished college out here, got a teaching credential in art, and went to work for LAUSD. I lucked out; my first job was a coveted art teacher position which included working with ceramics and crafts, working with clay, learning how to use the kiln.

WW: How did you become interested in Zen Buddhism?

Reiju: In those days, we were just getting to know things Japanese. I watched their movies, read books, and came to appreciate their art forms, especially of ancient Japan.

When my therapist at the time suggested I look into a spiritual practice, a Zen practitioner I knew mentioned Cimarron Zen Center (now Rinzai-ji Zen Center) and ZCLA. I naively asked her which was easier and ended up here. That was in 1984. It was an opportune time. I needed Buddhist teachings desperately. I had already been through a number of psychiatrists and therapists.

My feeling is that something within me kept me here. I knew I needed something, didn't know what, and that something in me pointed the way. Soon, something deeper than thinking formed an allegiance, an intimacy with the Center. And I could see that some of my behaviors were changing.

At that time, what held me was not so much allegiance to people as to the teachings. I didn't want to abandon the work of Maezumi Roshi in the United States or the Zen Center itself. The teachings have been a salvation not only for me, but for many others as well.



Reiju Wasserman

WW: How do you view your practice over the years?

Reiju: Over these 27 years, I've experienced a breathtaking transformation. I started to like people. I discovered they had more elasticity than I gave them credit for. I realized that my mind-habit of storytelling was illusionary and destructive. What goes through the mind is not the truth. Everything is open. Nothing is set. There's a wonderful flow.

WW: Your volunteer activities at ZCLA have spanned many years.

Reiju: I started out as Office Manager, and later became Bookstore Manager. For me, the bookstore has been like the kitchen in a home, the heart of informal linking for friends, family, and practitioners who pass through the doors. Meeting all those different personalities has been a self-discovery and has broadened my relationship to the Sangha. Now I'm retiring from the Bookstore, but I continue to work in the office and Sangha House and coordinate a variety of membership tasks.

WW: Do you have any closing thoughts?

Reiju: I feel transformed, and my transformation has been a beautiful thing. I've become more open and hold a real joy and love of the Sangha. The Dharma teachings are beautiful and continue their lure of being inconceivable, exhilarating, and regenerative. Once when I was complaining to Roshi about being "old" here, she told me that I was a teacher for others; I do whatever I feel I can do. ■

The Executive Circle: Taking Care

By Rosa Ando Martinez, for the Executive Circle

In keeping with the principles of Shared Stewardship, the Executive Circle oversees a range of practical matters, from writing the Center's Personnel Policy to managing projects such as the recent Zendo and Sangha House renovations. It also functions as the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors and works with the Finance Committee to develop the Center's budget.

More than ten years ago, Roshi Egyoku formed the EC to hold many of the responsibilities usually handled by an organization's executive director. Since then, the EC has attended closely to all areas of the Center's financial accounting, budgeting, and approval processes, buildings and grounds maintenance, and staffing matters. Requiring financial and organizational experience and an understanding of Shared Stewardship and the Center's Mandala, the EC serves as a powerful form of practice.

The EC meets on the first and third Wednesday of every month; after June 8, 2011, meetings will move to



The Executive Circle: Earth-Mirror, Myoho, Pine-Ocean, Faith-Mind, Mary, and Ando. Not shown: Butsugen.

the first and third Thursday of the month. Darla Myoho Fjeld is the EC's Steward; other members are Rosa Ando Martinez, Tom Pine-Ocean Cleary, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran, and Conrad Butsugen Romo. Business Manager Mary Rios attends EC meetings as consultant.

Any ZCLA member is welcome to observe or to bring issues of concern to EC meetings by emailing Myoho (dr.fjeld@gmail.com) prior to the meeting date.



