



Water Wheel

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

—Gate of Sweet Nectar

What is Buddha Nature?

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Our study of the fundamental aspects of Zen practice begins with an exploration of buddha-nature. In the *Shobogenzo* fascicle “Bussho,” Dogen Zenji writes:

All sentient beings without exception have the Buddha nature. The Tathagata abides forever without change.

Let us examine the first line, which is often expounded in the Mahayana sutras. This statement points directly to the essential nature of this very life that we are now living. It is our task to understand this nature, to experience it directly for ourselves, and to live it in our daily lives.

All sentient beings. We can distinguish between human beings, sentient beings, and whole-being. The word “sentient” means “responsive to sensations,” so it includes humans, plants, and animals. Dogen Zenji also includes all so-called inanimate things, such as mountains, buildings, rocks, computers, chairs, and so forth. In other words, *everything*, or to use Dogen Zenji’s expression, *whole-being*. Hence the word *all*. *All* means all. There is nothing that is not buddha nature. Everything has the same fundamental nature. Please carefully consider this and its implications for how you live.

Without exception. Again, the same point is emphasized: all without exception. Let redundancy and repetition of this point open you up, intellectually, spiritually, experientially. What do you exclude? The very act of excluding is a symptom that the conditioned self or ego is running the show, and that we are not living from *all without exception*.

All—every race, class, age, “good” and “bad” folks, animals, plants and so on: there is nothing that is *not* buddha-nature. Let’s be clear: we are not saying that everything has realized and actualized buddha-nature, only that everything is so. Realization and actualization applies only

to us humans. A pine tree, a chair, a dog—these have no problem being pine tree, chair, and dog respectively. Only human beings are under the false illusion of a permanent, fixed “I” or ego, or small self. We are so deeply attached to “me-myself” that it seems impossible to even consider that this is an illusion to be seen through as universal whole-being.



Have the. Although this translation uses the words “have the,” Dogen Zenji says that it is more to the point to say “are.” *All beings are buddha-nature.* You, the pine, the rocks, the dog, already are complete, whole, perfect as is. Buddha-nature is not something that you have, or can acquire. It is already your nature, the nature of everything.

Yasutani Roshi speaks of what buddha-nature is not. It is not a seed inside of you that grows when you water it and someday blossoms into a sweet-smelling buddha rose. It is not a substance to be acquired—it is you as-you-are, already complete. Nor is it something that you lack—nothing has more or less buddha-nature than you or anything else. Dogen Zenji says in the *Genjokoan*, “Everything stands in its own completeness and does not fail to cover the ground.” Nor is it a “soul” that continues on separately from the body.

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE

- 3 Firewood—Ash—Just This! by Kodo Boyd
- 5 Programs
- 7 Calendar: 2006 March, April, May
- 10 Shared Stewardship: Reflections
- 11 Heartfelt Thank You to the Sangha



You as you are: buddha-nature. This does not mean that you have directly realized it, nor that you are living from an experience of All. It does mean that you have all the potential that is needed to directly awaken to this nature and to actualize it in your very life. Yasutani Roshi says buddha-nature is of three kinds: *fundamental-cause* buddha-nature (*shoin bussbo*), or the fact of

already being buddha-nature; *capacity-to-realize* buddha-nature (*ryoin bussbo*), or you must realize it for it to be of any worth; and *cooperating-cause* buddha-nature (*enin bussbo*). The cooperating-cause already exists inside of us, whether it be a teacher, the sound of bamboo, the sangha—all together, everything is already cooperating for us to realize this fundamental nature.

Buddha-nature. So what is the essence of all life? It is indeed tricky to speak of the basic characteristics of buddha-nature because when we do, we immediately make it into a thing. Nevertheless, it is important to speak of it. The fundamental characteristic of buddha-nature is *sunyata* (Sanskrit), often translated as *emptiness*, or, more accurately, *empty of all independent existence*. All is empty of any fixed condition. Yasutani Roshi says, “Everything is in a temporary state as defined by particular causes and conditions.” (This leads us directly to the aspects of cause and effect and the formation of the ego-centered self, which we will explore later.)

We often speak of this characteristic as impermanence or change. Everything is in a condition of not lasting, of having no fixed identity, although appearing right now as a brunette, an oak table, a blue jay, you and me, or whatever. All is without a fixed-reference point. All is without a fixed “I” which is in constant birth and death according to conditions. Practice is to see through this fixed sense of self. We say: Empty out the subject; empty out the object; empty out the emptying out. This is the Great Matter of Life and Death which we penetrate.

