



Water Wheel

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

—Gate of Sweet Nectar

Zen Center of Los Angeles
Great Dragon Mountain / Buddha Essence Temple

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What is the Sangha Treasure?

By Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Many years ago, my root teacher Maezumi Roshi gave me a personal koan. “Your task,” he said, “is to penetrate the Sangha Treasure.” At the time, I neither grasped that this was a personal koan, nor did I foresee that it would resonate so profoundly throughout my Dharma life. I recall vividly the moment the koan was implanted and the sense of curiosity I briefly felt, and then giving it no further attention.

When I reflect upon these past fourteen years at the Zen Center of Los Angeles, however, I see that my task has indeed been the Sangha Treasure. The koan has been germinating in the fertile soil of this Zen Mountain, in the “manure for bodhi”^{*} that each of us inevitably brings to Zen practice.

For the past decade, we have engaged in an exploration of Sangha, both in terms of the Zen Center’s organizational spirituality as well as how to be a community practicing and, in some cases, living together. In retrospect, the near collapse of the Zen Center following the death of its founder and the subsequent rocky period were a gift, an invitation to create.

When we formally study the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (also called the Triple Refuge or the Three Jewels), we see that the Sangha is the intimate meeting of Buddha and Dharma. We affirm that the One Body (Buddha) and the Many (Dharma) are enfolded intimately as the functioning of awakened living

^{*}A phrase used by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Roshi Egyoku is the ZCLA Abbot & Head Teacher. This article is based in part on a Teisho given during a Zaizenkai on February 11, 2012.



A detail from the fingerprint enso created by the Sangha in farewell to Sensei Ryodo.

(Sangha). It may be a long while before we sense the truth of this, and it may be even longer before we sense how to actually live in this way.

The Buddha Shakyamuni said that a Sangha forms whenever three practitioners who have taken refuge in the Triple Jewels practice together. In the Zen lineage, one enters the Buddha’s family by receiving the Sixteen Zen Bodhisattva Precepts. When we make this public commitment to awaken and to live awake with others for the benefit of all beings, we take up the Bodhisattva Vow. The Sangha is those whose lives are guided by the unfolding and discovery of the Bodhisattva Vow rather than by personal agendas.

In the West, Zen communities formed around a founding Teacher, with great emphasis placed on the

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE

- 3 Finding Freedom, by Ven. Mujin Sunim
- 6 An Interview with Ven. Mujin Sunim
- 8 Programs
- 10 Rites of Passage
- 11 Sangha Appreciation
- 12 Like Us On Facebook!

Student-Teacher relationship. As a result, the organizational structures and the communities that grew up around this relationship were largely unexamined and the potential for the organization and the Sangha as an upaya (skillful means) for awakening has been unexplored.

Here at Zen Center, we have been asking the question: how can our organizational structures and collective practice manifest as upayas for awakening? The Sangha and the organizational components are like unearthed jewels. When jewels are harvested, there is a long process of cutting and polishing. Have you seen an unpolished jewel?

During my sabbatical, my partner Eberhard offered to replace the ring he had given me many years ago, which I had lost. We came upon a ring with three unpolished diamonds (no, that is not the one I'm receiving!). I was struck

“How can our organizational structures and collective practice manifest as upayas for awakening?”

by the unique beauty of these unpolished jewels – so much potential bursting forth, calling me to hold, and sense, and bring them into body-mind. Each one of us is truly an unpolished jewel brimming with incredible potential and beauty!

Zen Master Dogen said that one Raises the Bodhi Mind, the Aspiration of Awakening, through the affinity of the Student-Teacher relationship, and through the Bodhisattva Vow to bring all beings to Awakening before we ourselves are awakened. On this Zen Mountain, we are also saying that we arouse this aspiration through our collective efforts in co-creating the Zen Center organization and in co-creating the Sangha. We arouse the Bodhi Mind by bringing the entire Sangha to awakening by uncovering wisdom and compassion all together.

We dare ask: What would it be like to collectively awaken all together? What does collective wisdom and awakening look like?

In 2001, we undertook as a group this intentional questioning and focus on the exploration of the Sangha and Organizational Treasure on this Zen Mountain. I love to call this place a mountain, although we know that it is a little hill in Koreatown, Los Angeles, one of the most densely populated places in the United States! Long ago, it was home to the Chumash Indians, at a time when people

on this very land gathered acorns and ground them into food. When we appreciate this, we immediately feel the connection to this earth, to a way of life in which we knew intimately the cycles of the earth, of the animals, of the people that we lived among. All of this remains alive on this mountain.

