



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

All My Relatives

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



The Old Woman's Relatives

Once a monk on pilgrimage met an old woman living alone in a hut. The monk asked, "Do you have any relatives?" She said, "Yes." The monk asked, "Where are they?" She answered, "The mountains, rivers, and the whole earth, the plants and trees, are all my relatives."

This story is from *The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women*, compiled and edited by Florence Caplow and Susan Moon. In this important collection, the exemplars of awakening are no longer monastics. In *The Hidden Lamp*, you will meet grandmothers, maidens and mature women, women who lived alone outside of the communal structures, women who lost a child or spouse, women without children, and so on. Placing a woman's spiritual practice front and center as a model for awakening feels revolutionary even today.

In this Zen story, we meet a monk, an old woman living alone in a hut, and most importantly, we meet ourselves in the context of the natural world – the mountains, rivers, the whole earth, plants and trees. What does this story stir in you? Perhaps it stirs an unease that you do not have close human friendships? Perhaps it stirs your loneliness and feelings of separation? Perhaps it stirs your anxiety over the climate crisis or the exploitation of Earth's resources in the relentless search for economic profit? Or it stirs a vow to reclaim the awakened feminine, or a vow of caring for Mother Earth.

There is no right and wrong in what this story stirs within you – in your experience or in what you yearn for – there is only opening to whatever is arising within your heart and the growing confidence, over time, that you are enough – just as you are – to respond to the call of your deepest heart's desire. This is what we share with the



Our relative the ficus tree.

monk, the old woman, and spiritual seekers who continue to plumb the depths in the midst of everyday life, including challenging and sometimes catastrophic circumstances.

The tools for keeping company with a Zen story are what you already have – your very own eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The raw materials are also yours – your emotional nature, psychological makeup, family history, societal and cultural reference points, your gifts and talents, your wounds and scars, your innate capacity to realize and affirm your buddha nature. These are the tools

(Continued on page 2)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 Limitless Belonging by Roshi Joseph Bobrow
- 5 Vows and Bows by Jeanne Dokai Dickensen
- 6 2015 Dana Booklet
- 8 Peace Celebration on Great Dragon Mountain by Burt Wetanson
- 9 Maezumi Roshi's Archives in Your Hand by Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley

ALL MY RELATIVES (Continued from page 1)

and resources of the human condition, the particulars of an individual's experience within the vast context of the Great Earth and All Beings throughout space and time.

As far as the story goes, we can easily imagine the monk's alarm in encountering an old woman living alone in a forest, outside of the close-knit family structures of Sung Dynasty China. The monk asks, "Don't you have any relatives? Don't you have someone that you can live with?" "Yes," she responds. "Well, where are they?" "An old woman," he likely thought to himself, "should not be living alone in a hut in the forest."

When we were on a Street Retreat in Los Angeles, we spent a night in a shelter on Skid Row. I struck up a conversation with an older woman newly arrived at the shelter. She told me that her husband had died and the landlord for whom they managed an apartment building could no longer keep her on. So one day, he apologetically dropped her off at the Skid Row women's shelter. "Don't you have any relatives?" I asked, "Isn't there someone who could help you?" She said, "I have two grown sons who have no idea that I am here. I would never tell them." I often wonder what happened to her – did she finally reach out to her sons? Did she come to see all the people in the shelter as all her relatives?

We don't really know the circumstances of the old woman in the hut – we only know her through what arises within us. And yet, from her response – "The mountains, rivers, and the whole earth, the plants and trees, are all my relatives" – we know that she is likely wise and awake, a Zen hermit and adept, emanating from the boundless circle of anonymous old Zen women who confound young monks. What arises within you when you meet them?

During the Native American Bearing Witness retreat, we learned the Lakota Nation prayer: "*Mitakuye Oyasin*." It means "all my relations," "all my relatives," or as we come to realize, "without all of you, each and every one or thing, I cannot live." As Maezumi Roshi would often say, "My life cannot exist without your life." These sentiments are an invocation, a calling forth of the reality of our interconnection. There is a line in our chant dedication, "Whenever this devoted invocation is sent forth, it is perceived and subtly answered." This line expresses the exquisite functioning of this vast web of "all my relations." Life is ever so much bigger than we think, all my relatives in the past, present, and future are intertwined in a dance of cause and effect that keeps supporting me and you and vice versa.

