



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

This is the Place

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



Happy New Year! To begin the 2016 calendar year, I would like to share with you a fragment from the Avatamsaka Sutra*, one of the most renowned of Buddhist sutras, which dates back to the 2nd/3rd century CE.

Great Compassion is the essence of meditation. It is her body, her source and her means to spread herself through the whole universe.

Without this “great heart” of love and compassion, meditation, however sublime it may be in other respects, has absolutely no value.

This is the place of all the ones who are marked by love and compassion. Whenever they see how other living beings suffer, they are ready to descend into this suffering and experience precisely the same suffering themselves.

This is the place of those who, in the end, through genuine concern and commitment, bring everyone, no matter how deeply he or she is entangled in the web of birth, suffering, and death, to enlightenment.

This is the place of those who have arrived at the point where the great vows are made. This is the place where everything is seen solely from the perspective of love and compassion. This is the place from which all the beings from the ocean of arising and perishing are liberated.

This is the place of those who have wholly dedicated themselves to the salvation of the whole world. Who shall never despair doing that. Who allow their devotion to ripen evermore deeply, and who do this for and with the whole reality as one single being.

* Ton Lathouwers, *More than Anyone Can do: Zen Talks*, translated by Mical Goldfarb Sikkema, VU University Press, Amsterdam, 2013, pp. 205-206. (Note: Bold type is Roshi’s choice.)



The Great Compassionate Bodhisattva holding her hands in the No Fear position in the Kanzeon Garden.

This is the place of those whose deepest intention is to be as strong as diamond. This is the place of those who until the end of time are prepared to sustain their commitment and even to intensify it. This is the place of those who are prepared to do this for all living beings and in all dimensions of reality.

This is the place of those who are filled with Great Compassion, of those whose hearts remain deeply touched in

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love and wisdom, as long as others still moan in suffering, misery and sorrow. This is the place of those who shall eternally commit themselves to the well-being and enlightenment of the whole of reality.

Here is the place of those who give expression to themselves sitting in meditation and on all the paths of existence. Deeply rooted in meditation, they are at the same time totally concerned with helping all beings, going down to the very bottom of things, out of reverence for all who are already awakened.

There is much turmoil throughout the world, including terrorist attacks in many countries and people fleeing from the devastation in their homeland for refuge in the West. I think that this sutra is particularly apt for the times in which we are living as we, each in our own way, struggle with what to do about these dire situations.

This sutra tells us pointedly that the quality of the relationship we have to each other, including the so-called “other,” is the place where the essence of zazen comes alive. This is the place where you-and-I-and-all-the-rest live this hyphenated – as in inextricably interconnected – one life that is the suffering and joys of all lives interweaving all together.

Let us sit in a circle together and each share the ways in which this sutra moves us. Is it the vow to suffer with and experience the suffering of another? Is it the vow *to be as strong as diamond*? Is it the vow *of going down to the very bottom of things*? Is it the vow to see everything *solely from the perspective of love and compassion*? Which words in this sutra awaken your deepest heart’s desire for your life? How might each us live deeply shaped by love and wisdom?

The sutra grounds Great Compassion as the essence of zazen. What happens when you and I learn to sit still in the midst of our very own being – in the midst of our very own experiences of anger, sorrow, joy, confusion, contempt, bliss, jealousy and all the rest? Can we be still without repressing or believing that all of these expressions of our nature should not exist, or are wrong or shameful? What reversal can happen when you and I sit still in the midst of all of these expressions of ourselves?

Zazen can be really scary – to sit in the midst of whatever we have kept hidden from ourselves can feel so suffocatingly oppressive. We feel the need to run away; we feel utterly powerless in the grip of it all. And yet the sutra is saying that it is exactly at this very point when being still seems intolerable, that this is the place where compassion is born. This is the place where a great love can arise.

Have we not at some time felt this arising of compassion even towards the tiniest thing, an ant for instance? Have we not come to realize that we must embrace our very own selves with compassion? And, gradually, have we not experienced ourselves embracing more people and situations that we have previously held at arms length or willfully excluded?

I have learned over my many years of zazen that when I sit in the stillness of any situation, something turns in the stillness. Today, as I am feeling in my body the incredible suffering of the world, I see that this very body is exactly *the place ... where the great vows are made.*

Amazing! How can it be otherwise? Rather than succumb to despair, this is the point – the very point – where the great vows of a bodhisattva come forth. Why? Because, as the sutra so pointedly reminds us, zazen is not solely for our own benefit or for attaining various states of consciousness. Zazen is Great Compassion. This means that you-and-I-and-all-the-rest-of-life live in relationship to everyone and everything. We live in a hyphenated universe, and it is for each of us to mature into this relationship.

“... Great compassion is the essence of meditation ...”