Sangha Rites of Passage

SHARED STEWARDSHIP INSTALLATION

Parking Circle Steward
Tina Jitsujo Gautier

Resident Samu Coordinator
Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt

Bookstore Steward
Burt Wetanson

Entering Ceremony Steward
George Mukey Horner

Co-Tenzo Coordinator
Reeb Kaizen Venners

Angulimala Prison Circle
Rosa Ando Martinez

SHARED STEWARDSHIP LEAVE-TAKING

Development Circle
Rosa Ando Martinez

Parking Steward
Tom Yudo Burger

Resident Samu Coordinator
Tom Yudo Burger

Bookstore Steward
Nina Reiju Wasserman

Co-Tenzo Coordinator
Gary Belton

ZP 1 & 2 Instructor
James Bodhi-Song Graham

Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt “Thank You!”

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

To **Sensei Kodo**, **Patti Muso Giggans**, **Mary Rios**, **Jeanne Dokai Dickenson**, **John Plum-Hermit Swanger**, **Darla Myoho Fjeld**, and **Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert** for preparing a grant proposal to the Angell Foundation;

The staff transition team: **Myoho**, **Mary R.**, **Rosa Ando Martinez**, **Muso**, and **Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran**;

March kitchen cleaning participants: **Sensei Kodo**, **Sensei Ensho**, **Sensei Shingetsu**, **Gary Belton**, **Tom Yudo Burger**, **Bob Gido Fisher**, **Myoho**, **Jorge Issan Infante**, **Susanna Knittel**, **Joel Mitsujo Latimer**, **Miguel Rojas**, **Ando**, **Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt**, **Reeb Kaizen Venners**, and **Ty Jotai Webb**;

Everyone who helped with the Buddha’s Birthday celebration: **Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson**, **Katherine Senshin Griffith**, **Andy Mugen Handler**, **Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen**, **Tom Pine-Ocean Cleary**, **Yoko Bajra**, **Dokai**, **Susanna K.**, **Lynda Jikai Golan**, **Ando**, **Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown**, **Pat Way**, **Lorraine Gessho Kumpf**, **Sensei Kodo**, **Sensei Shingetsu**, **Sensei Ensho**, **Yudo**, **Kaizen**, **Chris Daian Fields**, **Pam Smith**, **Sheila Myokan Lamb**, **Dharma-Joy**, **Jonathan Levy**, **George Mukei Horner**, **Nina Reiju Wasserman**, **Dan Wick**, **Dan Hegarty**, **Diane Enju Katz**, **Miguel Rojas**, **Gido**, and **Lilly Brodie Berge**;

Those delivering donated food from the Gate of Sweet Nectar service to the local food bank: **Reiju Wasserman**, coordinator, **Cassie Riger**, **Pam Smith** and **Dan Wick**;

Health Care Circle stewards **Luminous-Heart** and **John Heart-Mirror Trotter**;

January-March Jikidos: **Susanna K.**, **Ryan Emslie**, **Tina Jitsujo Gautier**, **Erik Mathiesen**, **Kaizen**, **Z Zeller**, **Jotai**, **Luminous-Heart**, **Enduring-Vow**, **Mugen**, **Nina Harake**, and **Katy Keisen Behrens**;

Sensei Shingetsu for donating our new coffee maker and for coordinating the repair of our vacuums;

Buddha Hall Service Leaders during the first quarter: **Faith-Mind**, **Mukei**, **Kaizen**, **Enduring-Vow**, **Mugen**, **Luminous-Heart**, **Ando**, **Dokai**, **Jitsujo**, **Sensei Ensho**, and **Sensei Koan**;

Our weekend cooks and snack coordinators: **Daian**, **DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass**, **Kei Billington-Snodgrass**, **Enduring-Vow**, **Roberta Brehm**, **True-Joy**, **Yvonne Beatty**, **Issan**, **Nancy Ward**, **Ellen Reigen Ledley**, **Muso**, **Gido**, **Elizabeth Eishin Breyer**, **Tara Jiho Sterling**, **Senshin**, and **Flowing-Mountain**;