The Lakota Elders spoke of the Earth's wounding by those who do not know Her as the Source of Life. The climate crisis is a clarion call to the careless waste of

resources and destruction of the very Earth upon which all life depends. In Los Angeles, we may spend our days in our cars and in our offices. The sun and clouds, the trees and plants, the ocean are glimpsed only in passing if at all. In the crush of everyday urban life, we fail to hear the voice of the mountains, rivers, the whole earth, the plants and trees.

The old woman, the Lakota Elders, and Dogen Zenji all came to know the natural world as their relatives by living intimately in it. Dogen Zenji wrote, "Mountains and waters right now are the actualization of the ancient Buddha way. Each, abiding in its phenomenal expression, realizes completeness. Because mountains and waters have been active since before the Empty Eon, they are alive at this moment. Because they have been the self since before form arose they are emancipation realization." For those of us who live so separately from the natural world, we must discover this intimacy within the depths of our own hearts.

The old woman lived alone, but was she lonely? Her response perhaps suggests that she was not, but her story may cause us to examine our own condition. There are so many conditions of loneliness, ranging from missing certain people or types of relationship in our lives to a painful, gut-wrenching sense of separation. We might call the latter type a spiritual loneliness – a yearning for an experience of wholeness, of completeness. The old woman, the Lakota teaching, and Dogen Zenji's written words all point us to the uncompromising totality of Life.

"My life cannot exist without your life."

This experience of the totality, of all my relatives, can arise unexpectedly as it did for me one day putting on my walking shoes. A vision unfolded as I laced up my shoe; the great circle of people who have made shoes, who first thought of protecting the feet, the animals whose skin was used along with the sinew for thread and the brain for tanning, the knowledge of plants for dyes, all of the trial and error throughout the ages. For a moment, this awareness pierced through the dim mists of time and space revealing the many lifetimes of effort making shoes that are all present right here, now. I laughed softly, "This shoe on my foot is just a shoe, living totally its shoe life. It needs a foot to fulfill its purpose; it comes to my foot, this particular foot of mine, through all my relations."

I bow to the great round of Life. *Mitakuye Oyasin!*

Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA's Abbot & Head Teacher.

Limitless Belonging

by Roshi Joseph Bobrow



The Hermit of Lotus Peak held forth his staff before his assembly and asked, “When the ancient ones reached this, why didn’t they stay there?” The assembly was silent. Answering for his listeners, he said, “Because it has no power for guidance.”

The original says, “It has no power for the path of others.”¹

As Bodhisattvas, we let ourselves be moved, we enter the fray of relational living, becoming intimate with its ten thousand joys and ten thousand sorrows.

My first formal meeting with Aitken Roshi occurred in his library, located off a long, wooden outdoor walkway in the back of the plantation house temple compound. In this space, permeated by the smell of books and tropical humidity, he would read introductory talks to each new student individually. A Gauguin print faded by the sunlight bore the tiny inscription by the painter, “Who are we, where do we come from, where are we going?” – existential questions that Roshi often referred to in his talks. I entered dressed in crusty cutoff jeans and a tank top, somewhat redolent from a long walk. He suggested that when I came for part two of the orientation, I consider wearing pants and a shirt that covered my shoulders, not fancy but clean. I responded, “But aren’t all beings by nature Buddha?” He waited and responded, “Disorganized outside, maybe disorganized inside.” If he only knew.

After a while, I settled in and had a glimpse into the great matter. During evening zazen, while everyone was in the dojo, I was upstairs in our tree house dormitory, solitary and absorbed. There was a knock on the door that disoriented me, and Aitken Roshi entered in his robes. He asked what I was doing, and I replied, “All things are flashing into the phenomenal world,” a phrase from the Diamond Sutra. He said simply, “And we’re missing you in the meditation hall.”

In the earlier mondo, the hermit continues, still holding up his staff, “After all, what is it?” Nobody answers and he says, “Holding my staff across the back of my neck, going to the thousand, the ten thousand peaks.”²

For the past nine years, my steps along the crests of peaks and through valleys have taken me into the lives of thousands of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, their families and children, and their caregivers. I have been privileged to learn with them in intimate residential retreats that bring together Buddhist-and-psychologically-informed principles and practices.