Whether we have penetrated this reality or not, we can appreciate it from other perspectives. Since all is buddha-nature, all-as-it-is is perfect. This perfection is often depicted as a circle. Perfection is the fact that everything as-it-is is whole and complete just as-it-is. This is not our usual definition of perfection, so let’s examine this briefly.

In the realm of buddha-nature, perfection is not our

self-created standards of what is perfect and what is not perfect. Perfection does not mean to try to mold something into your idea of what it should be. A giraffe has very long legs; a dog has short legs. We are not trying to make the giraffe’s leg like the dog’s, nor the dog’s like the giraffe’s. This is a silly example, and yet everyday, do you not bind yourself by trying to make yourself, others, and situations into your idea of what they should be? Nor is perfection a state of purity devoid of characteristics.

Seeing as-it-is does not mean that what is going on benefits life. Someone asked, “I cannot accept genocide.

*Practice is not a belief system
—it is direct seeing into
the nature of reality*

How can genocide be perfection?’ This is a good question and serves to illuminate perfection in terms of buddha-nature. To accept directly that genocide is what is happening does not mean that we condone it. Nevertheless, it is just-as-it-is. Here we are looking at perfection as wholeness: my life and genocide are mutually enfolded in each other—not two, not separate. From recognition and acceptance of what-is, we can examine the causes of genocide.

We see immediately that the condition of genocide occurs when the mind lives in the small self dichotomy of what is acceptable and what is not. Furthermore, what is not acceptable, according to someone’s self-created standards, needs to be killed. We know intimately how this ignorance in our own mind creates suffering. We also know the intolerable suffering when this mind-set is played out on a larger scale. Please see the direct connection between your mind-set and what goes on in the world.

This is why it is so important to penetrate, unpack, study, and realize the essential nature of the mind. Practice is not a belief system nor adopting a dogma—it is direct perceiving of the reality of life and a commitment to live in accord with the reality. Everywhere in our life, ignorance is reinforced so strongly that it is difficult to even consider buddha-nature, or the perfection of whole-being. These fundamental realities do not reinforce the ego, and therein lies the challenge of practice. And yet, it is our realization and practice of these very realities that transform samsara, the world of suffering, into nirvana, the life of liberation. ■

Roshi Egyoku Nakao is the abbot and head teacher of ZCLA. She is currently leading an 8-week series based on The Eight Aspects of Buddhism by Yasutani Roshi. Photo of Roshi is by Jimmy Jakugen Chou.

Firewood—Ash—Just This!

By Dharma-Holder Merle Kodo Boyd

Today we are commemorating the parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha. Many of the pilgrims returning from India have spoken deeply of the feeling of being in Kusinagara, the place the Buddha chose to die. They have spoken of the sorrow that is still present there. It is a sorrow reflected in the many accounts of the Buddha's last days.

In a *Tricycle* article describing his own pilgrimage to India, Allan Hunt Badiner referred to Kusinagara as "the place where the Buddha's absence began." We also chant the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, "I am always here, preaching the Law. I am always here..." We experience both the sorrow arising from the death of the Buddha and the joy of knowing that his awakening is also our own.

The stories of the Buddha's last days recount Ananda's anguish as he becomes aware of the Buddha's failing health, increasing fragility, and approaching death.

The Buddha responds: "What else can you want of me? I have taught the Dharma fully and deeply. Do you think I have concealed anything?"

The Buddha tells Ananda: "Every person must make the teaching his own refuge. Every person must be a lamp unto himself. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are present in everyone. The capacity for enlightenment is the Buddha."

Later, the news comes that the Venerable Shariputra, the Buddha's main disciple, has died. Again, Ananda reports feeling loss, grief, and despair. And again, the Buddha speaks clearly and directly to him: "...did your brother, Shariputra take away your precepts, your concentration, our wisdom, or your liberation when he died?"

The Buddha reminds Ananda of the many times that he has offered to the Sangha the teaching that where there is birth, there is also death, that the coming together of form and circumstance is constantly shifting. All dharmas, all phenomena are temporarily formed.

Merle Kodo Boyd will receive Shibo (Dharma Transmission) from Roshi Egyoku in March 2006. This article is an edited version of Kodo's talk during zazenkai on February 5, 2006.



Like Ananda, how many times have we heard this teaching and believed ourselves to be accepting it as true? Then, suddenly, in the face of loss or unwanted change, we are taken by surprise, having no choice but to bear what we experience as nearly unbearable. At those times, we are face to face with the reality that we have taken impermanence as a concept rather than as the direct and intimate experience of being alive.

It is a deeply painful thing to lose a teacher, but the Dharma cannot be lost. It is ours, it is who we are from the very beginning, and has never been otherwise. It is easy to feel, however, that it resides in one who is wiser than we are. It is easy to believe that our awakening depends on the presence of that person.