And this hill is where a lone monk, Taizan Maezumi, set his staff some forty-five years ago and began to unfold the Vow to plant the Buddhadharma in the West. This Vow called forth the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to witness a humble effort; it called forth the commitment and selfless toil to live awake in the company of other like-minded folks.

It is this Bodhisattva Vow that makes this little hill a spiritual mountain, where we can each draw sustenance and inspiration to cultivate the empty field of awakening together and learn to serve and serve some more. This Vow recognizes that each of us, without exception, can never be apart from Buddha Mind, from Buddha Being. And that this Vow guides us not only individually and within our communities, but also into the public spheres, which are as yet unexplored territory.

Having grown up in Hawaii, the images of mountain and ocean are very potent for me. If we were to dive deep into the ocean, we would find the base of the mountain spread out across the ocean floor and arising from its depths. Most of the mountain is submerged; maybe just an eighth of it is above water.

Dogen Zenji says *gotsugotsuchi*, sit like a big, craggy mountain! And he also writes, “the ocean that does not reject any kind of waters.” This mountain and ocean are in an intimate and inextricable relationship and cannot be separated – just as you and I and everyone without exception cannot be apart from Awakened nature, or from each other, or from the Unity of Life all together.

So this year, I will focus my talks on the principles and practices underlying the collective awakening we have been engaged in. What underlies the Shared Stewardship practice we have been experimenting with, not as a volunteer effort, but as a practice of self-forgetting and all-encompassing inter-being. What we are learning about Sangha and about co-creating an organization that is imbued with Zen spirituality, not because it happens to be a structure for a Zen community, but because we intentionally choose to raise the Bodhi Mind individually and collectively at every turn, at every decision, at every meeting of ourselves and one another.

Stay tuned! ■

Finding Freedom

By Ven. Mujin Sunim

When I was about 14 or 15, two things happened to me. The first was that I met a book by William Golding called *Free Fall*. It's about freedom. He asks the question "When did I lose my freedom?" In the book, he examines his life - he goes to school, falls in love, becomes a prisoner of war - and at the end of each phase of his life, he asks the same question: "Here? Not here. Here? Not here." The general thread through the book is that he was more free when he was young and lost his freedom somewhere. The poor fellow never met the Buddha's teaching, so he's actually unable to come to a conclusion about the question, and I always felt very sorry for him. I read that book every year, and each time I'd ponder on this freedom business, and I always felt sorry that he didn't have any solution or conclusion.

The second thing that happened to me when I was 15 was that I was in a horrible English boarding school, and I was completely the odd girl out. I came from the wrong sort of family for that particular school, and I felt very lonely and friendless. One day, it suddenly hit me, "If you're going to get people to like you, you're going to have to love them." This was one of my first steps towards freedom, which I will come back to.

The Buddha is the only philosophy or religion that I've come across that offers us a path to freedom. All other religions speak of salvation, some sort of greater state to be in, but the Buddha is the only one who speaks of actual freedom. The Buddha is the only one who speaks of practicing happily, sitting down happily, happy in the meditation, getting up happy. Most religions tell us that if we suffer sufficiently, we'll be happy in the end. But the Buddha is the only one who encourages us to be happy from beginning to end. I don't know if you have realized that; if you haven't realized that, please put it in your heart and realize how lucky you are to be here. So

After completing studies in psychology and pedagogy, Ven. Mujin Sunim was ordained in Sri Lanka in 1976. She received bhikkhuni ordination in Korea in 1985. In 1987, she co-founded Lotus Lantern International Buddhist Center, and in 2005, she opened Popkye-sa / Dharma Realm in Switzerland. (An interview of Ven. Mujin Sunim follows on page 6.)

This is an edited version of a talk given at ZCLA on February 19, 2012.



Our visitors from Korea: Ven. Jawoo Sunim and Ven. Mujin Sunim.

when you begin to realize that, you begin to realize that the Buddha said, "You have the power to be free." The problem is, what is freedom?