I have been creating integrative learning and healing environments for some time. While a freshman at City College, I worked in recreation programs at the East Side House Settlement in the South Bronx, and created after-school enrichment programs for minority youth in the suburbs of Paris. I brought young parents together for tea while their toddlers played and made art in a daycare center in working class London, and founded a cooperative nursery school in rural Hawaii. While training in Zen, Aitken Roshi and I led a meditation group at the county jail. Much later, I created an educational and support program for divorcing families and developed mentoring and meditation groups for incarcerated teenagers. As I look back, the thread that runs through these projects is a profound conviction in the transformative power of community. I see now that I have been a community activator, helping catalyze the connectedness and healing that lie latent within and among us, waiting to be unleashed.

In Buddhist terms, this is the Sangha jewel. But it is only a concept until it is realized and activated. In “The Song of Realizing the Way” (Shodoka), we read, “It speaks in silence, in speech we hear its silence. The Great Way has opened and there are no obstacles.”

Listen: It’s January 2007, the first moments of our first Coming Home Project retreat, an opportunity for veterans and families from around the country to come together to share stories and support one another. We gather for our first circle, 33 veterans and family members from seven states with four facilitators. In the opening moment of silence, as we remember those unable to be with us, Ben, Stephanie and Michael’s three-year-old son, is playing with Isaiah, also three, around the edges of our circle.

Amid the reverent quiet, we hear Ben say, “My daddy died in Iraq.” We learn later from Stephanie that Michael actually committed suicide six months after returning home. Out of the mouth of babes, the first words spoken at a retreat have their own truth: something inside Michael did die in Iraq.

1. Robert Aitken, *The Mind of Clover*, p. 135

2. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record*, I, p. 164

Continued on page 4

LIMITLESS BELONGING *continued from page 3*

In a safe space, short on judgment and filled with compassion, an environment where trust and belonging prevail, veterans and families would express their truth, their experience of war. Toddler Ben spoke to everyone and we heard him loud and clear.

We went around the circle, introducing ourselves. Stephanie, Ben's mom, felt isolated in Houston, where she lived with the heavy legacy of her husband Michael's suicide. The group's reaction is palpable; Tonia, a military spouse, puts her arms around Stephanie as she weeps. During break, Stephanie is taken in like family by a swarm of other partners and parents. That evening over dinner, I saw and felt a togetherness and outpouring of unsentimental love as profound as any I had experienced. People were taking good care of one another without prompting; the atmosphere was relaxed, congenial, and permeated with non-self-conscious care. Abrahamic and Buddhist traditions might feature love and compassion as cornerstones of their teachings, but neither they nor any other religion had a monopoly on the real thing.

War trauma is like the blast from an improvised explosive device: The sonic waves radiate out on multiple levels simultaneously, fragmenting the intrinsic connections within the warrior, his body, brain, mind, and soul, fragmenting his family, social supports, relationship with his community, the organizations charged with his care, the institutions and leaders responsible for protecting the country, and the entire culture. Omnidirectional and instantaneous. Repairing this pervasive fracturing means regenerating capacities for connectivity at every level, waking up from the dissociative fog of war that enshrouds all the players in this devastating cycle, transforming the traumatic residues and becoming able to learn from experience.

I had experienced the healing power of emotional connections that develop in the consulting room. My intuition told me they could be cultivated in a non-psychiatric, intimate residential community setting characterized by unconditional acceptance. But I did not anticipate being moved to tears in the moments before our first retreat when I saw Kenny and Rory, a marine and a soldier who had both sustained massive head injuries, come to within inches of the other, straining to see, and then spontaneously trace with their fingers the contours of each other's



scars. They wanted to connect and we were providing the conditions where they could do just that.

The community provides the connective tissue that holds. The fear of falling through the cracks abates; we stop holding our breaths in traumatic reaction and anticipation, and finally exhale. We hold ourselves less tightly wrapped and come to trust that we are supported. As this trust and belonging deepen, we allow ourselves to engage again in the moment. The community provides a bigger container in which unrepresented anguish can be represented, re-experienced in a new key, and transformed from a haunting ghost into a memory.

