



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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The Brahma Net Sutra

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

This Winter we are studying The Brahma Net Sutra, or more accurately, The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sutra. We are using the version based on the translation by Kumarajiva from Sanskrit into Chinese in 5th century China. Kumarajiva translated two of the three parts of the Mahayana version of the text. In part one, Vairochana Buddha expounds the Mind Ground, the fundamental nature of existence; in part two, Shakyamuni Buddha expounds the bodhisattva precepts.

The title, “The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sutra,” is instructive. Who is the Buddha that speaks this sutra? Vairochana Buddha, the primordial Buddha, delivers the teaching of the original nature of mind. For hundreds of eons, he says, he has cultivated the empty field—the fundamental nature of life. His teaching reveals an infinitesimal part of this nature, but it is the Dharma door through which all bodhisattvas enter. Who is the bodhisattva? You are. What will you realize? The original nature of mind.

In the Sutra, Vairochana addresses myriad Shakyamuni Buddhas and instructs them to return to their respective realms and teach human beings how to live the mind ground through the precepts. Shakyamuni Buddha, in part two, delivers the teachings on the Ten Grave Precepts and the Forty-Two Minor Precepts. It is conveyed to us quite explicitly that by receiving the Buddhist precepts, we inhabit the realm of the Buddhas. In other words, a shift will happen in which we align ourselves and our lives in accord with the deepest respect and reverence for life. Our life will not be bound up with greed, hatred, and ignorance; with respect and restraint, we will cultivate the goodness of the empty field.

What is the Brahma Net? The Sutra is preached in Lord Brahma’s heavenly realm. It is said that before him

Roshi Egyoku is Abbot and Head Teacher of ZCLA.



Precept recipients with Roshi Egyoku, left to right: Chris Daian Fields, Carmen Chisho Izzo, Roshi, Cameron Jikaku Large, Bob Gido Fisher, and Elizabeth Eishin Bryer.

hangs a net-like curtain. In each node of the net is a pearl, and when the precepts are practiced well, the pearls emit light and illuminate the entire net. In fact, when we are in accord, we do enlighten our environment. We are attracted to people who emit light, are we not?

It is also said that the holes in the net are like the limitless worlds of the universe. Just as each world is unique and its variations are infinite, so, too, is every Dharma and every being. What is this net? All of life, without exception. *Your* life. *You*. Every cell, every pore in your very body is this net.

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The Sanskrit word *sutra* literally means “thread.” What is the thread that weaves the Dharmas taught by the Buddhas and the potential of every human being to fully realize themselves? What is the constant thread—the so-called rules and disciplines—that have remained a constant guideline that strings together the Buddhas, the Great Ancestors, and you and me all together?

The Brahma Net Sutra hands down to each of us a necklace threaded with the jewels known as the Bodhisattva precepts. Depending on your particular condition and capacity, you may immediately resonate with them and begin to shift in accord with the precepts. Or you may hear them and be touched by them on some level, but these seeds will not mature for a very long time. Or you may think them too restrictive and not worthy of your time and energies.

In addition to the meaning of “thread,” the word “sutra” carried several other meanings when it was translated into the Chinese language. According to the

***“When sentient beings receive the precepts,
They enter the realm of the buddhas,
Which is the Buddha Treasure,
annuttara samyak sambodhi.
Truly they are the children of the buddhas.”***

—verse on Receiving the Precepts

commentary by Master Hui Seng (Buddhist Text Translation Society), *sutra* also meant the foundation of all the dharmas; the revelation of the subtle and profound dharma principles; a bubbling spring, (as in the Dharma flowing forth without ceasing); and a carpenter’s inked cord, (as in a measuring device that lets one know what part to use and what part to discard).

In the formal study curriculum of our lineage, the precepts are studied at the end of long years of Zen training. This is based on the premise that by that time, you will have had an experience of the true nature of mind. There is also the premise that our life is guided by a good understanding of the Bodhisattva precepts, that we have a good ethical foundation for our daily conduct. Experience has shown, however, that the experience of True Nature, although inherent in each of us, is not easily accessible, nor are our lives fully grounded in ethical discipline.