How do we do this? The sutra seems to say that compassion takes hold when we suffer with each other and become companions of the heart. Do we not feel ourselves becoming more tender when we are open to suffering? Do we not feel more willing to extend a hand, to reach out towards someone, in the midst of all the brokenness of our lives?

Last night I viewed the documentary entitled *Flight of the Refugees*, by Syrian-American Elias Matar, which captures six days of his journey with Syrians fleeing into the West. The words of this sutra came alive for me: *This is the place. Here is the place.* From my seat right here, now, is the place where Great Compassion must extend her hand, her body, her resources to do something for this one single being that we all are together.

Please, in this new year, let us be deeply rooted in zazen and at the same time be totally concerned with helping other beings. This is the way to show our gratitude. Thank you for your practice.

Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA's Abbot & Head Teacher.

Out of the Blue

by Burt Wetanson

In early September, when Kodo Watanabe arrived unexpectedly on the front steps of Normandie Mountain – come straight from Japan via LAX – guest steward Yudo Burger and temple co-director Myoho Fjeld were at first unsure how to help him. He explained that he was a Zen buddhist priest whose home temple is Toshoji, a small temple in Tokyo, his master was Tetsujo Roshi, and he had come in hopes of practicing at ZCLA. Yudo and Myoho let the surprise visitor stay in the Lotus guest room until Roshi Egyoku got back from a trip.

After hearing his story, Roshi invited the obviously sincere Zen priest to live and practice at ZCLA for three months – the time remaining on his visa. Kodo-san plunged wholeheartedly into life and practice on Great Dragon Mountain.

To understand Kodo's arrival at ZCLA, we must see it from the perspective of a lifelong spiritual quest. From the time he was young, Kodo has been asking fundamental questions like "Where am I from? What is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of everything?" A consuming spiritual hunger had awakened in him.

"When I was 23 years old," Kodo said, "I traveled to see the world outside of Japan. I went backpacking to London, Egypt, France, Italy and Greece. Many things happened. I saw many poor people, many problems." Affected deeply by his exposure to the world of suffering, Kodo returned to Japan.

"When I was 26, I decided to challenge myself again, still with my questions." Kodo's quest for ultimate answers drove him to more cities and countries and spiritual masters. In 1997, traveling with Saddhus in India, Kodo arrived in Bodhgaya where he was directed to a Japanese Zen temple. There he found an elderly Zen priest and asked him his questions. Kodo vividly recalls the priest's response:

"YOUNG MAN... THERE'S NO TIME... NO TIME FOR THINKING... DO ZAZEN... DO IT NOW! NOBODY KNOWS YOUR ANSWER FOR YOUR LIFE. DO THE PRACTICE AND GET YOUR OWN ANSWER!"

"I was stunned. Those words shook my heart. Before, I was looking for another person to give me the answers. That man told me – you are your own answer. He changed my life."

Back in Japan, Kodo searched for a Buddhist temple where he could "do zazen." On the Internet, he found Toshoji temple and his present master, Tetsujo Roshi. Entering Toshoji, Kodo committed himself, mind and body, to an intense Zen practice.

"I joined a sesshin, then a zazenkai. In the second sesshin, I got kensho. That made a big change for me. I would do zazen, go to Toshoji to get my dokusan and zazen, then go to my job as a security guard. Maybe four, five, six years, I continued like that." While in his twenties, Kodo married. He is now 50 years old; the couple has a 20-year-old daughter who is attending college in Japan.



Reverend Kodo

Three years ago, the Dharma Wheel turned once again for Kodo Watanabe when he traveled, for the first time, to the United States with a group of Soto monks; their purpose was to visit Soto temples.

"At the San Francisco Zen Center, we were surprised that right here in the U.S., people were doing zazen in a large zendo along with many residents. My feeling was – Wow, it's great! They have a pure spirit for the practice, a pure passion for Buddhism. I stayed one day and night at San Francisco Zen Center. I thought, this is real Sangha and decided to come back and train and practice with them." Instead, Kodo found his way to the Zen Center of Los Angeles "because ZCLA is the same line as my lineage at Toshoji temple."

Kodo was surprised by some of the differences between practices at ZCLA and the temples in Japan.

"In Japan, the abbot is the only person who can manage the temple life. How to teach, how to lead the people to enlightenment. That's what the abbot learned from the previous abbot. If you become abbot, you cannot change the management and practice method. If you change that,

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some part of the best Buddhism is lost, whether you know it or not. If a person who has not attained the truth of Buddhism changes something according to his own thinking, everybody loses an important thing. When the abbot gets the same state as master Dogen, the founder of Soto Zen, then he can change things.