What we cannot acknowledge, we cannot process. What we cannot process, we cannot transform. What we cannot transform haunts us. It takes other minds and hearts to help us heal our own, to help us grow the capacities we need to transform suffering. This is done in concert, reweaving the web of connective emotional, relational, and spiritual tissue that cumulative trauma tears asunder. With an informed, responsive culture, it is possible to transform ghosts into ancestors, to make what haunts us into elements we can hold and properly remember. This opens up the present once again and the future as well.

Mauricio, an active duty, injured Marine noncommissioned officer, said at one retreat, "When we meet together, the tears come; when we break, we're all laughing. We meet again and I'm crying, and we hang out and we're cracking up. Laughing and crying." He provided comic relief, challenging his fellow marine Kenny by claiming that, of the two master sergeants, he was on top of Kenny. Mauricio got everyone laughing about who was on top and who was on bottom. When he kidded the whole group about status and rank, we laughed even harder. It buoyed our spirits.

The 10,000 joys and the 10,000 sorrows, held in the same hands, the same heart. Boundless and limitlessly inclusive. How freeing and enlivening to let go, support, and be supported. "Persons of no-rank," healing and waking up together.

Rosbi Bobrow is founding teacher of Deep Streams Zen Institute in Santa Barbara, CA and author of Waking Up From War.

Vows and Bows

by Jeanne Dokai Dickenson



As long as I have been practicing and training at ZCLA-Buddha Essence Temple, “vows and bows” have been woven into all of our rituals and ceremonies. The written words themselves are explicitly and implicitly indicated in our posted schedules and ceremonial forms: weekly and ceremonial services, zazen and sesshin, service ceremonies, all manner of ceremonial rituals. We chant

the Four Great Bodhisattva Vows daily and sometimes more often. Vows and bows, for Dogen Zenji, point to my living as ritual enactment, my being vow and bow.

*Numberless beings, I vow to serve them.
Inexhaustable delusions, I vow to end them.
Boundless Dharmas, I vow to practice them
Unsurpassable Buddha Way, I vow to embody it.*

We recite these formal and intimate vows marking a conclusion and integration to a council circle, shared stewardship circle, staff meeting, dharma class, dharma talk, Board of Directors meeting. In all of life, where and when might they begin and end? Most often, the Four Great Vows are followed by embodied bows. Bows of intention and enactment: of gratitude, remembering, affirming, actualizing I-and-you-and-all-the-others, the subjective and objective, coming together as one. Bowing to self, in the greater sense of the undivided all. Then the real work begins, the continuing intention to actualize these vows in the everydayness of our lives beyond all gates and boundaries.

It is the implications of inner experience and outer actualization of all that is maintained with “vows and bows” that I see as the crux of my own personal practice, and our collective practice together. This is what I mean by priest path. How can I, how do I, actualize the truths of this life of interconnectedness through serving others and doing no harm? For me, it has been a growing into this summative vow of service. It means allowing the natural unfolding of an intention not to turn away from whatever circumstances arise in my life. I think I’d had a subterranean inkling early on of this most fundamental intention when I responded to the call of the priest path: “I will not turn away so quickly.” The rest of it has both rested and swirled in Not Knowing.

One way all of this – the vows, bows, ritual space and time, form, dropping away of self – enlivens through me is through ceremony, such as the ritual enactment we celebrate as the ceremony of The Gate of Sweet Nectar. This ritual is all about serving others, not separating myself from suffering, my own or others, and then feeding the hungry spirits, the inner and the outer ones, bringing them to peace. The Gate ceremony invokes a ritual space that invites in the Five Great Buddhas to be present as we open our lives to the truth of suffering. Not coming to terms with the reality of suffering arising from my greed, hatred, lust, envy, and delusion, I am unable to open – unable to fulfill this fundamental vow of serving all beings.

The path of aspiring to maintain the vow as central to my life has been the lodestone of the priest path for me. This naturally magnetized stone became an important means to early navigation, able to integrate, and capable of neutralizing polarity for its effectiveness, yet able to lead the course, the way.

