



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 Gift of Zazen

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

One of my delights is to explore Zen Master Eihei Dogen's "Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen (Fukanzazengi)"* with practitioners. I encourage you to memorize the entire text, which is only two pages long, and to chew and digest it over your lifetime.

Written in 1227 upon his return from China, this text was Zen Master Dogen's first work, which was written when he was just 27 years old. As monks began to seek zazen instruction from him, Master Dogen felt the necessity of laying out the principles of zazen which he had learned in Sung China. While the text borrows heavily from a similar work in Chinese (no copyright issues in those days), Master Dogen added his own understanding and modifications to clarify the earlier work.

Over the past several months during our study of the precepts and in listening to your questions, I feel that you are not doing zazen as strongly as you are capable of. Sitting with you in the Zendo, it is easy to detect flimsy zazen and even more flimsy walking meditation. It takes effort, courage, and commitment to sit upright in correct bodily posture and to cease all the movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views, as Master Dogen instructs.

The instructions for zazen are simple and direct, but not easy to commit to and sustain. It takes guts. As I often say to you, zazen is not a time for reflecting or thinking about one thing or another, nor is it a time to daydream or chase after thoughts and emotions. But as we know, it is all too easy to slip into a thinking and reflecting mode, to work out our problems, and to plot our next moves. Please check yourselves carefully and honestly: is this your zazen?

*See: On Zen Practice: Body, Breath, and Mind/Wisdom.
Roshi Egyoku is Abbot and Head Teacher of ZCLA.



Bee landing at Great Dragon Mountain wild life refuge. The bees alighted on an old pine tree for nearly ten days before moving on.

Master Dogen says:

Once you have adjusted yourself into this posture, take a deep breath, inhale, exhale, rock your body to the right and left, and settle into a steady, unmoving sitting position.

In doing zazen, day after day, year after year, we develop the stability of a mountain, the vast spaciousness of sky, and a laser-sharp and penetrating awareness in all directions. This is the immeasurable gift of zazen. Master

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Dogen says: *sit like a big, rocky mountain*. In Japanese, the word is *gotsugotsu chi*, or sit fixedly—solidly, unmovably! This requires effort and commitment. It requires taking full responsibility for your own practice and realization. If you have been sitting for years and are still flopping about, it's time to take stock and make adjustments.

What is the art of zazen? Master Dogen instructs us further:

Think of not-thinking. How do you think of not-thinking? Non-thinking. This in itself is the essential art of zazen.

**“... sit like a big, rocky mountain ...
gotsugotsu chi ...
Sit fixedly, solidly, unmovably ...”**

—Zen Master Eihei Dogen

Think of not-thinking. Here Master Dogen points us to the possibility inherent in zazen. In doing zazen day after day, year after year, you recognize that zazen offers up its art, if only we can *take the backward step and shine the light inward*. Too often, we are so caught up in our small self—so caught up in thinking this and thinking that, preferring to think this and not to think that. We are addicted to the revolutions of the mind, intellect, and consciousness; to the calculations of thoughts, perceptions, ideas in which we are ensnared.

Maezumi Roshi would often use the expression *over and over and over and over and over and over*. Of course, when he used this expression, he was emphasizing that practice was exactly this *over and over* effort of disengaging from thought and discursive thinking. But many of you are applying over-and-over effort to bind yourself to yourself by engaging in unnecessary thinking.

As we stabilize and become spacious and develop a precise awareness, we see clearly how thought arises, lives briefly, and dissolves. Each of us experiences directly this arising and passing of thought. And in experiencing this, we must then ask ourselves, What is the proper relationship to thought? Of course, we see how addicted we are to discursive thinking—the drama, the stories, the ongoing narrative which solidifies the sense of self which is defined by thoughts of “I am this, I am not that; I favor this kind of thought, I do not like that kind of thought,” and so on. Stop driving yourself crazy! How? By *non-thinking!*

Let me reassure you, there is nothing wrong with

thoughts arising, living, passing. A Zen Master once said that thoughts are the farts of the brain. Very natural! So if you are suppressing thoughts or believe that you should not have any, that's not it. If you are chasing after thoughts and engaging them, that is not it. If you are seeking a thought-free mind, that is also not it. If you are preferring some thoughts and disliking other thoughts, that is not it either. *Not-thinking* is to see that a thought is just a thought, regardless of its content. One of my early teachers would admonish us by saying, “The thought about your mother is NOT your mother! It is a thought!”