In the Theravada, there is an important sutra called the Satthipavana Sutra, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. And a large part of psychiatry, all of psychotherapy, and awful lot of what we can do for ourselves is based on that sutra. Imagine, this is a discourse from 2,500 years ago - it's incredible! The Buddha mapped out how we should go along this path to freedom. I don't know how many of you are familiar with that sutra, but it is worth finding it and looking at it for yourself.

The four foundations of mindfulness are basically the body, which is our vehicle, including our breath, which relates us to life, just being aware of breath, being aware of a long breath, a short breath, breath going in and out; being aware of the position of the body. The second one is feelings, positive, negative and neutral feelings. The third one is mind, being aware if the mind is large, small, being aware of the state or situation of mind. And the fourth one is a purely Buddhist concept called mental objects. It is the basic teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha describes his own teachings as mental objects. So the Six Perfections, the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, all the basic teachings, being aware, having those in my mind, all mental objects.

At the end of each section of this sutra, there is a beautiful verse: "His mindfulness established, to the ex-

(Continued on page 4)

tent necessary just for knowledge and awareness that the body/feelings/mind/mental objects exist, he lives unattached and clings to nothing in the world.” Just for knowledge and awareness - not for analysis and thinking whether it’s nice or nasty or wanting more or anything. Can you feel the breath of fresh air coming in? Imagine.

So we have the choice at every moment in our life to be aware of those four particular areas, and what do we do? We lose our freedom. And the Buddha - he must have been an amazing man - comes to us and says, “Where do we lose that freedom?”

The answer is through five states of mind. The first state of mind is desire: “Oh, she has such a nice shawl, I want that shawl.” The second one is ill-will: “I hate her because she has such a nice shawl.” The third one you all know - laziness. “I’ll go and practice tomorrow.” The fourth one is agitation: Can’t sit still. And the fifth one is doubt: “Is the Buddha’s teaching really valuable?” We’re

“The Buddha is the only philosophy or religion that I’ve come across that offers us a path to freedom.”

supposed to penetrate the Buddha’s teaching, we’re not supposed to just swallow it like a pill, but doubt is another thing. “I’ve tested this much, seems pretty good, I’m going to become a Buddhist, I don’t know all of that, I’m going to put it on hold.” It’s sitting there, waiting for me to test it. That’s not doubt, that’s penetrating the dharma, which is very important for us to do.

Whatever I say today, the next person may come and say the exact opposite, and all of it is valid, because their experience is different, their ideas are different. But I have to test for myself. “Does desire really hinder my freedom?” I have to think about it. So we investigate, we go into each one of these things, we go through them, and we try not to allow them to stop us in our quest for freedom.

How can we get rid of those states of mind? How do I get rid of desire? I want that shawl. No, I’m not going to think about that, I’m going to think of something else. This is a basis for a lot of the neurological work that is coming out of Buddhism now.

I hope you have read the book *Buddha’s Brain*; if you haven’t, please do. The author is a neurologist and Buddhist. One of his main points is that we can change our thinking to get rid of such thoughts. One of the definitions of a Buddha is a person who thinks what he wants to think. Wow. The Buddha is wisdom and compassion in perfect harmony, he is also a person who thinks what he wants to think.

We can also be like that, but we have to do the work. Unfortunately, all of this is not easy. I have to work at it. I can’t just change my thought. I’ve got to keep at it, because I know I want to be free - to experience freedom, at least, if not to be free. This is where the paramita of determination comes in: I know that’s what I want in my life, I am going to change myself. At any age we can change our mind. I’m going to chip away at these states of mind until they’re gone.

In *Buddha’s Brain*, the author suggests that, neurologically, the most important thing is that our awareness be so sharp that as soon as that thought comes, we displace it. The faster, the better. If we let it sit and simmer, it gets stronger. He suggests embracing powerful thoughts – thoughts about someone you love or someone who loves you.

We know how silly these electrical impulses in our brain are, but we allow them to exist, we allow our freedom path to be interrupted. I say, “Yes, I’m going to be mad, I have a right, you’re terrible, you are wrong.” And the harmony is broken. In our training temples, when the head monk or head nun makes a mistake, we just go and clean up after them. We say, “Well, they’re busy, poor things, never mind.” We don’t point a finger, and say, “Hey, you made a mistake. Look at me, how clever I am, I saw your mistake.” We just clean it up.