“At ZCLA, things can work without the abbot. In Japan, in the temple, if a problem comes up, people go to the master and ask: What can we do? Here, if Roshi isn’t here and a problem comes up, they think how to do it and they do it without the abbot. Roshi watches and sometimes suggests. And it works. It’s such a surprise. It’s so beautiful!

“Another thing, in a temple in Japan, like Eiheiji, the monks’ faces are so dark. Because it’s so hard. You have to kill the personal self. And always say yes, yes, yes. This is the practice. Most days are so hard, it’s like in hell. We have a saying – to get to enlightenment, you must go to the hell place. But they get realized. Someday they get the light, the dramatic change. That is the way of the Japanese.

“Here people look happy and share their happiness. When people come here, they feel, ‘Oh, this is a nice place. The people are so nice.’ But I can’t take this kind of thing to Japan. It’s so different.

“I have very big respect for the abbot, Roshi Egyoku. Here everybody respects Egyoku Roshi and Roshi respects her students. She respects each person’s ego. She admires them and trains them. And it works.”

Kodo has in mind at least one practice he’d like to take from ZCLA to Japan. “One thing I want to try in Japan when I become abbot – when we have a zazenkai, I’d like the students to give talks and tell about their journey.

Here at ZCLA, the students speak about their experience. That was a big surprise. That encourages the other people. That’s what I’d like to bring to my temple.”

During his three-month stay at ZCLA, Kodo immersed himself fully in the schedule. He seized every opportunity for practice, ready and willing to help out any way he could; he was the constant helper of ZCLA’s facilities manager, Robert Diaz.

“I’ve been working with Mister Robert for the past three months,” Kodo said. “He’s a person who realized the reality mind of Bodhisattva. Those days with him have been like a big treasure, a gift from Buddha. I have never seen his face with a negative expression. He always contacts a person with a pure smile. He always calls out to everybody, ‘Hey, how are you doing? What’s going on? Is there something I can do for you?’ There is no secret intention or discrimination toward the person. I think he just loves the person.



Robert Diaz with Rev. Kodo

“When we went to the hamburger shop, there was a poor man in dirty clothes in the parking lot who asked, ‘Some change, please?’ Most drivers ignored him or had an attitude to push him away. However, Mr. Robert called out smiling, ‘Hey man, how are you doing? How are you today?’ His attitude was identical to his attitude towards Roshi – no different. He had a conversation with the man like his old

friend. He gave him some money with a smile.

“I can’t forget the joyful face of that poor man. A joyful face and smile in conversation with Robert. Here’s a beautiful moment in his life. Of course, I can give him money, but I cannot seem to be able to give him a sincere smile. So I think I saw in Mr. Robert the act of a true Bodhisattva at the parking lot.”



Rev. Kodo is a priest at Toshoji International Zen Center in Tokyo.

Welcome to New Roshis Kodo and Shinko

On Saturday, October 10, 2015, Roshi Egyoku gave Inka to Roshi Merle Kodo Boyd and Roshi Iliia Shinko Perez in a private ceremony. The ceremony was held at night in the Founders Room and was witnessed by Roshi Gerry Shishin Wick, Sensei Raul Ensho Berge, and a few members of Shishin and Shinko's family. On Sunday, October 11, the Sangha held a joyous celebration to welcome the new Roshis.



(Left) Roshi Kodo Boyd, Roshi Egyoku, and Roshi Shinko Perez.

Inka, (formally Inka Shomei, Seal of Approval), is conferred in the White Plum lineage through the Harada Sogaku/Yasutani Hakuun lineage. In 1970, Maezumi Roshi received Inka from Yasutani Roshi, who founded the independent Zen school Sanbo Kyodan. Both Harada and Yasutani Roshis primarily taught koans to lay students. In addition, Maezumi Roshi completed koan studies with the lay Rinzai teacher Osaka Koryu Roshi, receiving Inka from him in 1973.

These are the first Inkas conferred by Roshi Egyoku. Roshi Kodo is her first Dharma Heir and leads the Lincoln Zen Community in New Jersey and has been involved in interfaith dialogue and conversations on race. Roshi Shinko is the first Dharma Heir of Roshi Shishin and is Abbess of Maitreya Abbey and also teaches in Spain. She is the co-author of *The Great Heart Way*.

The new Roshis and the ZCLA Sangha have derived much mutual benefit and joy in practicing together. We look forward to many more years of Dharma exchange.

Sensei Ryodo Becomes a Preceptor

Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley received Preceptor Transmission from Roshi Egyoku Nakao on Thursday, November 5, 2015. This means that Sensei Ryodo, as a Lay Teacher, has been empowered to give the Zen Buddhist Bodhisattva Precepts in the ceremony of Jukai and to perform life-passage ceremonies at his discretion.