Ananda, realizing that the Buddha will die soon, says, "I have not yet attained my spiritual goal and now my teacher is dying. Who has ever cared for me more deeply than my teacher?"

The Buddha notes Ananda's virtues. He praises his years of kindness and true devotion to him and to the Sangha. He calls Ananda's love "a love that never varies and is beyond all measure." Then he tells Ananda to take care of his own awakening, his own liberation. This is the most important thing. "Be an island unto yourself, your own refuge. Make the Dharma your island, take refuge in none other."

One account of Ananda's awakening is found in the koan collection called the *Transmission of the Lamp*, or the *Denkoroku*. This is a collection of accounts of the master-disciple container in which the direct experience of the Dharma is encouraged, provoked, supported, and occurs, not just once, but over and over again. It is called transmission, but, of course, what the student experiences is the self that he or she has always been.

In the *Denkoroku*, Case 3, Ananda is now attendant to the Buddha's successor, Mahakashyapa. He asks the Venerable Mahakashyapa: "Elder Dharma brother, did the

(Continued on page 4)

(FIREWOOD—ASH—JUST THIS! *Continued from page 3*)

World-Honored One transmit anything else to you besides the gold brocade robe?” The Ven. Mahakashyapa called, “Ananda!” Ananda replied. Venerable Mahakashyapa said, “Knock down the flag pole in front of the gate.” Ananda was greatly awakened.

Practicing so deeply for all of those years, knowing the Buddha’s teachings thoroughly, Ananda still doubts himself and asks this question in all sincerity, “Is there something else, something I have not yet received? Something I am still lacking?”

We can hear Mahakashyapa’s words in different ways. In one way it is just this...“Ananda” and Ananda responds, “Knock down the flag pole.” And again, Ananda responds. Just This.

Another way is to knock down the division of student and teacher—let us mutually recognize each other. The late Roshi Lex Hixon, commenting on this koan in his book *Living Buddha Zen*, says, “There is only one robe with no one wearing it.”

Though our reverence and gratitude for the life of Shakyamuni Buddha is experienced far beyond our ability to express it, it is through attaining our own direct experience that we manifest our deepest gratitude. Intimately, for ourselves and with our own being, we taste impermanence, no-self, and cause and effect.

The teaching that everything that comes together also comes apart, that all things that appear also disappear is one we hear over and over again. And it isn’t just in the inevitability of death that we are given this teaching. We are being called to experience directly the truth that the nature of life is fluidity.

I once attended the funeral of a friend and colleague who had died a long slow death from cancer leaving two very young children. The eulogy began, “It is a fearful thing to love what death can touch.”

To live wholeheartedly is to love wholeheartedly, and that is certainly an understandable reaction to the loss of one deeply loved. But what else is there to love? What is there that having arisen, does not dissolve? What is there that impermanence does not touch, not just over the years, but from what we call moment to moment? When is it that life ever holds still? And yet in that constant flow, each instant is whole and complete.

There is a section of the *Genjokoan (The Koan of Everyday Life)* by Dogen Zenji, the great Zen Master and founder of the Soto Sect, that reads:

Firewood becomes ash. It does not turn into firewood again. But we should not hold the view that the ash is after and the firewood is before.

Though connected by circumstances of cause and effect, each breath, each moment, each circumstance is complete in and of itself. Through our perceptions and memory, firewood appears to become ash, but also firewood is firewood, half-burned firewood is half-burned firewood, and ash is ash.

Dogen continue:

We do not say that life becomes death. This is the established way of the Buddha-dharma. For this reason it is called unborn. Death does not become life. This is the established turning of the dharma wheel. For this reason it is called undying. Life is its own time. Death is its own time.

It is as we chant in the morning in *The Identity of Relative and Absolute*: “Each thing has its own being which is not different from its place and function.” Firewood, half-burned firewood, and ash are each handled very differently. Just this—firewood, used in the fireplace. Just this—ash, used in the garden.

Contemplating impermanence is more like contemplating the birth and death of each breath, of each moment. Seeing it this way, can we allow our lives to manifest as the Buddha Way with fluidity and flexibility? Or do we set ourselves against what is, thereby creating our own suffering?

How do we live not just with the inevitability of our own impermanence, our own death, but with the inevitable impermanence of every second of our lives? What clarity and flexibility this calls out in us. What freedom, joy, and wonder this makes available to us!


Living in resistance to this truth, taking it in only as an idea or a concept, we experience anger, grief, anxiety, and longing. Living in accord with it, we are free to create ourselves in every new moment.

In his pilgrimage essay, Allan Badiner quotes a monk he met at Kusinagara. The monk said, “Contemplating our mortality is unexpectedly liberating and inspires compassion.” Whether we view impermanence as liberating or terrifying is completely up to us.