What about the thought about your mother, that thought about how inadequate you are, that thought about how generous you are, the thought about how “they” are always doing it to you? It's a thought. Can you experience it as just a thought—a bare, unadorned thought regardless of its content? Can you be stable, spacious, and precise, so that when thoughts snag you, you have the courage and conviction to return *over and over and over and over and over and over again* to just this breath, this rising and falling belly?

Please listen to what you are telling yourself about zazen, about thoughts, about discursive thinking. Train yourself to look directly at what you believe about thoughts and about thinking in relationship to the art of zazen. No need to hide from yourself—just look unflinchingly at what you are believing. Listen to what you are telling yourself. It can be surprisingly difficult to identify because your inner landscape is so thoroughly saturated by thinking, by fixed reference points that are so embedded, they appear to be the very truth itself.

Maezumi Roshi would often ask us, “What is the thinking of zazen? What does zazen think?” Master Dogen says *non-thinking*. Sometimes, this phrase is translated as *beyond thinking*. This is precisely the thinking of zazen. In other words, do not sit on your cushion engaging in discursive thinking—spinning your tales and indulging your addiction to occupying the mind with thinking.

Immediately you ask, “What is wrong with thinking?” Nothing. Nothing at all. Nevertheless, in zazen, we do not spend our time thinking. Please consider this and have the conviction to disengage from thinking during zazen—*just straighten your body and sit erect*. In fact, strong zazen—stable, spacious, penetrating—will enable you to use the discerning mind fully and freely in service of the wholeness of the web of life.

When you discover the right thinking of zazen, you will realize just how much you have been long accustomed to groping for the elephant, so much so that you doubt the true dragon. The great gift of zazen is the gift of stability, spaciousness, and penetrating awareness that liberates your mind—and this is just the beginning! ■

Forgetting the Self in the Role

By Chris Daian Fields

How do I apply Zen principles to my work as an acting teacher?

I don't.

Since I started practicing, I've come to realize that, in fact, acting is Zen.

We say: Acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances.

And behaving equals the totality of everything the actor does.

That the truth is based on what we call the "reality of doing." In class, I'll ask for a volunteer to come up on stage. I then ask them to jump up and touch the ceiling. It's twelve feet to the ceiling in my studio. They usually give me a curious look. I assure them that it isn't a prank or a trick and then ask them to go ahead and jump and to keep jumping until I have them stop.

So they go ahead and jump. They give themselves over to it. They fall into a rhythm. They start to lose their breath and maybe break into a sweat. I stop them. I then regale the class with tales of my (fictional) athletic exploits and prowess. I toot my own horn bigtime. I tell them that they've never seen a guy like me jump the way I'm going to jump. Then I wink at them and hop about an inch off the floor. I make my point: the volunteer really jumped. I talked, I bragged, maybe I flirted with them a little, but I didn't really jump.

Whatever we do, we do it totally; we don't sort of do it or discuss doing it—we do it as fully as we can without thinking. When they first encountered each other, didn't Maezumi Roshi bark at Bernie Roshi: "When we walk, we walk!" To the actor, we say: "When you do, you do! When you talk, you talk! When you listen, you listen!" How like

Daian is a Los Angeles-based director, teacher, and actor who is currently the artistic director of the award-winning [Echo Theater Company](#), a theatre he founded in 1997. He also leads the [Chris Fields Acting Studio](#) in Los Angeles. Daian is a member of ZCLA.

www.echotheatercompany.com/company.html



Daian Fields

really washing each dish. Or really chopping the vegetable, making of everything your practice.

We say that "imaginary circumstances" means the play wasn't written about me. That would seem obvious, but when ego conspires with self-centered fear, it's very easy to drag the script to the small self. By that I mean that the actor assumes that they intimately know and understand the events of a script, and that they are the character. Isn't that truly self-centered? Elenora Duse, considered the first great modern actress, would pray before she went onstage, "Lord, rid me of the bondage of self... (for) it is by self-forgetting that one finds...."

Twenty-five years ago, I was cast as the lead in Clifford Odets' *Golden Boy*. A big, great part in a great, beautiful play. I'd studied it with Bobby Lewis, who'd helped found the Group Theatre and been in their original production. Boy howdy was I ready. Boy howdy, was I going to light it up. But...there were problems. You see,

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it's very difficult when you're persecuted by all that mediocrity surrounding you. It's a burden to be right about everything all the time. I was aglow with insight, unique in my understanding, poised on the threshold of theatrical greatness! How deluded I was. How full up with ego.