Over these years, during which I have been called by and embraced by an archetype of the priest, my own vision and experiences of the responsibilities and activities have come into focus. They include growing into profundity and competency with our Zen awakening practices, or upayas, and growing skillful in sharing them: zazen, council, shared stewardship, koan practice, learning how to give an effective dharma talk, how to listen and to talk to others, confronting what I am afraid of, and what I am attached to. There is intention to support the sangha, the Center, temple life. There is holding the lineage, or lineages, in our case. How to prepare, lead, and be present with Zen ritual and liturgy, appreciating their historical significances for the future, and the careful archiving of all that. There is the realization as well, for me, that planning, preparing, and leading effective rituals alone is not sufficient to help transform the suffering around me.

Ultimately, my walking legs would step lightly through the fundamental uncertainty of our primordial soup. The work in the world of the Bodhisattva priest does not depend upon the markers of formal practice. The vow becomes the lodestone of everyday living, with energies that can neutralize dualism, in this very body. It is the unsurpassable Buddha Way. Vowing to embody it.

Bowing in gratitude.

Dokai is a priest at ZCLA.

DANA BOOKLET

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

Dear Sangha and Friends of ZCLA,

As we all know, one of the Buddha's central teachings is that nothing ever exists entirely alone – we are all thoroughly interdependent. Where one waxes, the other one wanes. Where one gives, the other one receives. Generosity and gratitude flow through the network of life. The people whose names appear in this Dana Booklet are manifestations of generosity. They have given of their material goods, energy, time, and money so that the Zen Center can continue to encourage the awakening of hundreds of people a year.

This year our Sangha and friends were particularly generous. Our two main fundraising campaigns – The Dharma Training Fund and The Annual Fund both surpassed our financial goals. Your generosity ensures that the Zen Center can continue to provide the space, teachers, and com-

munity for regular zazen, trainings, programs, sesshins, and zazenkais, and to maintain our buildings and grounds.

We are also grateful for our Legacy Circle. This year we added ten new people to this circle for a total of 50 members. The Zen Center's Legacy Circle is made up of donors who have remembered the Zen Center in the form of future bequests. The Zen Center would not be the place it is today without our donors whose generosity has lived on after they have died.

As the Zen Center lives on for decades to come, we take into account and appreciate each one of you that have been so generous.

With deep gratitude,
Darla Myoho Fjeld
Temple Director

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**“We offer our blessings to all those who have come and gone
through this temple gate and nurtured us.”**

– From ZCLA's Third Service Dedication

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Peace Celebration on Great Dragon Mountain

by Burt Wetanson

Right after our annual Buddha's Birthday Celebration in the ZCLA garden on Sunday, April 10, at 10:00 a.m. we will have the special installation of a Peace Pole, along with a unique Flag Ceremony featuring the flags of 198 countries from around the world.

The custom-made Peace Pole, made of wood, will be installed in the ZCLA garden, inscribed with the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Sanskrit, Spanish, Swahili and Tongva. Tongva is the language of a Native American people who once lived in and around Los Angeles. Familiar Tongva words are Pacoima, Tujunga, Topanga, Azusa, Cahuenga and Cucamonga.

This will be the second Peace Pole erected on Great Dragon Mountain. The first stands inside the ZCLA fence at the corner of Irolo and San Marino Streets. Made of white plastic, it is inscribed with the same message in three languages, English, Spanish and Korean. The fourth side, facing the intersection, has the message: May Peace Be In Our Communities. This pole was the gift of peace activist Uran Snyder.

The gift of these Peace Poles to the Zen Center originates from a visit by our neighbor Rev. Hyunchul Sunim of the Korean Zen Banya Temple across from ZCLA. He introduced Roshi Egyoku to executive officers Tim Ide and Yumiko Sasaki and supporter Janis Kim of BYAKKO Los Angeles, a peace promoting organization. The idea



of the Peace Pole was the brainchild of Masahisa Goi, the Japanese philosopher and visionary who founded the World Peace Prayer Society. The first Peace Poles outside of Japan were put up in 1983. Since then, the same simple five-word prayer has been planted on more than 200,000 Peace Poles around the world.