In our practice these days, we study the precepts in the beginning, the middle, and the end of our life. In other words, all of the time. Our understanding expands

and deepens with every moment—we are always opening and ripening, or we could be. This process is never finished. Why not? Life is endlessly unfolding; there is no place for us to stick if we are to live truly liberated. To wear the necklace of the Buddhas’ precepts is to commit to a shift from living a life based on greed, hatred, and ignorance to a mind that abides in kindness, compassion, respect, and restraint.

As we engage the precepts, we come up against core beliefs that trap and snare us. For example, “I have been practicing for years and yet I still do such and such.” Or “I dealt with that long ago. I must be a failure because this issue is surfacing again.” “I can’t do this practice because I am fundamentally so inadequate.” If that isn’t enough, we sometimes say, “If that person is practicing and still behaves that way, then I want nothing to do with such hypocrisy. No Buddhist practice for me, thank you.”

We do not often recognize that such expressions represent a habitual reference point. It may not occur to us that this reference point needs examination and is the cause of our stuckness. This is one of the many reasons why consistent studying with a teacher face-to-face can be so helpful. These patterns can be identified and pointed out to us for penetrating consideration.

We are asked to inquire and challenge our points of view. We are being asked to just not shift from our particular point of view to yet another point of view and then another, but to expand to encompass all views, and, at a fundamental level, to experience the liberation of no-view at all. This undertaking requires stamina, determination, and unwavering commitment. It is not a casual endeavor.

There are times when we cannot comprehend what is being pointed out. In fact, we may at this point take a stand and let everyone know how wrong and woefully inadequate our teachers are. Or even, maybe the Buddha got it wrong. This is delusion. The medicine of Dharma can seem too strong. Just keep on sitting. Just keep on going. This is the great secret teaching of the Buddha Ancestors: don’t quit; just keep on going!

So, in the months ahead, we will keep opening The Brahma Net Sutra. As the Verse on Receiving the Precepts reminds us, those who have received the precepts have entered the realm of the Buddhas. In other words, there is a recognition on a deepest level that our original nature is the same as the Original Buddha, Vairochana. There is also a recognition that we have entered a territory of unlimited expanse in which we will turn and be turned by the Bodhisattva precepts and the kindness and respect that it calls forth in each of us.

Just keep on going! ■

The Annual Donor Memorial & The Sangha Urn



The memorial altar for Zen Center donors.

On Saturday, February 6, the Sangha respectfully gathered to honor deceased donors whose contributions of funds, time, effort, and gifts-in-kind have made the Zen Center possible. This Annual Donor Memorial is observed on the first Saturday of February. The Zen Center has long held a very special place in the lives of many people who have shown their appreciation with gifts that ensure its good health for future generations.



This year, we also dedicated the Sangha Urn. The Sangha Urn was gifted by Mary Rios upon the scattering of the cremains of Robert Heart-Mountain Yanez, a member who died in 2002. Since Zen Center is unable to house the cremains of

members for any length of time, we have dedicated the Sangha Urn to hold a very small amount of cremains for members who request it. The Sangha Urn currently holds cremains of both Heart-Mountain and Teido Cartee. If you wish to have your cremains deposited into the Sangha Urn, please leave a formal request in the Zen Center office.

