



# Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

## A Hungry Ghost Story

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



Master Goso said to his students: “Seijo’s soul is separated from her being. Which is the real Seijo?” Master Goso, who lived in 12th century China, picked up this popular Chinese ghost story and made a koan.

Seijo’s father had promised her hand in marriage to her cousin Ochu, but as she grew up, her father changed his mind and decided to marry her to someone else. Bereft, Ochu left the village only to find Seijo running after him. Together, they settled in a faraway place. After a few years, they longed for home and returned. Ochu approached Seijo’s father’s house, apologized to him, and said that Seijo was outside, waiting to reunite with him. Her father said, “What are you talking about? Ever since you ran away, Seijo has been lying unconscious on her bed.” When Ochu and Seijo entered the bedroom, the Seijo on the bed arose, and two Seijos embraced and became one.

Master Goso asks, “Which is the real Seijo?” Which is the real you? What parts of yourself have you not embraced?

We are caught up in our own ghost stories, pulled apart by our many so-called selves. When we do zazen, all these parts of oneself, and all the pulling apart and struggling, settle into the Self. All the seemingly disconnected parts of oneself settle into a unity; we plunge into a deep and pervasively felt sense of the life force that underlies it all.

You have to sit consistently over a long time to have this experience, to begin to trust this experience, and to embrace the disparate parts of yourself as Seijo did. When you have this experience, ongoing zazen will continue to affirm and deepen it.



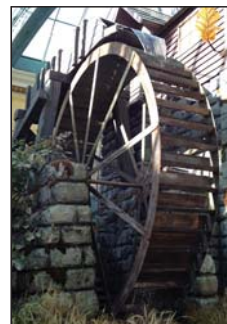
*Feeding the hungry spirit during the Gate of Sweet Nectar.*

In the Gate of Sweet Nectar liturgy, which we perform every Sunday morning, we begin by singing a verse by Krishna Das calling out to all the hungry parts of ourselves:

*Calling out to Hungry Hearts,  
Everywhere through endless time,  
You who wander, you who thirst,  
I offer you this Bodhi Mind.*

*Calling all you hungry spirits,  
Everywhere through endless time,  
Calling all you hungry hearts,  
All the lost and left behind,*

*(Continued on page 2)*



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A HUNGRY GHOST STORY (Continued from page 1)

*Gather round and share this meal.  
Your joy and sorrow  
I make it mine.*

In zazen, you are partaking of the supreme meal. What is this meal? It is this One Body – that which cannot be cut into two and yet recognizes two, three, four, the multitudes. We are calling out to all the so-called separate parts of ourselves to come home, come here, now. We call all our sorrows, even those long forgotten. We call an end to our wandering by inviting in our ghosts. We feed our hunger the supreme meal of buddha heart-wisdom.



*Calling all you  
hungry hearts,  
All the lost and  
left behind.*

Seijo's soul – her sense of wholeness – had been torn asunder, traumatized. One part of her was numb, entrapped in a deep sorrow. She longed to go home, longed to be made whole again, longed to unify all the disparate parts of herself. How did she do this? By embracing her suffering. Do we not feel joy when the two Seijos embrace? This embracing liberates the life force.

Ghost stories are not for the faint of heart! As a kid, I watched terrifying Japanese ghost movies crouched down in my seat, eyes covered except for a tiny opening, wanting, but not quite wanting to see. Right now in your life, what are you not wanting to see? Are afraid to face?

We invite in the hungry hearts to gather round and share the meal of wholeness. Steeped as we are in a culture of aggression, we may be challenged by the practice of inviting our hungers to a meal. In writing about feeding one's so-called demons, Tsultrim Allione says that these disowned selves are "... not slain or even fought against, but drawn out and fearlessly nurtured. In this way, we bridge the schism between 'good' and 'evil' [me and not me]. Every battle we are having within ourselves is tying up resources that could be put to far better use."

Indeed, zazen frees up our resources. In zazen, the oneness of life is sitting; the wholeness of the universe is sitting. Our struggle is illumined: we realize that the hungry ghost is not someone else. The hungry ghost is all that I

cannot accept, that I consider "outside" of me, that I consider "not buddha." It is all too easy to point to someone else and say, "What a hungry ghost!" Whenever we do the Gate, I find the finger is always pointing to me, myself. I am always the starting point, and yet I cannot find myself apart from you.

Zazen makes us honest. The bodhi mind rises up. We stop distracting ourselves; we stop running. We STOP. We learn to breathe the breath of the universe: breathing in, breathe in the whole universe; breathing out, breathe out the whole universe. Koryu Roshi said, "Breathe in this way." When we breathe in this way, we tell the truth about ourselves. It simply takes too much energy to use our life force in life-denying ways.

Roshi Bernie often says, "We are all breathing the same air." Are we not embraced so intimately by air – by breath – that we can hardly say where we end and air begins and vice versa? David Suzuki, leading Canadian environmentalist, says that we humans are largely made up of air. He says, "If you are air and I am air, then I am you and you are me." Breath is the great unifier. Zazen is the great unifier. It is not that we are unifying one thing with another thing. Rather, through zazen, this great life force that is already unified, whole, total, and complete in ways we can scarcely imagine, is affirmed.