Sensei Ryodo undertook an intensive three-day retreat prior to the ceremony. The ceremony was witnessed by Roshi Iliia Shinko Perez as ceremonial Precept Teacher, Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy as witness, and Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen as Roshi's attendant.



(Left) Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Roshi Egyoku, Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley, Roshi Iliia Shinko Perez, and Sensei Pat Shingetsu Guzy.

The Lay Preceptor empowerment comes through the Roshi Glassman line, which is the lineage passed on by Roshi Egyoku. The Soto Zen School does not empower Lay persons as Zen teachers nor as Preceptors.

Sensei Ryodo received Dharma Transmission from Roshi Egyoku in 2007, founded the Westchester Zen Circle in Los Angeles, and also teaches at ZCLA. He is the author

of *Three Steps to Mindfulness*.

We look forward to Sensei's evolution as a Lay Preceptor. Congratulations Sensei Ryodo!

2015 Fall Practice Period Commitments

We acknowledge the more than 143 Sangha members who participated from Zen Center of Los Angeles, Lincroft Zen Sangha, Ocean Moon Sangha, San Luis Obispo Sitting Group, Valley Sangha, Westchester Zen Circle, One Essence Sangha, Twin Towers Men's Central Jail, and California Men's Colony.

Alan Taigen Turton
 Andrew A.
 Ann Myoho Murray
 Amanda J.
 Amy Gollnick
 April True-Flower Ford
 Arthur Seisho Pavliska
 Bee Colman
 Ben Allanoff
 Benjamin Ehrlich
 Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown
 Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran
 Bill Ware
 Bob Doetsu Ross
 Bonnie Myosen Nadzam
 Bradford Schultze
 Burt Wetanson
 Candice Mitchell
 Carmen Drum
 Carmen Chisho Izzo
 Carol Ann Flowing-Mountain Schmitt
 Cassie Riger
 Charles Duran
 Chris Daian Fields
 Chris Hackman
 Christina Eirin Carvalho
 Cindy P.
 Darla Myoho Fjeld
 Dave Kakuon DeFrank
 David Kisen Thompson
 Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen
 Debra Shinko McKay
 DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass
 Diane True-Joy Fazio
 Diane Enju Katz
 Donna J.
 Dylan Neal
 Eleanor Joen Heaphy
 Ellen Reigen Ledley
 Frank Genku Martinez
 Fred G.
 Gabriel Lucero
 Geoff O'Quest
 George Mukei Horner
 Glenn Davis
 Hank Steinberg
 Hark Heck
 Hieu T.

Hilda Bolden
 Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka
 Jake Duarte
 James Ryushin Carney
 Jane Chen
 Janet Koren Sager-Knott
 Janie Jian Napp
 Jeanne Dokai Dickenson
 Jeffrey Hirsch
 Jenny Bright
 Jessica Oetsu Page
 Jim Dōjun Hanson
 Jim Quam
 John Daishin Buksbazen
 John Shinjin Byrne
 John Heart-Mirror Trotter
 John Rosania
 Jolene Beiser
 Jonathan Kaigen Levy
 Julia Seirin Norstrand
 Karen Enduring-Joy Brodie
 Kamran Pourmorady
 Kane Buzen Phelps
 Katherine Senshin Griffith
 Kathi Koshin Novak
 Kathy Myoan Solomon
 Katrenia L.
 Kei Myokai Snodgrass
 Kern Eccles
 Kim G.
 Kipp Ryodo Hawley
 Lana Shoshin Spraker
 Lane Igoudin
 Laos Onshin Chuman
 Laura E.
 Laurie L.
 Lee Kuzan Nedler
 Lisa Willenger
 Lorraine Gessho Kumpf
 Lynn Palumbo
 Mara Shiko Moon Cohn
 Marc Dogen Fontaine
 Mark Hougetsu Bueide
 Mark Seishin C.
 Mark Shefrin
 Mark Shogen Bloodgood
 Marley Klaus-Dowling
 Mary Rios

Max Ryushin Andes
 Merle Kodo Boyd
 Michael Jinsen Davis
 Michael Jishin Fritzen
 Nan Reishin Merritt
 Neli Koen Cartolin
 Nem Etsugen Bajra
 Patti Muso Giggans
 Patricia Shingetsu Guzy
 Pat K.
 Patricia Keian Pfof
 Patricia Way
 Paul W.
 Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson
 P. Hung
 Peter Nyodo Ott
 Raul Ensho Berge
 Rebecca Etsudo T.
 Reeb Kaizen Venners
 Richard Taishin Schulhof
 Robert Lone-Pine Smith
 Roger Haferkamp
 Roland Palmer
 Rosa Ando Martinez
 Russ Rayburn
 Sage R.
 Sandy Seiju Goodenough
 Sarah McCarron
 Shannon F.
 Shawn Shaon Sattva Nichols
 Steven Totland
 Steve Witkowski
 Sun S.
 Tara Jihō Sterling
 Thanh T.
 Tim Wisdom-Moon Halphide
 Tim Zamora
 Tina Jitsujo Gauthier
 Tom Yudo Burger
 Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert
 Ty Jotai Webb
 Vanessa Eisho Moss
 Wendy Egyoku Nakao
 Willie C. III
 Yuesen Lobsang Tenkyong Yuen
 Yvonne Dee L.
 Z Zeller