Dharma Words for Annual Donors Memorial

*The Dharma rain falls on Great Dragon Mountain—
there is no being it does not touch.
Buddha nature is revealed in the stormy clouds above,
in the green glistening of leaves,
in the somber and tender faces of us all.*

Dear Zen Center Donors,

*Today we gather to honor your gifts:
We offer our voices in chant,
our bodies bent in deep bows,
and our hearts overflowing with gratitude
for what you have made possible.*

*We repay your benevolence by meeting
in the realm of the True Dharma,
in this place where there is no giver, no gift, no giving.
We meet again in the intimacy
of the legacy of dana paramita.*

*The Buddha Ancestors revered all gifts,
from the smallest particle to the largest offering,
which sustain the Buddhadharma.
All of us—known and unknown to you—
have received infinite benefits from each of you.*

Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

*One bright pearl illuminates boundlessly;
Throughout the universe—
Giver, receiver, and gift!*

—Egyoku Nakao
February 6, 2010
ZCLA Great Dragon Mountain
Buddha Essence Temple

If It's Thursday, This Must Be County Jail

By Dharma-Holder Gary Koan Janka

Several years ago, a fellow priest asked if I would like to go with him to meet with Buddhist inmates at the Federal Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles. That visit eventually developed into a regular ministry in the jails and prisons of Los Angeles County and the State of California. Beginning with my colleague Daniel “Nagy” Buckley and his nonprofit organization the Strawberry Dragon Zendo, we have grown into a working group of eight. We call ourselves the Angulimala Prison Circle and operate under the umbrella of the Zen Center of Los Angeles.

Each Thursday, several of us visit the Men's Central Jail, the Twin Towers facility downtown, and the women's facility in Lynwood. One of our number works weekly with the Sangha at the California Men's Colony (CMC) in San Luis Obispo. While we go in as Buddhists, we also serve as chaplains for anyone who asks for our assistance.

The Los Angeles County Jail holds, on any given day, between 18,000 and 20,000 men and women in nine separate facilities. Although we can see only a very small fraction of that number, we make an effort to see any inmate who asks us to visit. On a typical day, we will offer a group meditation class for some of the general population inmates and then “walk the rows” in the high security modules, responding to individual requests and having follow-up visits with individuals and small groups with whom we have more or less ongoing relationships. We also offer Dharma books and periodicals to anyone who wants them.

In some ways, the work in jails and prisons is easy as the suffering there is so obvious. Jail is a chaotic and noisy place. The inmates tell us that it is also degrading and, sometimes violent. The men and women we see speak of the despair and hopelessness they sometimes feel. Yes, many of them have done some very bad things, but our job as chaplains is to help them deal with what they are going through. And lest we forget, some inmates are only awaiting trial.

Our primary effort is to encourage the inmates to learn to meditate. We have found that when they do, there is an observable settling emotionally. They begin to see

Koan is a resident priest at ZCLA where he serves as Co-Ino, and the Steward of The Angulimala Prison Project.



Dharma-Holder Koan Janka

their lives and situation more clearly and become much less reactive to events and conditions. We teach primarily *zazen* but will also teach *metta* practice and other forms as seem appropriate.

When we first began working in the jail on a regular basis, we encountered strong resistance from some of the more evangelical Christian groups, especially when we wanted to begin group meditation. Fortunately, we received the firm support of the sergeant in charge of the Religious Services Office and the gift of a chapel slot from the Catholic chaplains. To help reduce concerns around our teaching of meditation, we reached out to the director of the Los Angeles area chapter of the World Community for Christian Meditation, a wonderful woman in her early eighties who agreed to join our group. In this way, the offering became one of shared spirituality.

In addition to the stress, guilt, and tension that result from a loss of liberty, anger is a central issue for many of the inmates. As you can imagine, it was often their anger and reactivity that got them into jail in the first place. Many of them are eager to find ways to free themselves from that particular one of the Three Poisons (Greed, Anger and Ignorance). We offer two very good books on the subject: *Anger* by Thich Nhat Hanh and *Dealing With Life's Issues & Dealing with Anger* by Thubten Chodron. We also encourage *zazen* as the foundation of their practice, along with learning to let go and observing the inner dynamics that lead to emotional reactions. Among the men and women with whom we've

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worked, we have seen some pretty spectacular "turnarounds."