Please remember the Buddha’s last words to us: Be diligent. Strive for your own liberation! ■


Zen Programs On Normandie Mountain

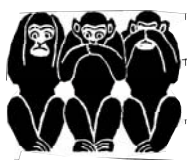


 Please register in advance. No one is ever turned away for lack of funds. See our calendar for the daily program schedule. Program information and updates are regularly sent by email to members on “DharmaFlash.”

Zazen Programs

Tangaryo. Saturday, March 11, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this day, zazen (both sitting and walking) is unstructured; no bells mark the end of the period; no teacher. You set your own schedule. Silent, informal lunch will be provided. Please attend the introductory session at 8:00 a.m. You may sit tangaryo either on this scheduled day, or on a day of your choosing. To arrange for another date, contact the Tangaryo coordinator, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, through the office. Tangaryo is required of all members. Fee: Dana; Zendo open for non-participants. 

Beginner’s Mind Sesshin. Begins on **Thursday evening, April 6, ending Saturday, April 8, at 9:00 p.m.** Led by Raul Ensho Berge. This two-day sesshin is designed for newcomers to sesshin practice, but open to everyone. Instruction is given on all aspects of sesshin. Sesshin, which means “to unify the mind,” is an essential practice for the deepening of one’s zazen. Also for experienced sitters and those who haven’t sat a sesshin for a long while. The schedule will be posted and sent by DharmaFlash. Fee is 80; \$140 for nonmembers. Zendo open for non-participants. 



Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva precepts will take place on

Saturdays, March 18 and April 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We begin with recitation of the precepts, zazen, and a brief precept talk followed by a short work period and lunch. A Precept Circle is held from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on the precept of the day. Open to everyone.

March 18 will be led by Gary Koan Janka on Precept #5: Do not be deluded. **April 15** will be led Jeanne Dokai Dickenson on Precept #8: Not being stingy: Using all the ingredients of my life.

Atonement Ceremony on Thursday, April 13, at 7:30 p.m. During this ceremony of renewing the vows and precepts, we each have an opportunity to bear witness to our con-

duct in thoughts, words, and actions. Everyone is welcome to participate and renew themselves. Those who have received the precepts are asked to attend this ceremony on a regular basis. Officiated by Gary Koan Janka.

Introduction to Zen Bodhisattva Precepts Class. Saturday, April 1, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Led by Merle Kodo Boyd. A close look at the Bodhisattva Precepts, the Three Treasures, the Three Tenets, and the ten Grave Precepts. These guidelines help us align our actions with the interdependent essence of reality. We will explore the nature of the Precepts and the ways in which we experience them in our lives. Class fee \$25 includes lunch and materials.

Classes, Workshops & Retreats

Shared Stewardship Class. Sunday, March 12, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. This 7-part series focuses on the revisioning of the Center. All sessions include a council on a current hot issue of the Sangha and exploration of where we are and

(Continued on page 6)

Buddha’s Birthday Service & Sacred Mischief Making Sunday, April 9 at 11:00 a.m.

Join us in celebrating the birth of Shakyamuni and all of us baby buddhas! Patricia Shingetsu Guzy will officiate. We will be joined by the sacred mischief makers (Center clowns) at the birthday lunch which follows the service.

For this special observance, a house decorated with flowers will be erected in the garden. Everyone is invited to bring a small bouquet of flowers as an offering and help decorate the house. Children, parents, friends, and relatives are welcome!

Please contact Jotai in the office, info@zcla.org, if you can join in the fun of decorating the Buddha’s house.

(PROGRAMS *Continued from page 5*)

where we are going in light of the Center's core values. Shared Stewards are also linked through an e-group open to both active members of Shared Stewardship and those members who wish to be informed and/or take part in discussion on sangha issues. Please contact Dharma-Joy at tvr@birdmarella.com to join the egroup. (*See Shared Stewardship comments on page 10.*)

Service Position Training Class. Saturday, March 4, 1:30-4:00 p.m., led by Koan Janka. Everyone is welcome to join this practice: those new to holding a service position to those who have been doing so for years.

Composting Revisited: Head-Trainee Presentation. Saturday, April 22, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Faith-Mind Thoresen shares information and initiates Sangha discussion concerning alternative composting models for the gardens.

Spring Gardening Day. Sunday, March 26, 1 to 5:00 p.m. Bring your grubbies and join the afternoon gardening fest. The Center has gloves if you don't. Led by Daiji Powell, Koan Janka, and Faith-Mind Thoresen.