Mr. Goi believed that words, thoughts and intentions carry energy strong enough to influence the destiny of all living things. And that the message and prayer, May Peace Prevail on Earth, has the capacity to bring people together in the spirit of universal love and oneness.

SAVE THE DATE!

Buddha's Birthday Celebration and Peace Pole
Installation and Flag Ceremony

Sunday, April 10, 10:00 a.m.

(8:30 a.m. Gate of Sweet Nectar; 9:00 a.m. Zazen)

After our annual Buddha's Birthday Celebration in the garden, we will have the special installation of a Peace Pole, which will include a unique Flag Ceremony with flags from 198 countries from all around the world.

All Sangha members, friends, and family members of all ages are invited. A celebratory lunch and birthday cake will follow at 12:15 p.m.



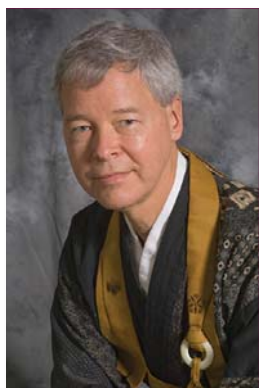
A ceremony dedicated the first Peace Pole that was planted at the corner of Irolo and San Marino Streets in February.



From left: Kaigen, Kaizen, Faith-Mind, Genku, Myoho, Mukei, Shogen, Flowing Mountain, Kakuon. In front: Mujin Sunim (left) and Jitsujo.

Maezumi Roshi's Archives in Your Hand

by Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley



It has been the custom at ZCLA since at least 1968 to record dharma talks. First we used reel-to-reel tapes, then cassettes, then digital files. Many of the recordings of Maezumi Roshi's talks were transcribed and some were sold on cassette and CD, but no special effort was made to preserve the tapes other than to store them in boxes.

After Maezumi Roshi passed away in 1995, Roshi Egyoku moved to New York to complete her training with Roshi Bernie Glassman. During that period, she spent part of her time compiling a database of Maezumi Roshi's talks. After returning to ZCLA in 1997, then-Sensei Egyoku kept the idea of an archived collection of these talks simmering in the back of her mind. Settling into her position as head teacher, and later, Abbot of Zen Center, took all of her energy. The archives were one of many projects that would have to wait.

By 2010, there was time to begin transferring the talks into digital form and cataloging them. Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert and Andrew Bodhi-Heart Haladay took the next step of stewarding the task of having digital copies made of the tapes. They researched tape conversion processes and settled on DeNoise Studios to do the actual digitizing. This is a painstaking, and therefore expensive, process: magnetic tape several decades old can stretch and even dissolve while being played back, and there were over 1300 tapes to go through.

At this point, I got involved in the technical aspects of the project. How would we make this treasure trove available to the sangha? We settled on USB flashdrives since the price for large-capacity flashdrives had come down enough to be reasonable. The hundred gigabytes or so of audio files had to be sufficiently compressed, but without loss of sound quality. And while some recordings had pristine clarity, others were unlistenable due to background noises, faulty microphone connections, and electronic hum. The remainder had minor sound issues that responded well to electronic enhancement software.

The next task was to compile all the information that Roshi Egyoku had collected into an accessible electronic format and validate it against the actual recordings. This was a monumental job, so Roshi brought in Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher to help. Faith-Moon found software that could identify duplicates and could deal with other issues like multiple talks on a single file and talks spread among multiple recordings. She also marked files for quality, did the work of standardizing the talk names and comments, and added to the comments sections.

My last technical job was to create an HTML "front end," which could enable any computer to access the talks on the flashdrive. The front end would have a listing of the file titles, sortable by speaker, date and subject, along with a keyword search tool. Clicking on the title would bring up the file in an audio player and display all the details about the talk.



The digitization was costly – Dharma-Joy and Bodhi-Heart graciously fronted part of the capital for the processing. To repay them as well as cover other costs, Roshi and John Plum-Hermit Swanger went to work. In addition to original monies from the Kuroda Institute, they were able

to secure financial support from the White Plum Asanga and the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation.