One example we call the "Legend of the Q-tip." In a group class at the women's facility, Nagy gave a short talk and handed out Q-tips. He asked if anyone knew what QTIP stands for. No one did, so he explained that it stands for Quit Taking It Personally, and then talked about how to head off angry reactions. One of the women in the class was a very angry person with a hair-trigger temper. A day or two after the class, she got into a confrontation with another woman and was about to punch her when three other women who had been in the class ran up and held out their Q-tips. It stopped her in her tracks and caused her to reflect in the moment on her behavior and to open up. Later that year, when a couple of us visited her in state prison, we saw a surprisingly calm, cheerful, and optimistic person.

We encourage the inmates to use their time of incarceration for self-reflection and spiritual exploration. After all, being in a county- or state-supported "monastery," why not live like a nun or monk? While they may be working on their cases, they are free of the demands of ordinary life, have no pressing engagements, and their meals are delivered to them. The parallels are not lost on some of them, and a few take the opportunity very seriously. It is said: "When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!" Life has handed them a very large lemon, and it is up to them to decide what to make of it.

Karma is a topic of great interest among the inmates. Most seem to have an intuitive grasp of it and know that what they are currently experiencing is a result of their actions. The critical question they ask is, "Can I change my karma or am I forever trapped in this cycle of wrong-doing and punishment?" The answer, of course, is one of good news and bad news. The good news is that, yes, they can change things going forward, but the bad news is that they have to live out their past accumulation of karma. The discussion of karma opens up issues of responsibility, empathy, and compassion which lead to much fruitful reflection.

Whenever this subject comes up, some of us feel a great sadness. Why did it take so long, or some terrible event, for the person to start waking up? When we see an eighteen- or twenty-year-old going to prison for thirty-five-to-life or life without possibility of parole, we can't help but be moved by the tragedy unfolding before us. We can offer them a path to liberation and true freedom—wonderful lemonade if they choose to make it.

The prison group at the California Men's Colony was started by a handful of inmates about fifteen years ago,

sponsored by a Theravadan monk. Over the years, the sponsorship and the community volunteers have changed, but the group has grown and remained steady in its commitment to the Dharma and learning to live a life of compassion under difficult circumstances. On any given Wednesday evening, fifty or sixty men gather for sutra service, meditation, and study. They have all-day sittings as often as they are allowed, and a number of men have received the lay precepts, some taking Bodhisattva Vows as well. I try to attend once a month to offer interviews and general support. The depth of their sincerity and the strength of their commitment to the practice always touches me.

"Can I change my karma or am I forever trapped in this cycle...?"

People sometimes ask me if what we do makes much difference. I liken it to crossing Iowa on a train and every so often throwing a handful of seeds out of the window. There is no way to know which seeds find fertile soil and which do not. But we know that some of them, at some time, will sprout and grow. And while we do not have any scientifically collected statistics, we have considerable anecdotal evidence that we do have an impact. Each of us has seen numbers of individuals change from being angry, bitter, and reactionary to being calm, thoughtful, and compassionate human beings.

It is easy to feel outraged by the prison system we Americans have created, and about which much has been written. I remember my first reaction on entering the County Jail: "What an incredible waste of human potential!" In Men's Central Jail alone, there are almost 5,000 men. How many lives do we waste and how much suffering do we create by incarcerating so many mostly young men and women? And lest I be taken for someone who is oblivious to the suffering and rights of the victims and their families, I have to say that there are people I am happy to see locked up and I hope they never get out.

At the same time, our job as chaplains is to address human suffering no matter who suffers. The Buddha himself ordained the serial killer Angulimala, the namesake of our small group. The Buddha said: only love can eliminate hatred. Surely we can find a better way to raise, educate, and employ people than we do now. In the meantime, we do what we can to offer the Dharma.