In Donald Silver's blog "The Green Interview," he writes that in the book *The Sacred Balance*, Suzuki says: "Your next breath will contain more than 400,000 of the argon atoms that Gandhi breathed in his long life. Argon atoms [an inert gas calculated at 30,000,000,000,000,000 atoms per breath] are here from the conversations at the Last Supper, from the arguments of diplomats at Yalta, and from the recitations of the classic poets." Suzuki continues: "... each breath is a sacrament, an affirmation of our connection with all other living things .... Air is a matrix that joins all life together ... We inhale our ancestors and exhale into the lungs of our children."

When the selves settle upon the Self in zazen, is there anything left out? Starting here, right where you are, invite. Invite it all because all are already here – Seijo, yourself, the hungry spirits, all that you struggle with and declare not me, not buddha, the dead, and those yet to be.

What is the "real" you?

*Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA's Abbot & Head Teacher.*

# Putting the Mind to Rest

by Gary Koan Janka



One of the most common complaints I hear as a teacher is, “My mind won’t settle down.” Before coming to practice, and perhaps for some time afterward, our minds just won’t settle down. Our discursive thinking runs wild and our minds are highly reactive to circumstances and events: past and future, rarely present.

Most of the people I work with are inmates and, granted, prisons are crazy places, full of noise, confusion and “politics,” but even there, it is possible to achieve a mind at peace with oneself and our moment-to-moment experience of life. With some discipline and practice, we can all learn to be at peace in this moment. I can remember times as a younger person when my mind would be so noisy with so many competing, repeating thoughts that it would literally be a “roar.” When I became aware of what was going on and it would momentarily stop, I would be struck by the profound silence. When people ask me how to put the mind to rest, I can appreciate what leads them to ask.

There is a great koan which speaks to this issue. It is Case 41 in *The Gateless Gate*, the *Mumonkan*. The case appears also in *The Denkoroku*, in the case of Dazu Huike, the second Chinese Patriarch, but the story is different. The case in *The Gateless Gate* goes something like this:

Huike is said to have been a general who, deeply troubled by the horrible suffering caused by war, sought refuge in the Dharma and eventually sought out Bodhidharma as his teacher. Several times, he approached Bodhidharma who repulsed him and continued to sit facing the wall of his cave on the mountain above Shao Lin Temple. One night, he again approached the Great Master and was rebuked as being an unworthy vessel of the Dharma. It was snowing and Huike was determined to stand all night in the cold and snow to prove his commitment. In the morning, Bodhidharma noticed him there, waist deep in snow, and asked him what he wanted. Not wanting to be rebuffed again, it is said that Master Huike took up a sword and cut off his arm and said, “Your disciple’s mind is not yet at peace. I beg you, Master, give it rest.” Bodhidharma said, “Bring me your mind and I will put it to rest for you.” Huike said, “I have searched exhaustively for the mind but have never been able to find it.” Bodhidharma said, “There, I have finished putting it to rest for you.”

Just like that: “I have finished putting it to rest for you.”

There are at least two ways to look at this koan. The first is from the point of view of the so-called Absolute and the second is from the so-called relative perspective.

From the perspective of the so-called Absolute, we know that one of the three essentials for accomplishing the Way is a “Great Doubt,” or a “Great Question.” We don’t know exactly what Master Huike’s question was, but it was obviously very powerful, so much so that it drove him to seek out a teacher, and his determination to resolve the issue was so strong that he stood all night in the snow and cut off his own arm to prove it.

These kinds of deep questions can only be answered by seeing directly into the nature of emptiness, our Buddha Nature or True Nature. He had been searching for his mind and discovered that it was empty. There was nothing to grasp after all, no substance whatsoever, so his mind could finally be at rest.

What I encourage each of us to do is to look to see what our question is. If it is not clear, then look to see what it was that brought you to Zen practice. Usually we want the practice to do something for us. What is that something? Is it the answer to a question or the resolution of a doubt?

And, we can also look at this koan from the perspective of the so-called relative realm, the world of things and distinctions and concepts and so forth. This is the realm in which we spend most of our time and where we encounter the busy, chatty monkey mind. This is the one we deal with on a daily basis.

So from this perspective, what is this ungraspable mind that we cannot find?

When we chant the Heart Sutra, we chant of the “emptiness of the Five Conditions,” the conditions that must be present for a human life to exist. Among them is “sensation,” that arises from our having “form.” The form we have includes sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, and so forth. And, in Buddhism, we have a sixth sense or source of sensory input, which is the mind. In a general sense, it is what is aware of the other sensory input. It also generates thoughts. In his book *Opening the Hand of Thought*, Uchiyama Roshi describes the mind as a gland that secretes thoughts. Just as the adrenal gland secretes adrenaline, the mind secretes thoughts.