So life, in this way, becomes more harmonious and more open. We begin to learn to choose. We tend to behave in the same way over and over; people in relationships have the same fight over and over. Very difficult to change. When you see the fight beginning, try to change this. It is very hard to do, because we are such habitual creatures. One of our great masters talks about habit energies. These things come boiling up. And unless you are incredibly powerful in your awareness, you can’t go against them, you just follow. They are paths in our neurological system. The path is carved, you just follow it.

What are we going to do to change this? We are going to change it by awareness. We’re going to change ourselves by awareness - we’re going to change the world by awareness. So change is something to embrace with joy. Change is at every possibility; every moment we can step a little more onto that path of freedom.

(Continued on page 5)

To me, freedom is the moment - every moment - when I have a million different choices and I can choose, I'm not just led by my habits. So each moment of my life, I can choose what to do, what to say, what to think next. Each moment, if I'm really present, I can decide what I'm going to do. That very pinpointed awareness is the result of tremendous practice. And for me, meditation is a support of that, chanting is a support of that. That practice gives support to my becoming fully aware, so that I can choose what I think, what I say and what I do. Who I am. And that choice is one of the main points of freedom for me anyway.

This moment, where I can choose, whenever I can choose - and eventually this should be from the gut, not a cognitive action, but it should well up from inside us - that freedom to think what I want, not recogitating an old fight, recogitating the harm someone has done to me, and on and on - that is one point of freedom.

Another point of freedom is to be really in tune with whatever is. Humility is not a popular subject today, but humility is a road to freedom. True humility, not false humility. The true humility of wanting to know, wanting to learn, not the humility of always having something ready to say. Actually listening. Listening is a big deal - to really hear is an act of humility.

I would like to say just one thing about your wonderful and beautiful Center. Last Sunday, I was very sad that no one put their hand up immediately to do the cleanup after lunch. I was very sad to find badly washed saucepans in the kitchen. These are little things, tiny things. But they are our practice, and I would even say, if you can't do those little things, don't go and sit, you're wasting your time. Because what we do, our practice, has to translate into our daily life. And whatever we can do for others is a path of freedom.

My godfather, many years ago, taught me: Do the dirtiest jobs. They're short and everybody admires you. Cleaning a toilet - how long does it take to clean a toilet really well? Five minutes? To give a talk takes years of practice or hours of reflection or something. But people will say, "Wow, you cleaned the toilet, thank you so much." After giving this talk, some people will say, "Well, that was okay, what she said." Remember this.

So if we are really going to look at this path to freedom, we are going to have to learn to practice very, very pointed, deep, continual awareness-attention. Really to be aware at every moment. To know what we are thinking.



That awareness, we have to bring it up every moment. Do you know what you're thinking right now? Are you thinking about what you're going to do this afternoon, or what you're going to do on vacation, or what you did last week, the fight with your partner? Very aware - no, I'm not going to think that now, I'm going to put that out of my mind. Come back to where we are.

Try doing some exercises - wash the dishes mindfully. Every time you think about something else - "Oh, I hate washing the dishes!" - say no, just wash the dishes. Just cut the vegetables. Just cook, just clean, just clean the toilet. Just do it. I find it useful to start with simple, repetitive activities, rather than something complicated. And just be totally there. And this mind carries through and we are more aware of our thinking each time, a little bit more aware of our speaking, a little bit more aware of our activities.

I want to leave you with a quotation from a Tibetan Rinpoche: "Rest in natural great peace, this exhausted mind, beaten helpless by karma and neurotic thoughts, like the relentless fury of the pounding waves in the infinite ocean of samsara, rest in natural great peace." Please find that great peace to rest in, while we are all working hard on our way to freedom. Thank you. ■



The Sangha gathers for Sensei Ryodo's leave-taking.

An Interview With Ven. Mujin Sunim

Q: How did you come to practice?

A: According to my memory - as you get older, reality and myth tend to get muddled up together - when I was five years old, I had a relative who was a diplomat in India, and I remember asking my mother to send me to India. My mother rolled her eyes at the five year old. When I was 20 years old, I found myself still asking the questions that you ask yourself when you are 17 or 18, and I began to realize there was something there, and I really wanted to find out what was going on.