Cradle of the Bodhisattva

by Burt Wetanson



Ben Allanoff

Next time you're at the Zen Center, stroll over to the northwest corner of our peaceful backyard and spend a moment in the company of Kanzeon Bodhisattva, the lovely statue carved from a Torrey pine tree limb years ago. You're sure to notice that the Kanzeon and the space around it are now cradled by a netlike fence of interwoven branches that remind some people of bamboo.

The cradle is the handiwork of Ben Allanoff, a versatile dharma artist who is a member of the Valley Sangha, has been practicing for some 19 years, and whose teacher is Sensei Shingetsu Guzy.

WW: How did you get involved with this project?

Ben: I had the idea of doing some kind of art exhibit here at ZCLA, so I met with Roshi Egyoku and we talked about all of these different ideas, and this was the one we settled on because that corner seemed to be the one place that could use some freshening up. Also, I had already made a structure similar to this.

WW: The branches remind me of bamboo but they're not, are they?

Ben: They're actually a vine called arundo donax. It's a tall perennial cane that grows in damp soil. Some people really dislike it because it's hard to get rid of. They actually call it an evil plant. But it's great for my purposes because it grows all over the place and people are happy to have you come and take it away.

WW: Why do people dislike arundo so much?

Ben: It grows near water and it tends to crowd out the native plants because it's much better at sucking up the water than they are. It grows all over the world and threatens species in wilderness areas that are endangered. What I like about working with arundo is to take something that's considered noxious and make something beautiful.

WW: Where are you from originally?

Ben: Philadelphia.

WW: Is that where you studied art?

Ben: I never studied art. I'm self-taught. I've been making art as my primary activity for just a couple of years. I did it on a more casual basis before that. I did mostly sculpture. I use things I find in nature, like arundo. I also use metal objects, old pipes and gears, and things like that. I make wire sculpture. I also do sculpture in nature. I find materials in the forest and arrange them in some way in the wilderness. They're not meant to last forever; over time, they'll decompose. I also do paintings but that's a separate activity.

WW: Do you feel that your Zen practice somehow informs your artistic work?

Ben: They're completely the same. I don't even know how to talk about that. Specifically in this case, Roshi looked at all my sketches and it was a really collaborative process. The communication was amazing. She understood what my art was; it was a direct kind of understanding that this project manifested.

How has Zen influenced my art? I would say it's a question of getting in touch with non-rational understanding and expressing it. I feel as if I'm answering a koan, but I don't express it in words. Through the practice, I've found that I can access other kinds of understanding than involve thinking. That's the place I go to when I make art. That's why I can't stop making art. I like living in that space.



To see more of Ben's work, Google: Artwork by Ben Allanoff.

Buddha Goes to Prison

by DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass



Gojitsu

Every day, approximately 1400 women wake up in the California Institution for Women at Corona (CIW) of whom some thirty practice Zen.

I began volunteering at CIW in June, 2014. When I first offered Zen to the prison, about fifteen women showed up; that number has since doubled. The group voted to call themselves the “One Essence Sangha.”

Three of the women have had jukai and one of those has been released and is practicing at the San Francisco Zen Center. Two others are scheduled to take jukai in the coming months. Two additional women have been released and are now practicing at Zen centers in San Diego and Riverside.

The program I provide each Friday consists of shortened versions of the various practices we use at ZCLA: zazen, kinhin, Dharma Talks, Day of Reflection, Council, and Face-to-Face. However, the periods are shorter since the total time slot I’ve been given by the prison is only three-and-a-half hours.

Being open and vulnerable in any prison is risky. Consequently, women tend to shut down and not share their pain with others. Many of the women have been abandoned by their families and friends and suffer the pain of isolation and being forced to get along with people they never would otherwise encounter on the outside. The whole prison culture is a major emotional and mental adjustment for anyone, but particularly for women who are incarcerated for the first time. The sobering statistic regarding female inmates is that 85 percent of them have been abused sexually, physically or emotionally, which means that many of our sangha are severely damaged psychologically and spiritually.

At ZCLA, in our closing ceremonies, we are told, “Practice diligently as though extinguishing a fire upon our head.” That’s apropos for the One Essence Sangha as more than half are serving life sentences or long-term sentences over twenty-five years, intensifying the importance of penetrating and practicing the dharma.