A key point is that in Buddhism, the mind cannot exist independently of the external world. Mind only arises or is observable through contact with (what is perceived as) the external world. In his work the *Shobogenzo*, our ancestor Dogen Zenji writes of this in Chapter 18, Mind Cannot Be



Grasped. Try as we might, we cannot find it. But, this does not mean we cannot put it to rest and find the peace we're seeking.

So what is to be done to bring the mind to rest? What are some practical strategies we can use when or if we find our minds going a little crazy?

One of the first we can do is to realize that we cannot stop our minds from thinking, so don't try. We also cannot "block everything out," so don't try that either. What we can do is train the mind to focus and pay attention. When it learns to do that, it can sit quite calmly in the midst of great chaos. It is also helpful to give up expecting or wanting our conditions or our minds to be different. Some days they are calm, other days they are noisy. Stop fighting what is. Once we accept that things are just the way they are, giving up desire and aversion, the rest of the things we can do come a lot easier.

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### The mind quickly figures out that it can't do two things at once.

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On a practical basis, there are a few things you can do to deal with the monkey mind:

First, as soon as you realize your mind has wandered, let go of the thought or image and return to the breath or whatever is your focus of concentration. Taking in and observing a single breath immediately brings us back to center and back to the present moment. Notice any resistance you have to letting go of the thought.

The mind quickly figures out that it can't do two things at once: count the breath and think about something else. Keep letting go of the other thoughts and coming back to the breath. You may have to let go and come back thousands of times until it eventually becomes a reflex action. I've had inmates to whom I've given beginning instruction tell me two weeks later, "Reverend Koan, I just can't do it. My mind won't settle down and thoughts keep arising. I go back to the breath and immediately lose count again." To them I reply, "Just keep doing it and talk to me again in two years."

As your practice deepens, it is helpful to look at how thoughts arise. Look to see if you can watch them arise and what gives rise to them. Seeing and understanding the underlying dynamic may help you recognize them and head them off a little sooner.

Second, before rejecting them out of hand, spend time looking at your thoughts. Are they repetitious and lines of your old story that you've heard a thousand times before?

If so, let it go. You already know where it goes. Are the thoughts a help or a hindrance? Most of the time they're a hindrance, but there are times when thoughts are relevant to the immediate situation.

What is called for is the development of discernment – discernment in a couple of ways. The first is the ability to discern what is causing the waves or ripples in our minds. Underlying the thoughts, is there fear of loss or pain? Is there desire for something we don't have or don't want to have (aversion)? Is it the actions of others and our interpretation of them? By digging a bit below the surface of the waves, we can eventually learn to distinguish between what is happening – the fear, the desire, the pain – from our awareness of them. When we can observe what is going on in our minds – what the mind is aware of – from a distance, we can be at rest, even if the mind is busy.

Going back to the inmate's question, it is essential to be able to discern what in our awareness requires attention and what does not. When we live next to a railroad track, our minds quickly learn that the sound of a passing train at night requires no action on our part. After a while, we learn that most of what goes on around us is just sound, requiring no action or effort on our part. What is happening around me? Can I safely let it go or not? Some of the inmates learn after a while that meditation is actually a survival skill because it helps them be aware of what is going on around them with greater clarity than before, when the mind was filled with "noise."

One final thought about discernment: part of it is the ability to distinguish between our direct experience and our thoughts about our experience. Our thoughts are not direct experience. Focus on direct experience, what you actually see, feel, taste, and so forth.

Third, ignore them. By ignoring them, we don't mean to act as though they don't exist. Of course they exist. This is essentially what Dogen Zenji is telling us in the *Fukanazengi*. "Think non-thinking." How do you think non-thinking? By neither suppressing our thoughts nor engaging with them; just let them be. Eventually, what you choose to pay attention to will become the stronger. Which do you want it to be, your breath or your thoughts? The present moment or some past event? Persistence eventually wins.

So, how do we put the mind at rest? First, appreciate its "ungraspable" nature and what makes it work. After that, it is a matter of effort, and we don't have to spend years sitting in a cave to do it. We can do it in this very moment. May these few words give you some peace of mind.

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*Gary Koan Janka is a teacher at Zen Center of Los Angeles.*

# Individual Commitments for Collective Awakening

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao

At the end of the Ox Herding series, we explored collective awakening by asking, “How do we create a portal for collective wisdom to arise?” Our experience is that collective wisdom must be invited to arise within a group; it may or may not arise even with conscious intentions. Sometimes, collective folly arises, so beware!

What are the commitments for an individual that can best create a portal for this wisdom to arise? For individuals practicing within a group, we identified three commitments:

- Embrace not knowing.
- Deepen self-awareness.
- Strengthen relationships.

Interestingly, without previous knowledge, the Ox Herding class came up with the same components identified by our mentors, John Ott and Rose Pinard, for sustained commitment and practices for self-leadership.

Let’s examine these commitments from our Zen practice perspective.

Embrace not-knowing. Not-Knowing is the first of The Three Tenets of the Zen Peacemakers. Simply be open. Being open means not fixing or solidifying your opinions or positions. Roshi Bernie reminds us to see that whatever one expresses is “just my opinion, man.” Don’t cling to it. The Third Zen Ancestor said, “The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences.”