An actor can go one of two ways: the first is the small-self way—it's about me, me, and more me, how much me, all the time me, look at me me. This is in service of ego, attempting to soothe that which can never really be soothed, never be satisfied, a child relentlessly demanding attention.

The second way is what I call "going to it," to the play. The ground being that it's not about me, it's about these characters living in these circumstances created by someone else. And I really don't know a thing about them, do I? (NOT KNOWING).

And this not knowing is a humble thing; it means approaching the script stupidly, without preconception or prejudice. A pianist sight-reading a piece of music for the first time, a painter dipping the brush into a color while not knowing where that brush will go. This wonderful entity, this script, needs to be approached with humility and the aspiration to serve. (DEEP LISTENING) Isn't realizing the script in this spirit of service DOING GOOD?

The technique of acting is so like the practice of Zazen:

A script consists of a sequence of moments—imagine a very long strand of pearls extending into the distance, with each pearl a moment in the script, and each pearl having integrity, its own unique size and shape and demands.

(Now think of the moment as our breath.)

And we give over to each moment, living out its demands faithfully, like my student jumping at the ceiling. All we have is the present moment over and over again. Each one is new. Each one is different. We inhabit each moment as fully, as humanly, as possible. We approach each moment with humility, striving to forget the self by giving over to that moment, striving to let it "do" us. The ideal is to be totally in service to the moment. Be like a blade of grass; rooted yet susceptible to the breeze.

Vulnerability isn't some histrionic display of tears but the ability to be available to, and penetrated by, the moment. Like coming back to the breath, the actor is always endeavoring to come back to the present moment.

By practicing this over and over until it's habitual, the actor can leave the ego behind to be of service to the action of the play which, moment to moment, (Breath To Breath), lives through him.

And the role is a koan:

If the script isn't about me, then the character I'm being asked to play is a mystery, isn't it? How do I solve it? Do I attack it intellectually with analytical muscle, dissecting it like a foreign object whose parts I can display in some lifeless, illustrative way? No. We resist premeditated, arbitrary analysis. We rehearse, listening to our

"Vulnerability isn't some histrionic display of tears but the ability to be available to, and penetrated by, the moment."

insides, waiting for the meaning of the role to surface in much the same way that we work on a koan. And like a koan, rehearsal requires faith and courage and patience.

I was in a very funny Christopher Durang play and I cried for the entire three weeks of rehearsal. Another actor would say a line to me and I'd cry. Someone would look at me and I'd cry. I didn't know why and I couldn't help myself. The cast thought I was sweet but cracked. The gentle director whispered to me, out of everyone's hearing, "You know this is a comedy, right?" Something had opened in me that was beyond my understanding. And on opening night, I still wasn't sure what would happen, but I said my first line and the audience laughed and something made sense somewhere somehow, and we were off and running.

So we have to live it out; it has to be experiential. We give over to it like our breath in zazen. And, as in zazen, a spaciousness can be created where the character arises clearly and simply. It can be a snippet of music, an image, a color, a long forgotten voice or hazy memory—but it has a deep and simple meaning to us, and this is what an actor can play from.

In acting, we don't know, we listen deeply—Stella Adler said that actors listen with their blood. We do good by trying to forget the self and serve the text, the director, and the other actors.

In acting, we return to the moment as faithfully as Zen practitioners return to the breath. By being humble and emphasizing service, acting becomes a human, spiritually affirming calling. ■

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 meetings on Saturday and Sunday mornings for members and non-members. Their specific schedules will be posted in the weekly Programflash.

Dharma Training Fund


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

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

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


Zazen Programs

Wall-gazing Day.* Saturday, July 10, 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 animals, wildlife, all beings who have suffered, and are suffering, from the technological disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.


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. 

Wall-gazing includes a **Zazen Clinic, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Roshi will be available in the Zendo for anyone who wishes help with their sitting posture and to review the important points of sitting posture using cushions, benches, chairs, and lying down. No fee or signup necessary.