With a deep bow of gratitude for the dedication and hard work of my circle colleagues; they never fail to inspire me. ■

Zen Programs at Great Dragon Mountain

Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

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

Zazen Programs

Wall-gazing Day.* Saturday, March 20, 6:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come to this silent half-day of sitting. A **Chant Circle**, held at 8:30 a.m., is dedicated to the victims, survivors, and humanitarian care workers of the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti. Zazen is scheduled every hour on the hour, with ten minutes of walking meditation at ten minutes to the hour. No interviews or talks. Includes breakfast and lunch. Fee: Dana. ☎

Tangaryo. * Saturday, March 20, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In tandem with **Wall-gazing Day** (see above). All members are encouraged to come to this silent day. The first half of the day will follow the Wall-gazing Day schedule above; the second half-day will be an unstructured zazen schedule with no timekeeping bells. 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.) Lunch is included. Fee: Dana. ☎

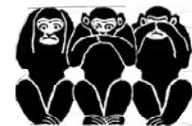
Spring Sesshin.* Thursday evening, March 25 to 27, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) to Saturday, March 28, 9:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Kodo Boyd. A silent retreat with sitting and walking meditation, eating formally together, dharma talks, Face-to-Face meeting with Sensei Kodo, liturgy, and samu. Sesshin provides a powerful container supporting the unification of body and mind, and our individuality with the community and the world. Part-time participation welcome. Fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. ☎

Zazenkai.* Saturday evening, April 9, 7:00 p.m. registration; 7:30 p.m. (zazenkai begins) to Saturday, April 10, 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Ryodo. Everyone is encouraged to enter The Great Silence with zazen, service, work, meals, Dharma Talk, and Face-to-Face meeting with Sensei Shingetsu. Open to everyone. Daily fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. ☎

* Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Public Face-to-Face Meeting. Sunday, April 4, 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Roshi will speak on a practice theme and invite everyone to engage in a public dialog with her.

Precept Practice



A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts will take place on **Saturdays, March 13 and April 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

March 13 will be led by Myoho Fjeld on Precept #7: Not elevating the self;

April 17 will be led by Mukei Horner on Precept #10: Not thinking ill of the Three Treasures. Open to everyone.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, April 15, 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. Rev. Koan Janka will officiate.

Special Observance

Buddha's Birthday Service, Sunday, April 11, 11:00 a.m. in the Center's Wild Space Garden. Join in celebrating the birth of us baby Buddhas. Rev. Koan Janka will officiate. A tiny house decorated with flowers will be erected in the garden. Come decorate at 7:00 a.m. After the garden service, Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt will share a Jakata tale or two about the Buddha as a child, followed by a birthday lunch and birthday cake for the Buddha. Children, friends, and family are welcome. Please contact Gemmon in the office, info@zcla.org, if you can join in the fun of decorating the Buddha's house.

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Classes and Workshops

Zen film on Dogen Zenji. Friday, March 12, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Life and medieval times of Dogen Zenji, founder of the Zen Buddhist Soto school, fearless spiritual seeker, and eminent world philosopher. Everyone is welcome. ☎

Fushinzamu. Sunday, March 21, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Join the Sangha for a gardening day, working-together practice, in gardens in front of the Buddha Hall and the Dharma Hall. Laughter, weeding, planting, mulching, and an ice cream break. Come for all or part-time. Led by Grounds Steward Faith-Mind Thoresen.

Compassionate Care of the Dying. Friday, April 16 through Sunday, April 18. Led by Evi Gemmon Ketterer. For professional caregivers. The various areas of caregiving, such as care for the caregiver, the wisdom of impermanence, and creative processes for emotions, grieving, and death will be the focus. Fee : \$250. To register, contact the office or go to the ZCLA website.

A Film for Earth Day: *Dirt! The Movie (A story with heart and soil)*. Sunday, April 25, 10:45 a.m. to 12 :15 p.m. Inspired by the book *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth* by Bill Logan. Directed by Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow, this film is about soil, the life-giving, life-containing substance without which life on land would be impossible, and what it means for us ecologically, economically, culturally, and spiritually.

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, March 28,** is led by Darla Myoho Fjeld is on "Buddhism and the Supernatural."



Living stone plant (Lithops species) blooming on Great Dragon Mountain.