Zazen is the core practice for not-knowing. In zazen, all the bits of ourselves settle into the unified whole that is fundamentally our nature – spacious, open, boundless, vast. Experience this place beyond opinions! Learn to create space within yourself, to stabilize and give yourself room to breathe so that you do not habitually default to reactivity or self-centered agendas. In this way, you give yourself a chance to uncover who you are without manipulating what you are discovering.

Deepen self-awareness. As your zazen stabilizes and you become spacious, yet focused, your sense of self – your habitual patterns, identifications, and psychological-emotional makeup – reveals itself to you. You develop your capacity to see these with a discerning eye, without the filters of judgement or blame. You become aware of how your behavior is affecting others. Someone shared, “I was very happy drinking. I had no idea how much difficulty it was creating for others.” You become aware that you can work with deeply entrenched patterns.



*Priest retreat feet.*

Over time, you stop defending your position and become receptive. You develop the capacity to listen and take in others’ feedback and views. You become aware of your own agendas and manipulations. You can admit error and apologize. You practice befriending all the parts of yourself as a unified whole, rather than maintaining fragmentation of energies disowned or repressed. You deepen into the wholeness of who we are and broaden into your unique relationship to the wholeness of life.

Strengthen relationships. Strengthening relationships with others seems obvious, yet many find it challenging. The underlying commitment here is to affirm the interconnections of your life in a life-giving manner. Consider that each thought, each word, each action you do or don’t do can either affirm or deny that you-and-I-and-everyone-all-together is a shining buddha body, linked as One Life, One Body. Can you expand your capacity for wise and caring relationships? Can your conduct be life-affirming, truly from the source of life itself?

I encourage you to try out these commitments. Each day, in a particular situation when you put your opinion first, shift into not-knowing. Each day, take a moment for self-reflection with discernment, thereby deepening awareness of yourself. Each day, do one thing consciously that will strengthen a relationship with someone close to you.

In the next Water Wheel, we will explore the group practices that are part of the portal for inviting collective wisdom.

## The Yoke of Shame

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Manzanar. Heart Mountain. These are two of ten concentration camps established in 1942 by President Franklin Roosevelt with Executive Order 9066, which authorized the forced removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from their homes following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Of the approximately 120,000 people affected by this order, about 80,000 were American citizens; 40,000 were children.

This year, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, and I made a pilgrimage to Manzanar (Owens Valley, California) and Heart Mountain (Big Horn Basin, Wyoming). For many years, the Japanese-American community has conducted pilgrimages to the sites, which are now being developed under the auspices of the National Park Service. This effort is calling forth the stories, deeply buried due to the yoke of shame that silenced the former prisoners for decades. Manzanar is the most developed site with an excellent Interpretive Center and detailed camp layout. This year, its pilgrimage drew over 1,000 pilgrims spanning ethnicities and community groups.

The camps have long lived in my awareness, following previous pilgrimages to Manzanar and Tule Lake. For Faith-Mind and Enduring-Vow, these were first-time experiences. Faith-Mind wrote: “When we pulled off Highway 395, the first experience I had of Manzanar was the resurrected guard tower. One of the former prisoners said that it was a shock to realize that the guards in the towers were facing inwards pointing their machine guns at them, not outwards protecting them. This began to ground me into the reality of what this space was about. As we entered

the Manzanar Interpretive Center, I began to feel the depth of this atrocity. We saw a movie depicting the rounding up and transporting of Japanese Americans from their homes, businesses, schools, and friends – from their lives! I wanted to cry for them, for my ignorance, and for my shame for ignoring this all of my life.”

The Heart Mountain Camp in Wyoming is known for the 63 men who organized a draft resistance movement to protest being drafted into the U.S. Army while they and their family



*Heart Mountain through barbed wire. Photo by pilgrim June Ryushin Tanoue, whose 15 family members were prisoners there.*

members remained imprisoned. They were subsequently convicted and sentenced to federal prisons. This camp is known for the 2,000 acres of harsh, arid desert that the prisoners transformed, by hand, into fertile agricultural land. For Zen students, Heart Mountain has the distinction of holding pioneer Zen teacher Nyogen Senszaki as a prisoner. He was the focus of our pilgrimage.

In 1942, Nyogen Senszaki wrote ironically, “The current of Buddhist thought always runs eastward. This policy (of deportation) may support the tendency of the teaching. Who knows?” When we arrived at Heart Mountain, we went in search of Block 28, Barrack 22, Section C, where Senszaki Sensei shared his tiny space with a family of three. He called his space “E-Kyo-An,” the Hut of Wisdom Mirror. We never quite identified the location because the camp is enormous, bigger than anything we expected, and we struggled to orient ourselves.

In his tiny space, Senszaki re-opened his zendo – the Meditation Hall of the Eastbound Teaching – without fuss or fanfare; he wrote commentaries on *The Blue Cliff Record* and *The Book of Equanimity*, and waited for serious Zen practitioners to find him. He referred to his zendo as “alms courtesy of the American government.”