Institute for Contemporary Clowning. April 5 to 9. Spring session with emphasis upon Clown on Stage. Culminates on April 9 with spring performance: Buddha's Birthday celebration and Sacred Mischievous Making. ☎

Guest Speakers

Don Parris, Sunday, March 12, 11:00 a.m. Don returns to ZCLA with a fascinating slideshow presentation featuring his latest journey through Bhutan.

Roshi Bernie Glassman, teisho on **Thursday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.** Bernie Roshi is Abbot Emeritus of ZCLA and Co-Founder of the Peacemaker Community.

Claude Anshin Thomas, Thursday, March 23, 7:30 p.m. Anshin is the author of "Hell's Gate" and a Vietnam veteran who now lives as a Dharma peace activist. ■

Transcendence Here and Now

led by Daishin Buksbazen
with Getsuren Alfano and Sensei Kodo Boyd

Saturday, March 25, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This workshop will examine aspects of psychological and spiritual maturation through the perspectives of attachment theory, practice, and the paramitas. Fee: \$25 includes lunch and materials.

The Eight Aspects of Buddhism

Class Series with Roshi Egyoku

Class series exploring life from eight aspects of Buddhism as presented by Yasutani Hakuun Roshi, who was one of Maezumi Roshi's teachers. Series meets throughout March, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Tuition per class: \$35 members; \$70 nonmembers; \$10 text fee.

Wednesday, March 1: Law of Cause and Effect

Wednesday, March 8: Existence of All Buddhas

Wednesday, March 15: Mutual Attraction Between Buddhas and Sentient Beings

Wednesday, March 22: Not Two but One; exploring absolute and relative wisdom

Wednesday, March 29: Road to Buddhahood

Open to all. Join us!

Dinner served at 6:30 p.m.; \$4.00.

Contact Jotai to register for the series and/or dinner.

Exploration of Becoming a Zen Priest

Hosted by Roshi Egyoku

Saturday, March 4, 5:30—8:00 p.m.

All those who have a serious interest in becoming a Zen priest are invited to this exploration.

This is the first time in over five years that Roshi is opening up the opportunity for tokudo to the ZCLA Sangha.

Please reply to Jotai in the office if you plan to attend. Contact Roshi directly at wen@ix.netcom.com if you have any questions.

Dharma Training Fund Kobori Roshi Transportation Fund

The Center has training funds that support serious Zen practitioners (not limited to members) who need financial assistance.

The DTF provides assistance for program fees.
The KRTF provides travel expenses.

Don't hesitate to inquire.

Contact Program Coordinator Jotai at info@zcla.org.



MARCH 2006—2548 BE

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Saturday Schedule New Members Series #2 9:00 a.m. New Members Entering Ceremony 1:30-4:00 p.m. Service Position Training Class 1:30-3:30 Teachers Circle 5:30-8:00 Exploration of Becoming a Zen Priest
			← 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service →			
			7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Class: The Eight Aspects of Buddhism (4) with Roshi 7:30 p.m. Open Zazen	6:00 Executive Circle 7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Zazen/Dharma Talk: Rabbi Don Singer, Sensei	4:00 p.m. Fundraising 7:15 p.m. Service	
			← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →			
5 ZP 1 & 2 Monthly Memorial Service Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Newcomers/ New Members Class with Gessho Kumpf 1-5:00 p.m. Kitchen Cleaning	6 (Office Closed)	7 (Office Closed) 7-8:30 p.m. NVC gathering	8	9	10	11 Founders' Service Tangaryo Day 8:00 a.m. Introduction 8:30 a.m. Service 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 6:30-8:00 p.m. India Pilgrimage Gathering
	← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →		7:15 p.m. Service 7:30-9:00 Class: The Eight Aspects of Buddhism (5) with Roshi 7:30 p.m. Open Zazen	7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Zazen/Dharma Talk: Kodo	7:15 p.m. Service	
			← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →			
12 ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Talk & Slideshow on Bhutan and the Himalayan areas: Don Parris 1:30-4:30 p.m. Shared Stewardship (2)	13 (Office Closed)	14 (Office Closed)	15	16	17	18 Zen Practice 3 Saturday Schedule Day of Reflection Led by Koan Janka Precept #5: Not Being Deluded 1:30-3:00 p.m. Precept Circle 7:30 Shiko Ceremony (private)
	Dharma Transmission (Shiho) Week for Merle Kodo Boyd					
	← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →		7:15 p.m. Service 7:30-9:00 Class: The Eight Aspects of Buddhism (6) with Roshi 7:30 p.m. Open Zazen	7:15 p.m. Service 7:30 Zazen/Teisho: Roshi Bernie Glassman	7:15 p.m. Service 7:30 Zazen	
			← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →			
19 ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 10:15 a.m. Change of Robe for Sensei 11:00 a.m. Roshis Bernie & Egyoku: Presentation of Sensei 12 noon Lunch	20 (Office Closed)	21 (Office Closed)	22	23	24	25 8:30 a.m. Service 8:30 a.m. Registration 9:00 to 4:00 p.m. Workshop: Transcendence Here and Now led by Daishin Buksbazen with Getsuren Alfano & Sensei Kodo Boyd
	← 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service →					
			7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Class: The Eight Aspects of Buddhism (7) with Roshi 7:30 p.m. Open Zazen	6:00 Executive Circle 7:15 Service 7:30 Zazen/Talk: Anshin Thomas	7:15 p.m. Service	
	← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →		← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →			
26 ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Dharma Chat with Myoan Solomon: Time Enough 1-4:00 p.m. Spring Gardening Day	27 (Office Closed)	28 (Office Closed)	29	30	31	
	← 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service →					
			7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Class: The Eight Aspects of Buddhism (8) with Roshi 7:30 p.m. Open Zazen	7:15 p.m. Service 7:30 Zazen/Dharma Talk: Sensei Kodo	7-9:00 p.m. Residents Circle	
	← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →		← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →			