Sacred Mischief Master Artist Returns Moshe YooWho Cohen

Saturday, April 3, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Refreshing Clown: Ceremony and Ritual An Improvisational Laboratory



The workshop will focus on creating ritual with humor using found objects, bells, and flowers. The workshop will look to refresh clown energies and provide an avenue to explore the possibilities around clown, ceremony, and ritual. This workshop is for Zen practitioners and for Clown/Physical Comedy aficionados and practitioners. *Tuition: \$40 for members; \$60 nonmembers.



Sunday, April 4, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Playing with the Zen Koan

Explore a new approach to koans as Roshi Egyoku and YooWho open up the intuitive along pathways involving Zen, Japanese Butoh Dance, Physical Theater, and Humor. *Tuition: \$40.

* Combination package for both days: \$50 for members; \$70 nonmembers.

<http://www.yoowho.org/index.html>

STUDY TOPIC: The theme for dharma talks for the next several months is *The Brahma Net Sutra*. Well-known as the "Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra," the *Brahma Net Sutra* is regarded as fundamental among scriptures elucidating Mahayana bodhisattva precepts and demonstrates an ancient ground for socially engaged Buddhism. Versions of the sutra abound on the internet.

2010 Precepts & Jukai Series

Sensei Shingetsu will lead the Precepts Series this year. Sensei Ensho and Sensei Daishin will lead the Jukai Series. Both series will be held at ZCLA.

We encourage interested members to enroll in this series. 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.
April 3, 10, 17, 24
May 8 and 15

This series will explore the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts. Any member may take this series regardless of whether one decides to formally receive the precepts. The series is a prerequisite for all those who will receive the precepts (Jukai). Tuition: \$175 for members; \$300 for nonmembers. ☎

Jukai (Receiving the Precepts) Class Series
Saturday: 9:45 to 11:15 a.m.
June 5 and 12

This two-class series is for those who wish to receive the precepts. The Precepts Study Series is a prerequisite for these classes. 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 Gemmon for information about a combined class package with reduced fee.



Great Dragon Mountain Resident Training in the City

One of the unique features of ZCLA Great Dragon Mountain is its residential training Sangha. We currently have 30 residents in training. Come and explore what it is to practice and live in this intentional community.

We currently have a studio apartment available. Gated assigned parking is available. Public transporta-



Left, the Dharma and Buddha Halls as seen from Irolo Street. Above, the garden and Wild Space in winter.

tion is easily accessible by Metro bus and subway and Dash buses. Guest and Extended-Guest stays for shorter periods are also available. Vacancies are not frequent, so please consider if this is the time for you to take up residential training. If you are interested, please inquire info@zcla.org and you will be directed to the appropriate contact person. ■

ZCLA Fundraising and Development

By Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward

During these months, the ZCLA teachers have been offering their dharma teachings, focusing on the current study text *The Brahma Net Sutra*. Roshi Egyoku strikes to the marrow of this net of flashing pearls: “What is this net? All of life, without exception. *Your* life. *You*.” In the same way, we can be what we are through actions, thoughts, and the existence of others.

The Center exists in a vast network of life, grounded on Great Dragon Mountain. We are deeply grateful for the continuing generosity of the Sangha, its members, and friends in giving financially and in every other way. The existence of this place of Zen practice and its offerings of the dharma rest entirely upon the support of all of us.

The donations the Center receives from fundraising and spontaneous donations are significant means by which ZCLA embodies its mission: *to know the Self, maintain the precepts, and serve others; providing the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism.*

The practice of *dana paramita*, the practice of generosity, is a fundamental first step on our Bodhisattva path to perfection. It could be called “the generosity that goes beyond generosity.” This generosity, in the deepest way possible, calls upon us to give fully of ourselves. It also refers to financial gifts. Giving is a worthy practice. At ZCLA no gift is too small, each gift is greatly appreciated, and all gifts are stewarded well.