To honor Senszaki Sensei, many people generously donated funds for bricks which will appear at the entrance to the Interpretive Center. Each brick will be inscribed: “Nyogen Senszaki, Zen Pioneer, 28-22-C.” We also donated a brick for Albert Saijo, a Japanese-American poet who was later recognized as part of the Beat Generation. At age 17,



*Nyogen Senszaki. Painting by Elizabeth Weiss, gifted to ZCLA. Text in painting reads: Inviting friends of all faces. Beckoning with the empty hands of Zen.*



Saijo left Heart Mountain to voluntarily join the 100th Battalion of the segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Unit, the most decorated U.S. regiment of World War II.

At Heart Mountain, American-born Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta recalled the hurt of being called, as a ten-year-old prisoner, a “non-alien” rather than an American citizen. Ironically, in 2001, it fell to him to stop all air traffic as the events of 9/11 unfolded. Following 9/11, the Japanese-American community was the first to reach out to Muslim-Americans, fearing that history would repeat itself. Today, Muslim-Americans attend the Manzanar pilgrimages in solidarity against racial prejudice and political ill will and the need to remain ever vigilant in supporting our rights as U. S. citizens.

As the former prisoners age, there is an urgency to collect their stories, including of the devastating decade following their release when they reentered a postwar society pervaded by racism. Over breakfast one morning, a pilgrim in his mid-80’s shared with us how he and his family, having lost everything and with nowhere to go after being released from Heart Mountain, lived in poverty at the Cody train depot for almost a year.

As pilgrims ourselves, we opened our hearts to former prisoners and their stories, and to Manzanar and Heart Mountain themselves, and invited it all to find a place in our bodies.



*Rosbi Egyoku (right) encountering a shocking display at the Manzanar Interpretive Center.*

## Reflections on Manzanar

by Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown

Imagine today receiving an order from the Department of Homeland Security giving you (an American citizen) and your family as little as 72 hours to close up all your affairs, leave your home, pets, businesses, and farms, and report to the Pomona Fairgrounds with only as much as you can carry. You’ll stay in the horse stalls there for a few weeks while awaiting transport, at gunpoint, to an undisclosed destination in the middle of the California desert.



*Manzanar guard tower.*

Once there, your entire family (up to eight) will live in a 20-by-25-foot section of barracks, separated by blankets hanging over a rope from the other families living in the same barracks. You and 10,000 others will use communal showers and latrines, without curtains or privacy of any kind. You’ll eat in large mess halls. You’ll be required to grow all your own food there in the middle of the desert.

Your draft age sons will either serve in the military while you are in prison or be sent to worse camps as punishment and proof that they are un-American. Your family unity will be destroyed as one child chooses to go to war and the other refuses in indignation.

Your community will be divided. You’ll lose everything you worked for most of your life. And at the end of three or more years of living like this, you’ll be told you are free to go. But where? You have no home. You have no job. Homeland Security gives you bus fare and \$25 to get you started back in life. You undergo all this because your parents were born in Japan and you look like them.

“This is a story that needs to resonate throughout the decades,” says Mrs. Fumiko Hayashida, the oldest living prisoner to have been at Manzanar. “We have to ensure that the power of fear never overcomes the promise of liberty.” I feel that by going on my pilgrimage to Manzanar, I have honored Mrs. Hayashida and all those whose lives were torn apart by Executive Order No. 9066.

*Enduring-Vow is a priest-in-training at ZCLA.*

## Sangha Artist: Carmen Chisho Izzo



I have been a clarinetist for 18 years and sitting zazen for about ten. I started zazen practice on my own, about the time I began my professional musical studies. It is difficult to imagine my music making and my life without Zen practice.

There are thousands of fantastic musicians and recordings around the globe and myriad ways to play even a single phrase.

In rehearsal you may feel that you have played the most beautiful solo from Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, and then the conductor wants it totally different. Louder, softer, more staccato, phrase it to the A. Any of these instructions can easily insult a musician. We express our heart and soul with our instrument – and it isn't good enough?

Music, like our individual perceptions, is subjective. There is no single correct way. Zen helped open me up to the vastness of everything. There are infinite possibilities along every route, and the only thing holding them back is a construct of habits. Opening up to suggestions, criticism – whatever comes along – can be quite intimidating.

My teacher at USC told me that first you must realize there are no taboos. People's opinions, suggestions, artistic possibilities all have some basis. I have tried to use this approach and take what I can from whoever I meet. If a suggestion is useful, I will keep it and hopefully grow as a musician.

Of course, within emptiness, there is also function. It's not that everyone is right and gets a trophy for their interpretation. Two musicians in unison cannot play a phrase differently and expect it to sound good. There often comes a time when you must decide what is best for any given piece, and do that with complete conviction. It is almost a koan. Music is subjective and inherently infinite, so play it in the one and only correct way!