It is easy for me to relate to their suffering since I had a very troubled childhood and youth and know how it feels to be locked up. I was incarcerated numerous times; I

carried around the negative self-image associated with that aspect of my past and never felt good about myself.

When I came to Zen practice, my teachers told me to “Just be yourself” which I was unwilling to do because it didn’t make sense to be somebody I didn’t want to be. I felt like a broken human being and a complete failure. Consequently, I practiced the way I thought I was “supposed to be.” I never felt comfortable, which is always the case when we try to be somebody we aren’t.

Thanks to intensive Zen practice and guidance from our teachers, that opinion of myself dropped away – for the first time in my life, I can say with certainty that I am finally totally comfortable in my own skin. After many years of Zen practice, my understanding had deepened to the point where I had something valuable to contribute, and I chose a group with whom I could easily identify, people who were suffering in a way that I understood all

Being open and vulnerable in any prison is “risky.”

too well. The women in my prison sangha know about my past, which has given me a credibility that allows them to listen to my advice about how to get their lives back on track.

The steady growth of the One Essence Sangha has been inspiring. But the ultimate validation for me came when 11 of us from ZCLA held a Buddha’s birthday celebration at the prison. Before the ceremony, we sat in council style, at which time I asked the prison sangha to share what impact Zen has had on their lives.

As others who were there can attest, the experiences they shared were extraordinary. They said things like: “The subtleties and spirituality of the One Essence Sangha is beyond measure.” “Serenity is in the now.” “I’m staying in the present and suffering less.” And “I’m feeling more freedom than I did outside the prison gates.”

It is wonderful to see the women of the One Essence Sangha show the same warmth and friendliness to one another as we express at ZCLA. Such is the power of the Buddhadharma to transform these Buddhas behind bars.

Gojitsu is a Buddhist Prison Chaplain and a longtime practitioner at ZCLA.

Security Tips: Here and In Our Neighborhood

by Karen Enduring-Joy Brodie



Enduring-Joy

As we enter the holiday season, we can expect lots of friendly get-togethers, good food, and...crime. Every year, crime soars during the holidays, so here to help you celebrate unscathed are a few security tips that all the experts seem to agree on.

1. Your life is worth more than your property. You are more

likely to survive a mugging if you give up your property without a fight. Note: This statement is true only because most of us don't know how to fight. Even better than handing over your belongings without a whimper would be to fight off your attacker through self-defense training such as Krav Maga, karate, or some other proven system.

2. For Ladies Only: Resist your Inner Good Girl when you are out on the streets. Women are often the prey of choice for miscreants because they are notoriously easy marks. For instance, they are easier than men to talk into doing a "favor" that will leave them vulnerable to attack, such as letting a stranger into their home to make a phone call, or walking to a dark, deserted area to help with something (that turns out not to exist). Let that guy find his own lost puppy! Along those same lines, when you are passing an individual in the street who makes you uneasy, look him right in the eye with confidence bordering on severity rather than looking demurely at the ground as you pass by. In addition to sending a message that you are not to be trifled with, you will have a better eyewitness i.d. if you are attacked, and he will know that.

3. Here is a fun fact from LAPD Officer Ashpaugh, who addressed the ZCLA residents last September: If you witness a crime, or if you are attacked, one of the most important pieces of identifying information you can give the police is a description of the shoes the troublemaker was wearing. According to Officer Ashpaugh, criminals often carry extra clothes so that they can quickly change outfits between crimes, but they rarely have time to address their shoes. Believe it or not, even the officers up in the LAPD

helicopter can see the shoes of those of us on the ground, and they use that information to catch wrongdoers. So keep your shoes polished, because they are watching.

4. Know your neighbors. This suggestion comes up over and over again, whether it is in the context of keeping your home from being burglarized or getting rescued in the event of a typhoon. Know the people with whom you share geographical space, because they are the ones who will have your back (or not) in an emergency. Chat with them, be nice to them, give them sweets.

5. Pay Attention! Be aware of your surroundings and of who is around you. Don't talk on your cell phone while you walk the streets unless it is to make a quick call that can't wait. This is especially true in the neighborhoods around ZCLA, where thieves have been known to snatch cell phones from their owners' hands mid-sentence. Can you even imagine the holidays without your iPhone?



Officer Ashpaugh offers valuable tips about safety to ZCLA residents.

6. Collect your mail and your packages as soon as possible. Mail and package theft is rampant in Los Angeles, so if you can find a way to have your packages delivered when you are home or left in a spot that is out of view from the street, do it. Also, know that the master keys that allow mail carriers to get past security gates are often stolen. This means that your security gate is not secure, and any mail left in the mailbox overnight may not be there in the morning.