Please give generously to ZCLA through one or several of the funds listed at the right.

Please contact Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward, 213.387.2352, developmentsteward@zcla.org for more information. ■



Giving Opportunities

Annual Fund (end-of-year)

Donations to this fund go to the general fund and are used by ZCLA for general operating support to maintain the Center.

The Dharma Training Fund

Helps students of all ages and backgrounds to participate in our training programs and retreats.

Capital Campaign

The Great Dragon Renovation, Phase I, is dedicated to the maintenance and refurbishing of the buildings and grounds. We are half-way to our goal of \$25,000 for Phase I, to be achieved by year's end.

The Angulimala Prison Project

Pays for dharma books and materials and transportation expenses to Southern California prisons.

Kobori Transportation Fund

Contributes toward the travel expenses of members and teachers who otherwise would not be able to visit to the Center.

The Sutra Fund

Dedicated to acquisitions for the ZCLA library.

ZCLA also accepts the following kinds of donations:

Memorial and Named Gifts

Honor a family member, loved one, or friend by donating in their name.

Matching Gifts

Encourage your employer to add ZCLA to their corporate matching gifts program, effectively doubling the size of your donations.

Planned Giving

Support ZCLA and its future through bequests and legacy gifts.

Designated Gifts

Create a donor-advised fund to support a specific need.



ZCLA is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit religious organization.



Sangha Rites of Passage

CEREMONY FOR RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS

From Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

February 7, 2010

Elizabeth Eishin Bryer
Chris Daian Fields
Bob Gido Fisher
Carmen Chisho Izzo
Cameron Jikaku Large

NEW MEMBERS ENTERING CEREMONY

February 6, 2010

Marisa Again
Susanna Dakin
Les Chiller
David McMonagle

NEW RESIDENTS ENTERING CEREMONY

February 6, 2010

Tara Phoenix Sterling
Susanna Knittel

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Incoming

Teachers Circle

Gary Koan Janka

Co-Ino

Gary Koan Janka

Co-Tenzo Coordinator

Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert

IT Manager

Ryodo Hawley Sensei

Grounds Group

Roberta Brehm
Richard Cloud-Forest
Tara Phoenix Sterling

Day Manager

Gary Koan Janka

Brown-Green Group

Tara Phoenix Sterling

Altar-Cleaning Group

Gary Belton

RITES OF PASSAGE *(continued)*

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Departing

IT Manager

Ty Jotai Webb

Co-Tenzo Coordinator

Miguel Rojas

Brown-Green Group

Heather Faith-Spring Chapman

DEATH

Michael Jimyo Smithe

February 18, 2010



Above: Ceremony for Receiving the Precepts from Roshi in February;

Below: Ty Jotai Webb, the Center's departing IT Manager.



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 **Roshi** as Preceptor for the February Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts;
Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt for donating the beautiful enso painting by Kaz Tanahashi which hangs in the library;
The **Feng Shui Group** for completing their Master Plan Project for the Center;
Departing member of the Brown-Green Group, **Heather Faith-Mind Chapman**, a founding member and its first steward;
Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Andy Mugen Handler, Lana Shoshin Spraker, and Jenny Jusen Warner who each sewed a rakusu for inmates with The Angulimala Prison Project;
Ty Jotai Webb, outgoing IT Steward, for two years of expert IT direction;
Miguel Rojas, outgoing Tenzo Coordinator for eight months of steadfast weekend tenzo support;
Bob Gido Fisher for the stellar cake celebrating the Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts;
Everyone who helped with the fushinzamu kitchen cleaning: **Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Lynda Golan, Mugen Handler, Gary Koan Janka, Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Joel Latimer, Tara Phoenix Sterling, Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt, Roshi, Deb Faith Mind Thoresen, and Reiju Wasserman**;
Photographers for Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts: **Marley Klaus-Dowling and Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert**;
Roshi for the annual Abbot's jundo with the residents;
Richard Cloud-Forest for all-caring grounds work;
Gemmon Ketterer for guiding and hosting the Soto nuns, Ryosen-san and Fukan-san;
Tom Yudo Burger for care of Pine House and garden;
Day Tenzos: **Gary Belton, Roberta Brehm, Sensei Daishin, Marly Klaus-Dowling, Bob Gido Fisher, Chiko Letton, and Ryodo Rothrock**;
Dokai and Koan for cleaning the Evergreen cemetery sites for the annual pilgrimage;
Koan Janka for keeping the compost wheel turning;
Faith-Mind Thoresen for supervising installation of the Sangha House security door;
John Heart-Mirror Trotter for the emergency escape ladders for the Zendo and the Sangha House;
Tom Yudo Burger and Koan for guiding and hosting Soto monk Shoshin-san;
Nilotpala gardeners: **Lynda Golan and Heart-Mirror Trotter** for their persistence and patience;
Brown-Green Group for planting and tending the vegetable garden in front of Zendo;