Moshe Cohen for his dharma talk and for leading the

Buddha’s Birthday Levity Laboratory workshop, and to the workshop participants and performers: **Jiho**, **Reigen**, **James Bodhi-Song Graham**, **Senshin**, **Kaizen**, **Jolene Beiser**, **True-Joy**, **Jane Chen**, and **Flowing-Mountain**;

New bookstore volunteers: **Enduring-Vow**, **Jiho**, and **Heart-Mirror**;

Mukei for printing photos for the Abbots’ wall in the Dharma Hall;

Ando for many years of service on the Development Circle—she organized the very first meeting and has been involved ever since;

Yudo for quick turnaround email support during Senshin’s absence;

Pine-Ocean for addressing bicycle storage issues; Departing Co-Tenzo Coordinator **Gary Belton** and incoming Co-Tenzo Coordinator **Kaizen**;

Yudo for years of service as Parking Steward and as Resident Samu Steward;

Flowing-Mountain as the new Resident Samu Steward, and to **Jitsujo** for as the new Parking Steward,

The Brown-Green Environmental Group for organizing ongoing local meditative hikes.

We say good-bye to **Dan Wick**, a guest resident now relocating to the Bay Area. Best wishes! ■

ZCLA Affiliated Sanghas & Sitting Groups*

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

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

The Monday Night Meditation Group (Pasadena, CA)
coordinated by Betty Jiei Cole

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

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

The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)
led by Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

The Westchester Zen Circle (CA)
led by Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley

Contact us at info@zcla.org for information.

* Affiliated groups are led by Dharma Successors of Roshi Ekyoku or coordinated by practitioners actively practicing at ZCLA with a teacher. Those interested in leading a ZCLA-affiliated sitting group may apply to the Teachers Circle.

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Our 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 or on our Web site, www.zcla.org.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi
Abbot 1995-1999: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao
Abbot Seat-Holder: Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd
Staff: Mary Rios, Business Manager; Katherine Senshin Griffith, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Grounds & Membership Steward; Jeanne Dokai Dickenson and John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Development Co-Stewards; *Water Wheel*: Editor, Dokai Dickenson; Working Editor Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson. Proofreading and editing: John Heart-Mirror Trotter; Photographers: Reeb Kaizen Venners, Dharma-Joy; Publishing and distribution: John Heart-Mirror Trotter.

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Address Correction Requested

(MARA'S REALM, BUDDHA'S REALM *Continued from page 2*)

paradox. As the poet Walt Whitman tells us, we can "contradict ourselves." We are "large and contain multitudes." This means we can be generous with each other. We have no one to defend and justify. Flat statements of "I am who I am" become laughable.

We may, without thinking, take liberation to mean the freedom to be "I am who I am," as if a drop of water can gain the right to ignore the stream in which it flows. Instead, our freedom is found through the Oneness of a constantly changing stream. With each change, we are released from one responsive way of being into another responsive way of being. And there are myriad ways to be responsive.

Early in our practice, we may be stiff and inflexible and slow in matching our response to others. In fact, we may come to this practice of forgetting the self after having worked hard to define who we are and who we are not. Now, immersed in a community of practitioners, circumstances ask us to soften, if not dissolve, such clear

divisions between ourselves and others. Can we allow ourselves to do such a thing? Can we give up defining ourselves according to the conditioned and dualistic view of Mara's realm, and see ourselves instead as the spaciousness of the Buddha's realm?

With no self identified, there is no self to protect, no vigilance to maintain. Settling solidly in the moment, we experience the now of nothing to do and the spacious nature of such an instant. We can give our attention over to listening and to noticing what is happening. We can hold our own view and hear others. We can have growing confidence in our ability to respond spontaneously to whatever arises. We can make an effort toward Right Speech. As we experience the abundance of Oneness and selflessness, we will be amazed by how generous we feel able to be. In each encounter and in all relationships, the auspicious merging occurs and offers us the opportunity to know ourselves as treasure. We can enter all manifestations of our Oneness in such a way that both our interdependence is realized and fully expressed as Collective Awakening. ■