7. Lock your car when you leave it unattended, and do not leave anything tempting in view! Also, hide your valuables before you arrive at your destination. If a thief observes you sliding your MacBook Air under the passenger seat after you park, he just isn't going to fall for it when your car sits there pretending to be empty after you leave.

So there are your seven tips. It is always a bit anxiety-provoking to be reminded of these concerns, but hopefully these suggestions will help you enjoy a safe and prosperous holiday season with the people you love!

Enduring-Joy is a longtime practitioner at ZCLA.

The 2015 Annual Fund Appeal

by Darla Myoho Fjeld

While sitting in the stillness of Rohatsu Sesshin, a deep feeling of gratitude welled up inside my heart. This came from the realization that the very building I was sitting in was there because of the generosity of the thousands of Zen practitioners who had crossed its threshold. The heat that kept me from shivering, the beloved Roshi who sat in the renovated Dokusan Room waiting to see students, the functional restrooms and comfortable guest rooms – all made possible by generosity.

Each year at this time, the Zen Center calls upon our members and friends to give to our biggest fundraiser of the year. Our Annual Fund is a key source of income for the Zen Center. Successfully reaching our goal of \$65,000 allows the Zen Center to continue to offer our Sangha a place of deep practice. It ensures also that we can



continue to maintain our buildings and grounds with a balanced budget.

Many of us pledged to make a gift to the Annual Fund as part of our Intensive Practice Period commitment and also committed to a daily Gratefulness Practice. As Roshi Egyoku expressed in her Annual Fund Appeal letter: “Generosity and gratitude are natural expressions that come from realizing the profound interconnection of all beings.” When we approach our lives with gratitude, we appreciate that every single thing in our lives comes from the generosity of others and then we automatically give generously to others.

Last year, donations ran from \$5 to \$10,000 – only the giver knows what his or her financial priorities are. Our goal is 100 percent participation in the Annual Fund. It’s the giving that counts.

Many Hands, Many Hearts

by Conrad Butsugen Romo



Normandie Avenue to San Marino Street and 8th to Fedora Streets.

This all began at our last Sangha Forum when I raised the issue of ZCLA being more involved in the neighborhood. Then there was our first Do-ocracy meeting, and that intention was put into focus with the possibility of a cleanup effort. What other groups in the neighborhood might be interested? St. Mary’s Church was the first place I contacted. I then searched for Koreatown community associations, made calls, wrote letters, and asked people who else I might reach out to. I got lucky

Nearly fifty of us gathered on the morning of Halloween to pick up trash: members of ZCLA, including Roshi, along with St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, the Korean Youth Community Center (KYCC), and several USC students. We cleaned the streets from



with Ryan Allen from KYCC, who had, by his estimate, participated in over two-hundred street cleaning efforts. He is also a licensed arborist, and when I mentioned the many trees that had been planted by Sensei Koan, Ryan was on board to help water and care for them.

As it was, he already had a date in mind for a street cleaning along with twenty-five students from USC who were raring to go. They had yet to settle on a neighborhood. The timing was good. Reverend Anna Olson from St. Mary’s had a number of young Oaxacan boys and girls and their parents ready and willing. KYCC provided gloves, bags, rakes, and a couple of trucks to haul the trash away.

As I joined the many hands in picking up trash, and watched others bend and crouch again and again, the image came to me of the story I’d heard in grammar school of Jesus washing the feet of others. Work as nasty and humbling as our concerted effort to clean up a few streets in Koreatown. A number of people thanked us as we worked. I think we made a few friends.

Butsugen is a longtime practitioner at ZCLA.

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

The Zen Center is maintained by the hands and eyes of each one of you.

To all those who helped with our Day of Dead: **Rosa Ando Martinez, Tom Yudo Burger, Ty Jotai Webb, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Darla Myoho Fjeld, William Earth-Mirror Corcoran, Tim Zamora, Rev. Kodo-San, John Rosania, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, Lilly Berge-Brodie, Diane True-Joy Fazio, Dave Kakuon DeFrank, and Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka;**

To **Roshi Egyoku, Myoho, Yudo, and Karen Enduring-Joy Brodie** for the Annual Appeal letter;

To **Roshi Egyoku, Pat Shingetsu Guzy, Roshi Iliia Shinko Perez, Faith-Mind, and Rev. Kodo** for Sensei Ryodo’s retreat;

To **Roshi Shinko** for her Great Heart Way workshop;

To **Myoho** for preparing lunch for the Great Heart Way workshop;

To **Gojitsu** for leading the November Zazenkai and to **Tim Zamora** for tenzoing the Zazenkai;

To **George Mukei Horner, Roshi Egyoku, Yudo, Jotai, and Dylan Neal** for yard clean-up after the wind storms;