Enduring-Vow Brown, Gemmon Ketterer, and Faith-Mind Thoresen for initiating and planning the Sangha House backporch project;
WaterWheel Production Group: **Heart-Mirror Trotter**, Steward of production, assembly, and delivery; and **Bonnie Myosen Nadzam**, for proofreading service;
Andy Ferguson for his talk on his new discoveries about the life of Bodhidharma;
Canyon Sam for her presentation and book-signing of *Sky Train*, a glimpse of the past through the eyes of Tibetan women, and her advocacy on their behalf;
Santa Monica Zen Center and **Sensei Yoshin Jordan** for co-presenting with ZCLA the film *Journey from Zanskar*;
Rosa Ando Martinez for registration for *Zanskar*.

Hearty welcome to new member **Mike Buck**, who teaches physics and has a six-year-old daughter;
To new resident **Susanna Knittel**;

Congratulations to **Sensei Daniel Nagacitta Buckley** upon receiving the Robe of ZenMaster from his teacher, The Ven. T. T. Roshi Thich An Giao, Abbot of Desert Zen Center, Lucerne Valley;
We also enjoyed the visits of Soto-shu monastics **Ryosen-san** and **Fukan-san** from Aichi-Senmon Nisodo nunnery in Nagoya, **Shoshin-san** from Eiheiiji Monastery, **Andy Ferguson**, and **Ven. Mujin Sunim** from Popkye-Sa/Dharma Realm in Switzerland ■

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 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 (Senseis) of Roshi Egyoku or coordinated by practitioners who are actively practicing at ZCLA with a teacher. Those interested in leading a ZCLA-affiliated sitting group may apply to the Teachers Circle.

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; Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Grounds Steward; Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward; *Water Wheel*: Editor, Dokai Dickenson; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson. Photographers: Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, Marley Klaus-Dowling, George Mukei Horner, Gemmon, and Dokai; Publishing and distribution: John Heart-Mirror Trotter; Proofreading: Bonnie Myosen Nadzam; Graphics: Yudo;
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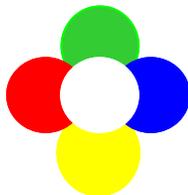
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Save This Date!

Sangha Appreciation Gathering

Sunday, August 1

- 11:00 a.m. Teisho with Roshi**
**12:30 p.m. Appreciation Lunch in
the Wild Space Garden**
**1:00 to 3:00 Program and
Entertainment**



You, your family, and friends are invited to celebrate our summer Sangha Appreciation Gathering in appreciation of ZCLA's members. We will be honoring the circles and groups of Shared Stewardship and of the Center's Mandala: the Circle of Life.

Over the years, a number of members have stepped forward to co-sponsor our large, periodic members' appreciation events (the last one was in 2006).

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the 2010 members' event. To explore this opportunity and/or for inquires about how to go about it, please contact Chairperson Enduring-Vow, betsybrown@earthlink.net.

Co-Chaired by
Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown,
Tom Yudo Burger, and
Jeanne Dokai Dickenson