The best part of all is working with your colleagues, hashing out your differences, and using it all to your benefit. There is a Japanese phrase, *sessa takuma*, that is often applied to monks in training. It roughly translates as "living in a rock grinder," where the stones rub and grind against one another, but the end result is that they are polished smooth. Squabbles in the orchestra (or sangha) are part of the practice.

## Fresh Flowers for Our Altars

by Lorraine Gessho Kumpf



The Zen Center's altars hold an image of the Buddha, a vase of flowers, bowls for water and incense, and a candle. The Flower Group provides new flowers for our altars once a week and arranges them as beautifully and simply as possible.

Our guidelines are that our flowers be in harmony with the other altar elements and not dominate the space. They should be lower than the Buddha image and their size and fragrance should not overpower.

**Pat Way** "For me, flowers are the practice. Gathering flowers is mindfulness focused on the flower elements of color, texture, sustainability, and personality. Gathering flowers is also a practice of seeing interdependence.

"Often, arranging the flowers is like my sitting practice. The arranging may begin with scattered thoughts:

"I don't like this. I do like that. Will there be enough?" Then thoughts drop away, the flowers arrange themselves, and there are always enough. They come together to sit with and be a part of the Buddha's smile."

**Ando Martinez** "When I was first asked to do chiden (altar cleaning) years ago, the job included flower arranging, something I knew nothing about. I could stick flowers in a vase, but that wasn't sufficient.

"Then a priest named Koren showed me how making a tiny change, moving just one flower, changed the whole appearance of and feeling of the altar. I thought, 'Wow, this is a practice in itself!' Soon afterwards, I started taking classes in ikebana (Japanese flower arranging). That deepened my Zen practice and my connection with nature."

Our current Flower Group consists of Gessho Kumpf (Steward), Patricia Way, Enju Katz, Jitsujo Gauthier, and Reiju Wasserman. If you would like to help care for our altar flowers, please contact Gessho at [lekumpf@gmail.com](mailto:lekumpf@gmail.com).



## 2013 Fall Practice Period Commitments

We acknowledge the more than 130 Sangha members who have made a formal commitment to participate in the Fall Practice Period.



*Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, outgoing Head Trainee (left), Roshi Egyoku, and Mark Shogen Bloodgood, incoming Head Trainee.*

- Ahmed Agha (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Alan Taigen Turton  
 Anthony Costa (Lincroft)  
 April True-Flower Ford  
 Arthur Seisho Pavliska (Lincroft)  
 Artis Knox (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Barbara Smith (Ocean Moon)  
 Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown  
 Bonnie Myosen Nadzam (Ocean Moon)  
 Burt Wetanson  
 Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt  
 Carlos Soto  
 Carmen Chisho Izzo (in Japan)  
 Cassie Riger  
 Charles Duran  
 Charlotte Holtzermann (Ocean Moon)  
 Chris Daian Fields  
 Cliff Shishin Collins  
 Concetta Getsuren Alfano (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 Daniel Garcia (Corazones Luminosos)  
 Daniel Uribe (Corazones Luminosos)  
 Darla Myoho Fjeld  
 David Kisen Thompson (Valley)  
 Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen  
 DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass  
 Diane Enju Katz  
 Diane True-Joy Fazio  
 Dylan Neal  
 Eberhard E. Fetz  
 Ellen Reigen Ledley
- Gemma Cubero  
 George Mukei Horner  
 George Pallacios (Corazones Luminosos)  
 Hannah Seishin Sowd  
 J Jingetsu Fong  
 James Bodhi-Song Graham  
 James Edmonds (Corazones Luminosos)  
 James Jindo Hagar  
 James Ryushin Carney (Lincroft)  
 James Sie  
 Jamie Jian Nappi (Lincroft)  
 Janece (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Jeanne Dokai Dickenson  
 Jeffrey Bennett (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Jeff Hirsch  
 Jeff LaCoss  
 Jim Hanson  
 Jim Quam (Valley)  
 Joel Mitsujo Latimer  
 John Daishin Buksbazen (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 John Heart-Mirror Trotter  
 John Long (Valley)  
 John Shinjin Byrnes  
 Jonathan Kaigen Levy  
 Jonathan Tokuyo Crow  
 Jose Anthony Diaz (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Jose Delgadillo (Corazones Luminosos)  
 Juan Tillis (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Katherine Senshin Griffith  
 Kathi Koshin Novak (Lincroft)  
 Kathleen Pure-Heart Rork (Valley)  
 Kathy Myoan Solomon  
 Katrina Eko Durante-Fossas (Lincroft)  
 Kay Myokai Snodgrass  
 K Bryan (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Kim KiMu DeBacco  
 Kipp Ryodo Hawley (Westchester)  
 Kirk Slaughter (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Lana Shoshin Spraker  
 Laos Onshin Chuman  
 Lee Nedler (Valley/ZCLA)  
 Lorraine Gessho Kumpf  
 Louise Myotai Dasaro (Lincroft)  
 Marc Dogen Fontaine (Valley)  
 Maria Pappajohn (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 Marinel Mukherjee (Lincroft)  
 Mario Gamez (Corazones Luminosos)  
 Mark Shogen Bloodgood (San Luis Obispo)  
 Mark Hougetsu Bueide
- Marley Klaus-Dowling  
 Martin Garcia (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Max Andes (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 Merle Kodo Boyd (Lincroft)  
 Michael Jishin Fritzen (Valley)  
 Michael Davis  
 Morris Paliwoda (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Nan Merritt  
 Nelida Koen Cartolin (in Peru)  
 Nem Etsugen Bajra  
 Nina Harake  
 Patricia Pfost  
 Patricia Shingetsu Guzy (Valley/ZCLA)  
 Patricia Way (Westchester/ZCLA)  
 Patti Muso Giggans  
 Paul Young (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 Peggy Faith-Moon Gallaher  
 Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson  
 Peter Nyodo Ott (Lincroft)  
 Raul Ensho Berge  
 Reeb Kaizen Venners  
 Richard Schulhof (Valley)  
 Robert Lone Pine Smith (Lincroft)  
 Roberta Myodo Brehm  
 Roger Haferkamp (Valley)  
 Rosa Ando Martinez  
 Rudy Kioko Lopez (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Sandeep Lehil  
 Sandy Goodenough-Schulhof (Valley)  
 Steven Totland (Valley)  
 Susanna Knittel  
 Susan Tritt (Ocean Moon)  
 Sue Dakin (Ocean Moon/ZCLA)  
 Tara Jihō Sterling  
 Tim Tetsudo Langdell  
 Tim Zamora  
 Todd Nyogen Bursaw (Ocean Moon)  
 Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert  
 Tom Enjo Arthur  
 Tom Pine-Ocean Cleary  
 Tom Yudo Burger  
 Tony Herrerra (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Ty Jotai Webb  
 Vanessa Eisho Moss (Lincroft)  
 Warner Spears (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Wendy Egyoku Nakao  
 Willie Crockett III (Twin Towers, MCJ)  
 Yoko Bajra  
 Z Zeller