APRIL 2006—2548 BE

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						Saturday Schedule 1 New Members Series #3 9:00 a.m. New Members Entering Ceremony 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Class: Introduction to the Bodhisattva Precepts with Sensei Kodo
ZP 1 & 2 2 Monthly Memorial Service Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Teisho: Roshi	3 (Office Closed)	4 (Office Closed) 7-8:30 p.m. NVC gathering	5 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 p.m. Service 7:30-9:00 Bonus class of Eight Aspects of Buddhism series	6 6:30 p.m. Registration for Beginner's Sesshin 7:15 Service 7:30-9:00 Zazen		7 8 Founders' Service
	← 7:30-9:00 Zazen →					
ZP 1 & 2 9 Sunday Schedule Buddha's Birthdy Celebration Service 11:00 a.m. 11:30 Sacred Mischief Making Noon Lunch	10 (Office Closed)	11 (Office Closed)	12 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 p.m. Service	13 7:15 Service 7:30 Ceremony of Atonement, Officiant: Koan Janka	14 7:15 p.m. Service	15 Zen Practice 3 Day of Reflection Led by Dokai Dickenson on Precept #5: Do Not Be Stingy 1:30—3:00 p.m. Precept Circle
	← 7:30-9:00 Zazen →					
ZP 1 & 2 16 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Teisho: Roshi 1:30-3:30 Curriculum Circle	17 (Office Closed)	18 (Office Closed)	19 5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 Service	20 7:15 Service 7:30 Zazen/Dharma Talk: Sensei Kodo	21 7:15 p.m. Service	22 Earth Day Celebration Saturday Schedule 1:30-4:00 p.m. Head Trainee Presentation: Composting Revisited with Faith Mind Thoresen
	← 7:30-9:00 p.m. Zazen →					
23 ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Dharma Chat with Maggie Rowe:Being 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting	24	25	26	27	28	29
Center is Closed for SPRING RECESS						



MAY 2006—2548 BE

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Center is Closed for SPRING RECESS			5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 6:00 p.m. Executive Circle 7:15 Service 7:30 Zazen/Talk: TBD	7:15 p.m. Service	Saturday Schedule New Members Series #4 9:00 a.m. New Member's Entering Ceremony Five Wisdom Energies Workshop with Acharya Alyn Lyon
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 Dharma Talk: TBD	(Office Closed)	(Office Closed)	5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 Service	7:15 p.m. Service 7:30 Zazen/Dharma Talk: TBD	7:15 p.m. Service	Founders' Service Zazenkai Led by TBD
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Newcomers/ New Members Class with TBD Mother's Day	(Office Closed)	(Office Closed)	5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 Service	6:00 p.m. Executive Circle 7:15 Service 7:30 Zazen/Talk: TBD	7:00-9:00 p.m. Residents Circle 7:30 Open Zazen	Zen Practice 3 Day of Reflection led TBD Precept #__: TBD 1:30—3:00 p.m. Precept Circle
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Dharma Talk: TBD 1:30-4:30 p.m. Shared Stewardship (3)	(Office Closed)	(Office Closed)	5:25 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 p.m. Service	6:30 p.m. Sesshin Registration 7:30 Zazen	Sesshin led by Roshi	
28	29	30	31			
ZP 1 & 2 Sunday Schedule 11:00 a.m. Dharma Chat with Shogen Bloodgood: Taking Care	(Office Closed) Memorial Day	(Office Closed)	5:25-6:30 a.m. Zazen 6:30 Service 7:15 p.m. Service			

Shared Stewardship

The Center is entering the fifth year of Shared Stewardship, the practice of taking every facet of Center life as practice and developing an all-centered view. Burt Wetanson interviews several Sangha members who have plunged continuously into the Center's "Circle of Life," most of them since its inception in 2001.