Summer Sesshin.* Sunday evening, July 18, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) to Saturday, July 24, 9:00 p.m. Led by Roshi

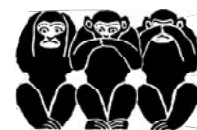
Egyoku. "Sesshin" means "to collect one's heart and mind." It is highly recommended for deepening one's practice. The schedule includes zazen, chanting, face-to-face meetings with Roshi, Dharma talks, work, rest, and three vegetarian oryoki meals daily. Limited overnight accommodations available. \$240 for members; \$540 for nonmembers, plus housing. Daily fees are also available. Please note: although this sesshin officially ends Saturday evening, sesshin schedule will continue on Sunday morning until Head-Trainee Dharma Combat at 11:00 a.m. A detailed schedule will be issued. 

Head-Trainee Dharma Combat on Sunday, July 25, at 11:00 a.m. followed by celebration. Head-Trainee DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass's year's training as Head Trainee will culminate with the ancient ceremony of Dharma Combat with the Sangha. The Head-Trainee has been working on a case koan, which he will present to the Sangha in his first official Dharma Talk in which he will challenge the dragons and elephants (you!) to dharma combat. This is an important rite of passage for the Head-Trainee and for the Sangha, so please plan on participating to support this practice effort.

Zazenkai.* Friday evening, August 13, 7:00 p.m. registration; 7:30 p.m. (zazenkai begins) to Saturday, August 14, 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Shingetsu. Everyone is encouraged to enter The Great Silence with zazen, service, work, meals, Dharma Talk, and Face-to-Face meeting with Sensei. Open to everyone. Daily fee: \$40; \$75 for nonmembers. 

* Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Precept Practice



A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts will take place on **Saturdays, July 17 and August 21, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** This day is set aside for exploring the Bodhisattva precepts. We begin with recitation of the precepts, zazen, a brief precept talk, a snack, followed by a Precept Circle focusing on the precept of the day.

July 17 will be led by Luminous-Heart Thompson on Precept #8: Not being stingy;

August 21 will be led by Ando Martinez on Precept #10: Not disparaging the Three Treasures. Open to everyone.

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Priest Ordinations, Sundays, July 18 and August 15, at 10:30 a.m.

On **July 18**, John Plum-Hermit Swanger will receive the Zen Priest Bodhisattva Vows from Roshi. Plum-Hermit serves on the Board of Directors, and over the years has served as consultant and coordinator of many Center renovation projects, and as Operations Steward from 2005-2007.

On **August 15**, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert will receive the Zen Priest Bodhisattva Vows from Roshi Egyoku. Dharma-Joy serves on the Board as Treasurer, and Chief Financial Officer.

Everyone is invited to witness Plum-Hermit and Dharma-Joy receiving their vows.

On both days, the head shaving ceremonies will take place at 6:30 a.m. in the Buddha Hall, followed by a simple breakfast. Members are invited.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, August 19, 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. Dharma-Holder Koan Janka will officiate.

Classes and Workshops

Meditative Walk in the Sangha Monica Mountains. Saturday, July 3, 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Join the Brown-Green Group in a meditative walk in **Temescal Gateway Park** in the Santa Monica Mountains. Walk begins in the Park's parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Carpooling from the Center leaves at **7:30 a.m.** Directions, information, and RSVP to Mukei Horner, mukei@mac.com. ☎

Zazen Clinic. Saturday, July 10, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Roshi will be available in the Zendo for anyone who wishes to check their zazen postures for sitting and walking. Please bring your own cushion, if you have one. We will learn proper sitting postures for zafu, benches, and lying down, adjusting them to your own body. No fee or signup necessary.

Sewing the Buddha's Robe, Saturday, July 10, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Those having completing the Precepts Class Series and the Jukai Series and intending to receive the Precepts are sewing their rakusu under the guidance of Andy Mugen Handler and Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen. Anyone having received Jukai is welcome to attend. Sew a rakusu for yourself or as a gift.

Conversation about Practice, Sunday, July 11, 11:00 a.m. to noon. This conversation is led by a member of the Teachers Circle. The leader introduces a topic and leads the Sangha in a conversation. Roshi Egyoku will lead this session.

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Important Observance:

ANCESTOR'S SERVICE

Sunday, August 15, 8:30 a.m.

This year we are creating a service to welcome and honor our ancestors—deceased mothers and fathers, grandparents, children, siblings, aunts and uncles, friends, and all those listed in ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple's *Book of the Past*. Please bring photographs of your deceased loved ones for the altar.