## It's Good to Feel Loved

by Gold Medallion and Flowing Mountain Schmitt



Hi. I'm the Gold Medallion tree who lives across from the Zen Center. I was in a nursery in Goleta when a man in a white truck picked me out and planted me here on Irolo Street. Los Angeles can be scary territory for us trees, with lots of risks to life and limb, literally. People break our branches, trash gets piled up around us, and when dogs pee on us, it hurts our health. My entire

top half even got chopped off – that's why I'm shorter and bushier than other Gold Medallions my age.

I'm happy to report I'm healthy now. After he planted me, the man in the white truck watered me, and when he moved away, some of his friends promised to keep us trees watered until we're big enough to make it on our own. I see them coming with their laundry carts filled with gallon water bottles. If not for those kind-hearted people, many of us might not make it.

Which is sad because we trees give a lot. We give beauty, shade, oxygen, cleaner air. We muffle street noise. And yet it's easy to pass us by and not notice us. But some people do notice. A Live Oak friend of mine lives near a taco truck. One day, when a Zen Center person was watering my friend, the taco guy gave him a discount.

There are lots of spaces for more young trees if people were willing to water them. So if you'd like to help us trees,

Mr. White Truck and the tree-friendly people at the Zen Center could sure use your help.

I'm the second tree south of James Wood on the west side of Irolo. Stop and say hello. It's good to feel loved.

## How I Became the Man in the White Truck

by Gary Koan Janka

It all started 17 years ago in Santa Barbara with a live Christmas tree that outgrew its pot. I needed somewhere to plant it and seeing all the open space in a nearby park, I planted it there. As I tended it, I saw the rich possibilities for tree planting.

When I started hearing about global warming, I realized that planting trees was something positive I could do to counteract it. I signed up as a park volunteer and the rest is history, at least in Santa Barbara.

When I moved to Los Angeles, the concrete desert bothered me, so I began planting trees here, too. The first were four Winter Pears on San Marino. There are now about 42 trees around the Zen Center – an urban forest coming into bloom – and a short while ago, I planted my 310th tree.

Some of our local trees have had their problems – some were vandalized or fell victim to disease. Some have been stolen. But without the Zen Center volunteers who water all those trees, the whole project would have been toast.

## Our Shared Financial Stewardship

by Cassie Riger

During the past few months, the ZCLA Development Circle has been at work on several projects including continuing our Dharma Training Fund Campaign so that no serious Zen student is turned away from participation in ZCLA programs for lack of funds. We are currently \$1,000 short of last year's total.

In 2012, we raised more than \$45,000 to commemorate ZCLA's 45th anniversary. Interpreting "development" in the broadest sense, the Circle continues to explore ways to support our Sangha's evolution and sustainability.

We also aim to facilitate ongoing discussions about the relationship between Zen practice, generosity, money, and financial decision-making. If you have ideas for us, we'd love to hear them!

Deep bows to the ZCLA Development Circle: Patti Muso Giggans (Steward), John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Deb Faith-Mind Thoreson, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Tara Jiho Sterling, and Cassie Riger.