GESSHO: It's been wonderful seeing the Sangha taking responsibility for the Zen Center in a way that enables us to practice and train together, knowing that it's our initiative, our practice, and our Center. This very definitely strengthens people. We're more aware of one another as a Sangha. We communicate more. We do more things together. We're more willing to share in the activities of the Center. In all of these ways, Shared Stewardship provides that mirror to one another that is so valuable in developing our personal practice.

PLUM HERMIT: It's really been a practice of the differences of people's energies. Learning to work with people. More specifically putting into practice the Three Tenets—Not Knowing, Bearing Witness, and Serving. Learning to work with the places in myself where I resist and tend to shut down or close up. Practicing opening those places up. Stimulated by all the interactions—Zen Center is quite complex—that's been the most consistent learning point. And I've begun to experience all of this in the context of the Five Buddha Families, the Five Buddha Energies. Really experiencing the connections of those energies to life and the interactions and organizations of the Center. For me, it's made the Five Buddha Energies very concrete.

KOAN: For me, it's been watching people seeing things that need to be done and doing them. We knew that Roshi and a small number of people simply couldn't do it all. Something had to happen—other people began to pick up the load and take responsibility for the day-to-day operations and management of the Center. It's actually working. As needs are identified, circles form, individuals step up and take responsibility. And this is clearly a practice, with the realization that I take this job on, not necessarily knowing what I'm doing, but I will grow into this job.

GEMMON: The most meaningful thing is hearing the different views that people have on a subject. It broadens my perspective on the world and my views on a specific situation. Out of a broader mind, it's easier to find a decision that works for everyone. Not being so stuck in my view but hearing others, too. Then, suddenly, different opportunities open than before, when I sat alone in my



Back row, (l to r): Plum-Hermit, Koan, Roshi, Dokai, Luminous-Heart; in front: Faith-Mind and Gemmon. Not pictured: Ensbo, Gessho, and Dharma-Joy.

room or when I heard a decision from an authority and either agreed or disagreed with it.

Through Shared Stewardship, the world gets bigger and your mind gets into the habit of getting away from your first reaction. This process helps me to become less judgmental and less fixated on "I know."

DHARMA JOY: Working in groups like this can push every button you have, whether it's impatience with the process or love for the process. I work better in small groups. Shared Stewardship has always been 25 to 45 people working at a very different speed than I would on my own. So for me, working in community brings up a lot of stuff to work with either on the subjects we work with or the process itself.

Shared Stewardship is a clearing house for the Center where Sangha in the many spheres of the Center get together and report. Ideas and suggestions flow and a lot of energy comes out of that. It's also a connection to the Sangha. You could come to the Center and sit and have lunch or not but not really have an investment in the Sangha. Shared Stewardship is really a way for people to connect as an intimate group practicing together and the practice is the care of the Center.

FAITH-MIND: The aspect that is predominant for me is the transparency with how we deal with *all* issues. At times this seems quite tedious, in particular if it is not "your" issue, or interest. However, my ways of thinking, working, and listening have expanded. This has been an

(Continued on page 12)



*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 everyone for their fine caretaking of the Center in January while many were on the pilgrimage to India;
Shishin Collins and **Suigetsu Watanabe** for preparing the New Year's Celebration meal and noodles;
Erik Mathieson and **Faith-Mind Thoresen** for organizing, coordinating, and purchasing Dana Baskets, and the **20/30 Group** and the **Sangha** for making possible this dana to families-in-need in the neighborhood;
Teido Cartee for the beautiful bronze bell to be hung in the garden;
Roshi for finding the shimmering wall fountain in the Sangha House and to **Plum-Hermit Swanger** and **Charles Duran** for installation;
Jotai Webb for meticulous overseeing of the new data base;
Daiji Powell for supervising the front yard gardening crew for three years;
Weekend Tenzos: **Katy Behrens**, **Gary Bolton**, **Shogen Bloodgood**, **Gemmon Ketterer**, **Muso Giggans**, **Mark Lucas**, **Senshin Griffith**, **Jisen Reybin**, **Ziva Renan**, **Daishin Buksbazen**, **Nancy Martinez**, **Reiju Wasserman**, **Ensho Berge**, **Yuigyo** and **Sayaka Kamimura**, **Kaizen Venners**, **Charles Duran**, **Seishin Sowd**, **April Ford**, **Daiji**, **Kongchal Stephenson**, **Butsugen Romo**, **Dharma-Joy Reichert**, **Julia Norstrand**; **Yudo Burger**, **Plum-Hermit**, **Ando Martinez**, **Koan Janka**, and **Jessica Armstrong**;
Koan, **Yuigyo**, **Dharma-Joy** and **Mukei Horner** for extensive repair of Pine House driveway;
Gemmon Ketterer for tenzo for Wednesday evening suppers for Eight Aspects of Buddhism class;
Moshe Yoowho Cohen for offering 3rd session of the Contemporary Clown Institute and making sacred mischief in the Sangha; sacred mischief/delight maker clowns: **Ensho**, **Daishin**, **Yugen Courtney**, **Bodhi-Song Graham**, **Senshin Griffith**, **Stephen Park**, **Erin Seaborg**, and **Kaizen Venners**;
Rats and Roaches Group: **Luminous-Heart Thompson**, **Carla Trotter**, **April Ford**, **Gemmon**, **Gessho Kumpf** and **Earth-Mirror Corcoran** for residents' pest prevention booklet;
Roshi for the ascetic Gautama image carved by craftsper-son in Rajagaya, India;