We will open a space and invite our ancestors for a visit, offering them food, remembrance, and gratitude. We will offer the Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo (The Ten Phrase Prolonging Life Kanzeon Sutra), chanting it thirty-seven times, starting slow and increasing the tempo. Please join us.

BOOK OF THE PAST

ZCLA has maintained, from its beginning, the *Book of the Past* which lists the names of all deceased members.

In addition, any member can enter the names of deceased family members and friends. These names are remembered during the temple's monthly and annual services.

If you are interested in adding a loved one's name to the book, send us the name of the deceased, the dates of their birth and death, and their relationship to you. A donation is customary.

Contact Dokai Dickenson at developmentsteward@zcla.org, or (213) 387-2352.

Sangha Appreciation Gathering 2010

Sunday, August 1

11:00 a.m. Teisho with Roshi

12:30 p.m. Appreciation Lunch in Jizo Garden

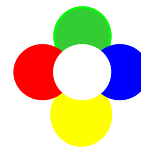
1:00 to 3:00 Program and Entertainment

The Zen Center will acknowledge the Sangha, the emerging Mandala, and the Circles and Stewards whose intentions and loving actions develop, maintain, and sustain the Circle of Life. This appreciation will be held as a summer afternoon celebration in the Kanzeon Garden. Following a Sunday morning teisho by Roshi at 11:00 a.m., there will be an elegant vegetarian lunch arranged by Tenzo-Chef, Bob Gido Fisher, and a program of sangha appreciations and sangha talent.

Please set aside this afternoon! We will be acknowledging your contributions in presence, laughter, caring and practice (including your generous sharing of time, money and gifts-in-kind) between June 2006 through June 2010. Every member is encouraged to join the Sangha in enjoying this afternoon of entertainment, good food, and appreciation of our life together, interwoven as the Mandala of life.

Each member will receive an invitation in the mail. If you have not received an invitation by July 9, please notify the office immediately. Your partners, family members, and guests are welcome. Be sure to respond with your lunch reservations no later than July 16 to the Program Steward at programsteward@zcla.org.

Over the years, a number of members have stepped forward to co-sponsor our large, periodic member appreciation events (the last one was in 2006). Consider becoming an SAG sponsor. Welcomed possibilities for additional sponsorship include Dessert Sponsor, Flower Sponsor, Paraphernalia Sponsor, or to sponsor the celebration lunch itself. Get in touch with SAG Chairperson, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, for sponsorship linking and questions at betsybrown@earthlink.net ■



PROGRAMS (Continued from page 6)

Service Position Training. Saturday, August 28, 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. An opportunity to be offered demonstrations and hands-on practice in service positions. Members are encouraged to take advantage of this form of practice as a way of embodying the physicality of Zen training, becoming one with the temple's ancient practices, as well as integrating more fully into the life of the Center. Led by Co-Inos Dokai Dickenson and Koan Janka. ☎



DHARMA CHAT. 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, August 29**, led by Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt is on "Imperceptible Mutual Assistance."

STUDY TOPIC: The theme for the dharma talks over the next few months will be: what is the heart of Zen practice: zazen We will take a fresh look at the basics of how to sit zazen correctly, pointing to some of the commentaries and texts written by Zen teachers of the past and present. These talks will be opportunities to examine what Dogen Zenji called "the Dharma gate of repose and bliss – the manifestation of ultimate reality."

Great Dragon Mountain Resident Training in the City

One of the unique features of ZCLA Great Dragon Mountain is its residential training Sangha. We now 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 transportation 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 at programsteward@zcla.org and you will be directed to the appropriate contact person. ■



Late summer afternoon shadows descend upon Great Dragon Mountain. Above, Kanzeon Garden; below: main gateway. Lower left: Sangha lunch on Sunday.



Carmen Chisbo Izzo and Betty Jiei Cole serve as volunteer tenzos for a Sunday noon lunch.

Calling for Sunday Lunch Tenzos

Every Sunday, the Center offers lunch. Here is an opportunity for members to jump in and offer stewarding in organizing and preparing this weekend meal.

This simple Three-Bowl Meal consists, first, of a dish of your choice, next a salad, along with a beverage. If you choose to be the main cook, we can give you an assistant. If you would prefer to assist, we can team you up with a more experienced cook. You can sign up on your own or together with a friend or partner.