For the final push in the fall of 2015, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown got involved with the ordering of the flashdrives, finishing the attractive imprint on the flashdrive casings, and creating a beautiful display box. Tom Yudo Burger did the card insert, and Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen took charge of order fulfillment. Due to their efforts, we were able to begin shipping orders for the archives on January 15, 2016.

All told, the archive comprises 1370 talks by Maezumi Roshi along with his teachers Koryu Roshi and Yasutani Roshi. These are mostly formal teisho and dharma talks, but there are also hidden gems such as the closing remarks from several sesshin, which include comments from some of Maezumi Roshi's successors. We who spent these years compiling the talks are very pleased to offer them to the sangha!

Sensei Ryodo is a Teacher at ZCLA and leads Westchester Zen Circle.

All You Have To Do Is Practice

by Dylan Neal



I've been a musician since my parents brought a sad ukelele home from a trip to Mexico. I might have been 11 when I claimed it as mine and began figuring out Nirvana songs with it. Years later, I now play in a few different bands and do a lot of music production.

I also play with a lot of neurotic self-doubt. Doubt has been one of my biggest obstacles, and I have learned through zazen how to practice with it and see it as an ingredient in my life and my art. In zazen, I can watch the cadaver dogs sniff out my core beliefs about myself, and then, sometimes, the torrent slowly turns into a trickle and I'm really able to hear the music as it is.

Last year, I spent about nine months completing an album, and the stress, doubt, and self-loathing surrounding

it sucked all the joy out of the experience. I had signed up for a full Rohatsu sesshin that was about to start so I had to put it all aside for the time being. After eight days of a particularly difficult sesshin, I listened to my album again. Whack! I could hear it! I remember thinking "I made this? I don't remember doing any of this. I like this!" I heard it for what it really was without all of the stress and angst that had built up around it. I was hearing something that was created despite my thoughts about it. I was just hearing it.

This experience helped change my relationship to self-critical thoughts. Up until that point, negative thoughts about creating music, and about life, felt like an enemy to me. They were something to fight. Now I can see that working with all of that is very much a part of working with art. It is the art. It's another note on the fretboard. The only thing I have to do is practice.

Dylan Neal is a Practitioner at ZCLA.

The 2015 Annual Fund Appeal Update

by Darla Myoho Fjeld

The Zen Center's Annual Fund brought in \$71,425 shared among 193 donors who gave in the following way:

- 33 gifts in the \$5 to \$45 range
- 51 gifts in the \$50 to \$80 range
- 62 gifts in the \$100 to \$190 range
- 25 gifts in the \$200 to \$320 range
- 7 gifts in the \$500 to \$800 range
- 11 gifts in the \$1,000 to \$1,900 range
- 2 gifts for \$2,500
- 1 gift for \$10,000
- 1 gift for \$10,001

We surpassed our goal of \$65,000 by \$6,425 and increased our number of donors by 35 over last year's Fund. This year 70 people pledged to give to the Annual Fund on their Intensive Practice Period Commitment forms.

We express our heart-felt appreciation to all of our donors. Your generosity will be felt in all areas of the Zen Center's life and will radiate out into the world.



Bernie Roshi's Gate of Sweet Nectar workshop.



Witnessing the Wounded Knee Massacre site at the Pine Ridge Reservation, SD, during the ZPO Native American Bearing Witness Retreat.

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 bought Hygiene Kits for the Syrian refugees: **Mujin Sunim, George Mukei Horner, Cathy Jikan Sammons, Julie Feiten, The Valley Sangha, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Pat Way, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, John Rosania, Diane Enju Katz, Eberhard Fetz, Rosa Ando Martinez, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Jim Dojun Hanson, Roshi Egyoku, Carol Flowing Mountain Schmitt, Michael Jinsen Davis, Susanna Knittel, Mark Shogen Bloodgood and Ty Jotai Webb;**

To **Bill Earth-Mirror Corcoran** for leading January’s Day of Reflection and Precept talk on Martin Luther King;

To **Faith-Mind** for the Rakusu dyeing classes and sewing classes;

To **Roshi Egyoku, Faith-Mind, Tina Jitsujo Gauthier, Shogen, Jonathan Keigen Levy, Mukei, Heart-Mirror, Tim Zamora, Earth-Mirror, Enduring-Vow, Ando, Jotai, Tom Yudo Burger** for the annual services at the Evergreen Cemetery;