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

To the kitchen Fushinzamu Boddhisatvvas: **Rosa Ando Martinez, Brent Beavers, Burt Wetanson, Carlos Soto, Cassie Riger, Gary Belton, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, Jeff Hirsch, Ty Jotai Webb, Reeb Kaizen Venners, George Mukei Horner, Peter Su, Susanna Knittel, and Tom Yudo Burger;**

To all our third quarter Tenzos and their Assistants: **Gary, Tim Zamora, Jotai, Chris Daian Fields, Lana Shoshin Spraker, Jessica Oetsu Page, Paul Young, Charles Duran, Jim Hansen, Gabriel Diamond-Moon Russo, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, and Diane True-Joy Fazio;**

To our Jikidos: **Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Z Zeller, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Rosa Ando Martinez, Tim Zamora, Jonathan Kaigen Levy, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, and Patricia Pfof;**

To **Robert Diaz** for picking up merchandise for the bookstore;

To **Conrad Butsugen Romo** for always showing up to do dishes;

To **Yudo** for stepping in to provide cookies and tea for one of our Thursday night talks;

To **Dharma-Joy** for faithfully providing homemade cookies for our Thursday night talks;

To our flower Boddhisatvvas: **Lorraine Gessho Klump (Steward), Pat Way, Diane Enju Katz, Tina Jitsujo Gauthier, and Nina Reiju Wasserman;**

To **Tim and Jane Chen** for purchasing floor mats for the kitchen and the **Tenzo Circle** for their input;

To **Hannah Seishin Sowd** and **Jane** for all the work they’ve done on assembling basic recipes for new cooks;

To **Jotai** for tending and watering the grounds;

To our parking boddhisattvas: **Patricia Pfof, Yudo, Jitsujo, Kaizen, Gessho, Tara Jiho Sterling, and Oetsu;**

To **Senshin, Enduring-Vow, Heart-Mirror, Jotai, Dharma-Joy, and Mukei** for recording our Thursday night talks;

To **Roshi Anna Myoan Gamma** for her Thursday night talk “Opening the Heart”;

To **Mukei** for stewarding the annual Garden Zazen;

To **Carlos, Tim, Jotai, Yudo, and Heart-Mirror** for the Garden Zazen set-up;

To **Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson** for the Garden Zazen breakfast;

To **Yudo** for stepping in as the interim Parking Steward;

To **St. Mary’s Episcopal Church** for the use of their parking spaces when we need them;

To **Tim, Gary, and Tressa Berman** for cooking lunch for the Roshi Bernie Glassman workshop;

To **Darla Myoho Fjeld** for serving as Tenzo for the October Zazenkai;

To **Dharma-Joy, Brent Beavers and Senshin** for preparing the snacks for our Day of Reflection;

To **Nina Harake** for her tenure as our Parking Steward;

To **Kaizen, Jitsujo, Luminous-Heart, Jiho, Mukei, Carla, Gessho, Gary, Butsugen, Burt, Matt Goodman, and Dylan Neal** for their meticulous care and cleaning of our altars.

To **Jorge** and his crew of gardeners for keeping our grounds beautiful.



*Senshin hits the inkin as work service doan.*



*Tim and Heart-Mirror setting up tents for Tangaryo.*



*Oetsu directing our members to a parking spot.*



*Alex and his crew lay a new driveway.*



## ZCLA Affiliated Groups

### The Lincroft Zen Sangha (NJ)

led by Sensei 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

### The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)

led by Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

### The Westchester Zen Circle (CA)

led by Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley

Contact [info@zcla.org](mailto: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 Egyoku Nakao

Staff: Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, *Temple Director*, Mary Rios, *Business Manager*, Katherine Senshin Griffith, *Program Steward*, Tom Yudo Burger, *Guest Steward*

Water Wheel: *Editor*, Burt Wetanson; *Production Artist*, Tom Yudo Burger; *Transcription and Editing*, Bonnie Myosen Nadzam; *Photographers for this issue:* Roshi Egyoku, Burt Wetanson, Yudo Burger, Jonathan Kaigen Levy, Reeb Kaizen Venners, and Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown.

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## Sangha Rites of Passage

### Welcome New Members

Carlos Soto

Jill Shinjin Peters

Kane Phelps

Mak King

Michael Altshuler

Nancy (Nan) Merritt

### Welcome New Resident

Cassie Riger

### Shared Stewardship Entering

#### Priest Circle Member:

Betsy Eduring-Vow Brown

#### Buddha Hand Circle Steward:

Betsy Eduring-Vow Brown

#### Co-Tenzo Coordinator:

Gary Belton

#### Co-Chiden Steward:

George Mukei Horner

### Shared Stewardship Leave-Taking

#### Buddha Hand Circle Steward:

Tina Jitsujo Gauthier

### Resident Member Leave-Taking

Matt Goodman

Nina Harake

Gemma Cubero

## The Legacy Circle

Please consider joining the Legacy Circle by arranging for a bequest or other estate gift to ZCLA. For more information please contact Muso or Plum-Hermit through the ZCLA Office.