For more information, to sign up, or to ask for support, contact a Co-Tenzo Coordinator: Dharma-Joy Reichert tvr@birdmarella.com or Dharma-Lotus Armstrong, thejraco@gmail.com ■

We're Almost There!

Great Dragon Renovation Fund Phase I

We are so close to completion of Phase I of the Great Dragon Renovation Campaign toward reaching our goal of \$25,000. Last month, we achieved 100 percent participation from the members of the Board of Directors, the Teachers Circle, and the Development Circle, which enabled the mercury in our fundraising thermometer to rise.

Anyone who steps on the grounds knows the renovations that have been accomplished, including, most recently, the soon-to-be-completed garden entrance of the Sangha House. The funds for this campaign continue to be used wisely and prudently to maintain our practice place.

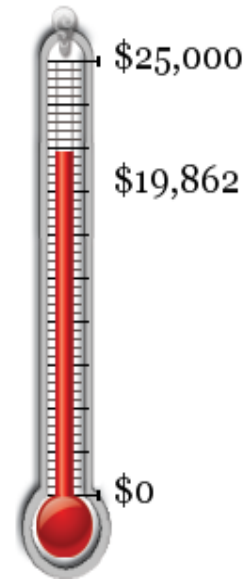
We invite Sangha members and friends to close the gap by the end of this summer. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed; some of you have contributed twice. We are fourth-fifths toward our goal. All that is needed is one person to give \$5,000, five people to give \$1,000, ten people to give \$500, 50 people to give \$100. The giving of any amount will help greatly to move our campaign forward.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have 100 percent from everyone.

We thank you in advance for your commitment and generosity.

In gassho,

ZCLA Development Circle



Help conclude the Great Dragon Renovation Fund Phase I reach its goal by donating or pledging today.

To participate, contact Development Circle members: Jeanne Dokai Dickenson at 213-387-2353, or Patti Muso Giggans at 213-304-5574. Or, please stop by the Sangha House where there are donation envelopes and a Dana Box.

These are just some of the projects we have been able to accomplish through the generosity of Sangha members and friends

- ◇ Pine House Porch
- ◇ Cement sidewalks around Dharma Hall, Buddha Hall, and Zendo
- ◇ Painting of south wall of Pundarika building
- ◇ Buddha Hall entrance porch
- ◇ Nilotpala fence
- ◇ Exterior painting of Dharma Hall



The remodeling of the Sangha House garden entrance and stairs is near completion! The project will make the area safer and easier to use.



Sangha Rites of Passage

NEW MEMBERS ENTERING CEREMONY May 22, 2010

Adam Berkley
Steven Caldwell
John Parsons

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Incoming

Co-Tenzo Coordinator
Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong

Disaster Preparedness Steward
Tara Sterling

SHARED STEWARDSHIP — Outgoing

Day Manager
Reeb Kaizen Venners

The Angulimala Prison Circle
Rosa Ando Martinez

Snow falls gently in the Zendo.
Each flake like us with its deviations
Melts upon contact in the footprints of our
lineage
No matter what August day of open windows,
sirens, bus brakes, gates, and dogs...
It is always a perfect day for snow.

—Lynda Golan



Head-Trainee Gojitsu Snodgrass, standing at left, presents his Head-Trainee presentation: "Exploring Different Realities."



Tara Sterling, left, and Lynda Golan, right, are two of 15 members of ZCLA's current Sewing the Buddha's Robe Class, where Co-leader Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen helps guide them in the sewing of their rakusus from scratch.

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 **Bill Yoshin Jordan** for his dedicated efforts constructing the new Sangha House back entrance, and to **Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen** for mindfully stewarding this long-range project;

Charles Duran for dismantling the old back porch;

Tom Jotai Webb for above and beyond technical support during the new server transition in the office;

Sensei Shingetsu for leading the Precepts Class Series;

Sensei Daishin and **Sensei Ensho** for leading the Jukai Class Series;

George Mukei Horner for sharing his photo artwork for EarthDay in the Sangha House;

Day Tenzos: **Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong, Gary Belton, Elizabeth Eishin Bryer, Nelida Cartolin, Elizabeth Jiei Cole, Chris Daisan Fields, Bob Gido Fisher, Andy Mugen Handler, Jorge Infante, Gary Koan Janka, John Gensho Letton, and Sassa Chiko Letton;**