To **John Rosania and Kakuon** for cleaning the halls in the Pundarika building;

To **Rev. Issho Fujita** for his Dharma Talk;

To **Faith-Mind and Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert** for leading the Precepts class series;

For **Sensei Ryodo’s** Thursday night Dharma Talk;

To **Leon Berg and Andrew Taggart** for the workshop on money;

To all those who helped with Roshi Kodo and Roshi Shinko’s reception: **Jean Dokai Dickensen, Tim Zamora, Kakuon, Rev. Kodo, Jotai, and Josh Berkowitz;**

To **Roshi Egyoku, Roshi Shinko, and Roshi Kodo Boyd** for leading the Autumn Wind Sesshin;

To Zen Teacher **Anita Jeong Ji Feng’s** reading of her new book *Sid*;

To **Conrad Butsugen Romo** for leading the October Day of Reflection;



Lilly Berge-Brodie face painting at our Day of Dead.



Kimu DeBacco cooking for Robatsu Sesshin.



Dylan Neal (left) and Genku cleaning windows.

To **Jessica Oetsu Page** for leading the November Day of Reflection;

To **Diane Enju Katz** for leading the December Day of Reflection;

To **Butsugen** for organizing our Neighborhood Coalition Clean-up with **St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, the Korean Youth Community Center (KYCC), and USC;**

To **Myoho and Earth-Mirror** for the Many Hands And Eyes Dharma Chat on Race;

To **Faith-Mind** for leading the Jukai Class Series;

To **Chris Hackman** for leading the “Integrating Practice with Everyday Life” Dharma Chat;

To **Tina Jitsujo Gauthier** for leading the 2nd Informal Open Do-Ocracy meeting;

To **Ben Allanoff** for his fence project in the Kanzeon garden;

To our 3rd quarter Tenzos: **Chris Daian Fields, Frank Genku Martinez, Dojun, and Tim Zamora;**

To **Senshin and Jitsujo** for preparing snacks for Zazenkais;

To our 3rd quarter Jikidos: **Debra Shinko McKay, Bob Doetsu Ross, Kaizen, Yuesen Yuen, Patricia Keian Pfost, Genku, Jim Dojun Hanson, and Tim Zamora;**

To **Elias Matar and Ginger Fung** for showing their film *Flight of the Refugees* and discussion afterwards;

To **Uran Snyder** for her gift of a Peace Pole and to **Tim Ide, Yumiko Sasaki, and Janis Kim** of BYAKKO, Los Angeles;

To **Roshi Egyoku** for leading the Rohatsu Sesshin;

To **Roshi Joe Bobrow** of Deep Stream Zen Institute for his reading and talk;

To **LAPD Officer Ashpaugh** for speaking to the Residents on crime in the area;

To our Altar Flower Group: **Diane Enju Katz (Steward), Yoko Bajra, Mara Shiko Moon Cohn, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Ellen Reigen Ledley, Janet Ko Ren SagerKnott, Cathy Jikan Sammons, and Pat Way;**

ZCLA Affiliated Groups

The Lincroft Zen Sangha (New Jersey)
led by Roshi 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

Santa Barbara Zen Center (CA)
led by Sensei Gary Koan Janka

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

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

Outreach Groups

**CMC Buddhist Fellowship Group
California Men's Colony (CMC)
San Luis Obispo, CA**
led by Mark Shogen Bloodgood

**One Essence Sangha
California Institution for Women (CIW)
Corona, CA**
led by DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass
Contact info@zcla.org for information.

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

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.

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Abbot 1995-1999: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

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Sangha Rites of Passage

Welcome New Members

Peter Sample
Camila Ribadeneira
Helena Harvilicz
Lane Igoudin

Shared Stewardship Leave-Taking

Penelope Luminou-Heart Thompson - *Sangha Member*
Rev. Kodo Watanabe - *Guest Trainee*

ZPO Steward Installation

December 12, 2015

Nem Etsugen Bajra
Mark Shogen Bloodgood
Ellen Reigen Ledley
Ann Myoho Murray
Jared Oshin Seide

2016 Sesshins

Introduction to Sesshin

Thursday eve March 17 - Saturday March 19

Buddha's Birthday Sesshin

Tuesday eve April 5 - Saturday April 9

Growing a Plum Blossom Sesshin

Wednesday eve May 25 - Sunday May 29

Just Summer Sesshin

Sunday eve July 17 - Saturday July 23

Autumn Wind Sesshin

Sunday eve October 9 - Sunday October 16

Rohatsu Sesshin

Friday eve December 2 - Saturday December 10

MuGon End-of-Year Reflection Retreat

Sunday eve December 27 - Wednesday December 30



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