To **Enduring-Vow** and **Earth-Mirror** for fixing lunch for the residents after Jundo;

To **Roshi Egyoku** and **Sensei Raul Ensho Berge** for officiating Jundo;

To **Mukei** for leading the February Zazenkai;

To our February Zazenkai Tenzo **Mujin Sunim** and her assistant **Enduring-Vow;**

To **Faith-Mind** and **Katherine Senshin Griffith** for February’s Dharma talks;

To **Tara Jiho Sterling** for leading the February Day of Reflection and Precept talk on Not Being Deluded;

To **Gessho** for leading Tangaryo and for preparing lunch;

To **Jane Chen** for February’s Dharma Chat on State Your Practice;

To **Roshi Egyoku’s** class series on Living With Vow;

To **Yudo** and **Mukei** (SALA Co-Stewards) for organizing a volunteer day at the LA Regional Food Bank and to all those who volunteered: **Bob Doetsu Ross, Darla Myoho Fjeld, Frank Genku Martinez,**



Our 2nd Tenzo class. From left, Hilda Bolden, Jane Chen, Tim Zamora (back), and Kane Buzen Phelps.



Faith-Mind showing Steve Witkowski how to sew his rakusu. Steve practices at the Valley Sangha.



John Rosania (left) and Robert Diaz cleaning up after the installation of our new range hood.

Mukei, Geri Bryan, Ingeborg Buzan Prochazka, John Rosania, Kane Buzen Phelps, Senshin, Shogen, Nan Reishin Merritt, Pat Way, Jotai, and Hunter Goffin;

To **Jitsujo** for her Dharma talk on the Ox Herding Pictures;

To **Dokai, Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley, DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, and Myoho** for the March Dharma talks;

To **Faith-Mind** for leading Intro to Sesshin;

To our Intro to Sesshin Tenzo **Myoho** and her assistant **John Rosania;**

To **John Rosania, Diane True-Joy Fazio, Tim Zamora, Jane Chen, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, and Reeb Kaizen Venners** for Fushinzamu Kitchen Cleaning;

To **Heart-Mirror** for leading the March Day of Reflection and Precept talk on Not Elevating Myself and Blaming Others;

To **Janet KoRen SagerKnott** for the March Dharma Chat on Rebirth and Right Livelihood;

To **Tim Zamora** for the Tenzo class;

To our First Quarter Jikidos: **Tim Zamora, Z Zeller, Jotai, Dave Kakuon DeFrank, Genku, Chris Hackman, and Dojun;**

To our First Quarter Tenzos and their helpers: **Reishin, Monica Kyodo Campins, Mujin Sunim, Jessica Oetsu Page, Genku, Buzen, Jenny Bright, Wayne Whitaker, and Nikolai Loveikis;**

To those who made cookies for after our Thursday night talks: **Mujin, Yudo, and Reishin;**

To our recorders for talks: **Enduring-Vow, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Heart-Mirror, Mukei, and Senshin;**

To **Yudo** for videotaping Dharma talks;

To our first Quarter Resident Security people: **Gabriel Lucero, Kaizen, Yuesen Yuen, John Rosania, Mukei, Burt Wetanson, Gessho, Yudo, and Jotai;**

To **Tim Ide, Yumiko Sasaki, and Janis Kim** of BYAKKO Los Angeles for the gift of the Peace Poles;

To **Korean Zen Master Hye Kuk Sunim** for the scroll hanging in the Sangha House Dining room.

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

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.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi

Abbot 1995-1999: Roshi Bernard Glassman

Abbot: Roshi Wendy Ekyoku Nakao

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Sangha Rites of Passage

Welcome New Residents

Geri Bryan

Bob Doetsu Ross

Resident Leave-Taking

Mara Shiko Moon Cohn

Shawn Shaon Nichols

Shared Stewardship Entering

Dave Kakuon DeFrank - *Tenzo Circle*

Shared Stewardship Leave-Taking

Mara Shinko Moon Cohn - *Development Circle*

John Plum-Hermit Swanger - *Board of Directors*

2016 Sesshins

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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