Reiju Wasserman for all that she does in the office;
Altar Cleaners: **Yudo Burger**, **Jotai Webb**, **Kongchal**, **Carla**, **Mukei**, **Gemmon**, **Koan**, **Burt Wetanson**, **Kodo Boyd**, **Shishin**, **Reiju**, **Yuigyo**, **Heart-Mirror Trotter**, **Faith-Mind**, **Butsugen** and **Gessho**, for maintaining the Center's altars, and to **Luminous-Heart**, **Daiji**, **Ando**, and **Jessica** who filled in for India pilgrims in January;
Blake Gilbert for his generous help in so many areas;
Jessica Armstrong for parking support;
David Green for consultation & sketches for the possible Sangha House bathroom renovation; and
Dharma-Joy Reichert for ongoing support as E-group Steward for the Shared Stewardship, Executive Circle, and Health Circle.
Welcome to new members: **Kahty Chenoweth**, **Stephen Fredieu**, **Troy Perry**, **Norick Toomanian**, **Peter Mugan Schellin**, **Craig Daigetsu Brandau**, **Brandon Abraham**, **Chris J. Koenig** and **Joanne Levy**;
Welcome to new resident **Blake Gilbert** and to guest-resident: **Stephen Park**. ■

Sangha Rites of Passage



Shared Stewardship Installation

February 4, 2006

Tenzo Coordinator

Hillary Kongchal Stephenson

Executive Circle

Rosa Ando Martinez

Parking Steward

Tom Yudo Burger

Shared Stewardship Leave-taking

Tenzo Coordinator

Evi Gemmon Ketterer

New Members Entering Ceremony

December 17, 2006

Kahty Chenoweth

Stephen Fredieu

Troy Perry

Birth

Mateo Haas, son of

Stephan Haas and Lorena Griparic

January 15, 2006

Congratulations and deep gratitude to all of you.

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

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.

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(SHARED STEWARDSHIP *Continued from page 10*)

opening more fully to the meaning of the Three Treasures in Action, which is continually unfolding.

ENSHO: The creation of the environment of Shared Stewardship provides a space to talk, and the talk itself expands the voice of the Sangha. People share their thoughts and we get an amplified version of what people would like to see and do.

I also see the integration of membership and the participation of people in this process. Hearing the different voices, I am then not separate from the process and am able to absorb it all. I simply sift through the voices and hear the common voice of the Center.

DOKAI: An important part of Zen practice and training is the teacher-student relationship, that being a possible training ground for self-transformation. But through these four years and more, I've been able to see clearly that just as significant is training and practice with Sangha face-to-face. This goes beyond reciting the vow of taking refuge in the Sangha. Being intimately involved in practice, programs, and circles is an opportunity to work with the precepts directly with one another.

How do I practice and let go of whatever I'm holding on to? To serve others and come to see 'as is,' honor and work with each other's different perspectives and energies. Shared Stewardship is a container which invites me to work with those differences. I have the radical opportunity to see myself and my patterns and to expand beyond.

LUMINOUS-HEART: When I first came to the Center, I heard Roshi's words in a talk that "each of us is responsible for the whole universe." I've come to realize that each of us is responsible for the life of the Center and I try not to wait for other people to do what needs to be done. The form this takes for me is to step into positions where I did not feel sufficiently skilled or qualified. This is a major life lesson for me.

I also see manifested a deep commitment to the horizontal form of Shared Stewardship of the Center. I am moved by this commitment to not having top-down shared stewardship in a spiritual institution. I feel proud of Roshi for envisioning it and for all of us for living this process. ■