Day Tenzo Assistants: **Lynda Golan, Nelli Herrigan, Carmen Izzo, Sheila Lamb, Tim Langdell, Mugen, Reeb Kaizen Venners, and David Thompson;**

Sensei Ryodo Hawley for IT leadership;

Jessica Dharma-Lotus Armstrong for support of Precepts Class Series;

Kitchen fushinzamu: **Gary Belton, Dharma-Lotus, Susanna Knittle, Koan, Andre Myers, Bonnie Myosen Nadzam, Miguel Rojas, John Heart-Mirror Trotter,** and to **Yudo Burger** for making the run for ice-cream;

Mugen Handler and **Faith-Mind Thoresen** for leading the Sewing the Buddha's Robe class;

Everyone who is assisting with the recording of teachers' talks: **Roberta Brehm, Don Erway, Enduring-Vow, Heart-Mirror, Mugen, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert,** and **Katherine Senshin Griffith;**

DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass for his Head-Trainee presentation: "Exploring Different Realities;"

WaterWheel Production Group: **Heart-Mirror Trotter,** Steward of production, assembly, and delivery;

Departing member of the Angulimala Prison Project, **Rosa Ando Martinez;**

Bob Gido Fisher as replacement cookie monster;

Roberta Brehm and **Miguel Rojas** for all their care of the Center: weeding, yardwork, picking up trash; and more;

Richard Cloud-Forest for his gifts of steadfast gardening and tree pruning;

Mugen Handler for guiding the fabric-dying for those

making their rakusu (Buddha's robe);

Charles Duran and **Yudo Burger** for cleaning the fountain, and to **Yudo** for scrubbing the basement floor of the Pine House;

Hearty welcome to new members **Cameron Burnett,** Licensed Clinical Social Worker and psychotherapist, and who enjoys sailing, yoga, and music; **Steven Caldwell,** a former US Army helicopter pilot, and who volunteers as a phone counselor at the Trevor Project (Crisis/Suicide Prevention Helpline); **Daniel Hegarty,** who is Lead Network Engineer with Tierzero Inc., and enjoys yoga, and problem-solving; **Sassa Chiko Letton,** retired teacher and bookseller who enjoys writing, cooking, and music; and **Jonathan Levy,** retired film editor, who enjoys photography, gardening, and swimming;

Welcome back to: **Barbara Phoenix-Plum Lynch,** artist, retired teacher, and aficionado of photography;

Farewell to Extended Guest. **Nelli Herrigan** who returns to Australia after her three-month stay at the Center;

Congratulations to **Peace Over Violence** and **Patti Muso Giggans,** Executive Director, for the Grand Opening of POV's new center at new metro headquarters; and to **Katherine Senshin Griffith** for performance in the Bertolt Brecht play, *The Good Woman of Setzuan* with The Open Fist Theatre Company. ■

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 Ekyoku 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.

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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; Katherine Senshin Giffith, 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 Yudo Burger, George Mukei Horner, Burt Wetanson, and Dokai; Publishing and distribution: John Heart-Mirror Trotter; The *Water Wheel* is published bi-monthly in paper and electronic formats. Contact the Editor at (213) 387-2352 or dokai@zcla.org. The *Water Wheel* is also available through electronic distribution.



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Address Correction Requested

Zen Center Sponsors Neighborhood Food Pantry

In 1999 ZCLA adopted one of 13 Food Pantries serving metropolitan Los Angeles. And over the past 11 years, ZCLA Sangha have collected non-perishable food items Sunday's Gate of Sweet Nectar Service and delivered them each month to a food pantry location.

Since then, the need for food supplies has exploded in response to worsening economic conditions. In 2008 and 2009, the Food Pantries experienced a 77% increase in clients served, a 94% rise in pounds of food distributed, and a 49% increase in food distributed that is equivalent to a whole meal.

HOPE-NET, a local social service organization which organized the Food Pantries, now offers a variety of other services, including low-cost housing, a thrift shop which distributes clothing and house wares at low or not cost. Some food pantry sites also offer ESL classes, infant and pre-school programs, programs for at-risk youth, job training, community computer centers, community gardens, and more.

Please continue to bring your non-perishable food offerings to the Gate of Sweet Nectar Service each Sunday morning. Thank you for your all your food items. In addition, preferred foods include being readily edible in pop-top containers.

Place your offering on the altar before service.

For more information, you may contact Dokai Dickenson at developmentsteward@zcla.org.