Then I read a book, and there was a sentence in it that said, "Buddhism is taking responsibility for yourself." And I liked that, and I thought, "Yes!" I was brought up a bad Christian by my family, I went to a very High Church school, but God has never been available to me. To me, the idea that someone is in charge of my life has never appealed to me. So I started studying and thinking - not reading books, I bought the books, but for some reason, I knew you had to learn from somebody. So I wanted to leave immediately after school, and my parents said, "Go to university, when you finish university you can do what you like." So I took them at their word and immediately after university, I went to work for an organization in Morocco, because I couldn't get to India.

After my time in Morocco, I went with my parents to visit my uncle in California, and we spent two months here. My uncle had married, and his wife didn't like me at all, so my uncle sent me to spend two weeks at Esalen. The instructor at Esalen mentioned Sufis, and I went up to him and asked him what Sufis were. He thought for a moment, then he said, "Sufis are happy people." I thought, "Oh, I'm a happy person." Afterwards, I went back to Geneva, and as I was walking through town one day, it started to rain. To get out of the rain, I went into a building and found myself in the International Sufi Center. They were lovely people, and I went and lived with them for a time in London. I decided that I wasn't going to do the work I was supposed to be training for in London, and instead, I decided to go with the Sufis to India. So I went with them to India. And then I went on tour in India, and then went to Sri Lanka, then back to India. I decided I was much happier and healthier in Asia, so I went to spend some time in Singapore, where I had an uncle.

I stayed and worked in Singapore for two years, then I met some Buddhists and I started learning Buddhism. I'd go off and study after teaching school every day, and all day on Saturday and Sunday, studying Buddhism and being in the temple. Then, one day, someone said to me, "Why don't you go and be ordained?" So I said, "Oh, okay," and I went off to Sri Lanka and was ordained. It was perfect, just perfect.

I stayed there a few more years, then I traveled around India for five years and then went back to Sri Lanka for a couple of years. But my aim was always Zen. And my teacher in Sri Lanka had taught madhayameka philosophy, and he'd been to China. So one day I told him I wanted to study Zen, and he said "Go, go, go, and come back and teach us all."

I wanted to go to China, but I went to South Korea first, because I had met a couple of Korean Buddhists over the years, and they are very vibrant. I had met a Korean monk in Sri Lanka, and he said to me, "We need people like you, come to Korea!" So I went to Korea, arrived in Korea, and I was put in this Zen temple. It was not a very good experience. But then this monk took me to what would end up being my temple, and my teacher was just an amazing woman. He talked for four hours. Afterwards, the head of the temple met with her disciples, and she asked them if they would agree to have me come, and they said, "Oh, sure."

When I came, someone said, "Well, you had better give her a name," so she thought about it for around half an hour. Then she said "Mujin." Now, there are two meanings to Mujin. There is the "no dust" mujin, and there is the "infinite" mujin. Mine is the "infinite" mujin, which is a name that really suits me.

Q: The "infinite"?

A: "No limit."

Q: How did you become involved in running a Buddhist center?

A: I stayed at this temple a while, and she was wonderful to me. She let me break in slowly, then she dumped me in the meditation hall. I had to learn Korean, so I went up to Seoul for a few months between meditation periods to attend school. I needed a room, so I went to the school and inquired. A woman there offered to let me live with her, and I stayed with her for around three months. It turned out that she was head of the international women's association. She said, "Why don't you start a Buddhist

(Continued on page 7)

class, because so many people are interested.” So we started a Buddhist class, and these masses of people came. And then the monk I had met back in Sri Lanka said, “Let’s start a Buddhist Center.” So we did.

And it was crazy: working, cleaning, teaching all day long, seven days a week. We didn’t have any money, we were very poor, but it was a wonderful place.

I had been given everything for twelve years, and I thought, we have to give something back. Everything I need is given to me, we have to give something back. So let me give a couple of years back. I am not a great teacher; I rather avoid it. But anyway, we ended up doing it, and it was a big success. It was huge, we used to have 400 to 500 people a week going through classes and events. It wasn’t a very big space, either.

Then, around 1997, I began to realize I wanted to go and do something for my family back in Switzerland. And, the way life is, one thing led to another, and people wanted me to stay, because there weren’t any Korean sunims in Switzerland. I inherited some money, and my brother helped me, and I bought a small house in Switzerland and that’s where I live at the moment. But I don’t know, I am inclined to go back to Korea. I really like Korea.

Q: do you move back and forth between Switzerland and Korea?

A: I didn’t for many years, then I started going back a bit, then two years ago, I was asked to make a documentary about Korean temple food, and I went three times. Last year, I went two times, and this year, I’m going two times.

Q: What are you spending your time on now?

A: Nowadays, I do a lot of work for the foundation, and I have a huge backlog of writing to do. I have a computer packed with classes, and I am going to revise the classes for teaching children and teaching adults.

It’s funny how life unfolds. I came out of Geneva University with a B.A. in something like psychology, and an M.A. in education, and I said to someone, “What can I do now?” And they said, “Well, the main thing you can do is write curricula.” And I thought, “I’m not doing that.” But it ends up that it is what I’ve been doing a lot of. It’s really funny.

I’ve written all these curricula, and I am going to put them together and make up some books for teaching people, particularly young people. We have so little teaching material in Buddhism, it’s really pathetic. So I’m going to do that, and then there’s my own practice, and, I don’t know, let’s see. It will be interesting.

Q: Can you tell me about your foundation?

A: It is called the Douglas A. Campbell Foundation, after my uncle, who lived here in Los Angeles and founded it. He created a small foundation, and eventually I inherited it after he died in 2008. The foundation work is very interesting. The ego dimension in this world of charity is phenomenal and fascinating. If I didn’t have the practice behind me, I’d get led along by it. It’s great ego practice.

The positive part is that I’ve been able to do some really wonderful little projects. We’ve built quite a lot of places for orphans. This year, we’re giving wheelchairs for handicapped children. We’re helping a Buddhist school in the hills of Bangladesh, a wonderful place. I’m very excited about that.

Right now, my quest is for the perfect project. I look at a lot of aspects. Unfortunately, there are a lot of little foundations doing band-aid work. We get lots of similar projects with no coordination among them.

Q: How do you figure out where you are going to direct the foundation’s resources?

A: At the moment, I’m working with friends. How long that will go, I don’t know. At the moment, I have very good friends in Myanmar, very good friends in Bangladesh. This year, India. Oh, I love India.

Q: Do you?

A: Oh, I am very much at home in India. This year, my base is going to be India. I like travelling around. I wish I had a better mind for traveling slower. I usually go for two or three weeks, but I am beginning to think I should go slower than that. But some places you can stay for a few days or for a few years, you can’t just stay for a month. You can, but it doesn’t work somehow. You’re peripheral or you’re involved, you can’t be in between. You need to stay a long enough time to do something, or stay a short enough time not to interrupt their lives.

Q: So will you be coming back to us next year?

A: Oh, definitely! ■

Zen Programs at Great Dragon Mountain

Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

When she is on campus, Roshi will offer Face-to-Face meetings for members Wednesday evening, Friday dawn, and Saturday and Sunday mornings during scheduled zazen. 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** is available to supplement program fees. No serious practitioner 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 Sensei for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to practice the Dharma!

Zazen Programs

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

☎ – Please register in advance on the sign-up sheet in the Sangha House through info@zcla.org.

* – Zendo remains open for non-participants.

Wall-Gazing Day.* Saturday, March 10, 6:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join this silent half-day of just sitting. Zazen is scheduled every hour on the hour, with ten minutes of walking meditation at ten minutes to the hour. Includes breakfast and lunch for registered participants. A **Chant Circle** will be held at 8:30 a.m. in the Buddha Hall Fee: Dana. ☎

Tangaryo.* Saturday, March 10, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All members are encouraged to join in this silent day, which runs in tandem with the Wall-Gazing Day. The schedule includes 8:00 a.m. orientation, 8:30 a.m. Chant Circle, sitting from 9:00 a.m. to noon, lunch from noon to 1:00 p.m., and unstructured sitting from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The afternoon schedule includes no timekeeper and no timekeeping bells—you set your own sitting and walking schedule. To register, contact Gessho Kumpf through the office. (All members are required to participate in one Tangaryo.) Fee: Dana. ☎

Introduction to Sesshin.* Thursday evening, March 22, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) to Saturday, March 24, 9:00 p.m. Led by Sensei Shingetsu Guzy. This two-day sesshin is designed for newcomers to sesshin practice. Instruction is given on all aspects of sesshin. Sesshin, “to unify the mind,” is an essential practice for the deepening of one’s zazen. Also for experienced sitters and those who haven’t sat sesshin in a long while. The schedule will be posted and sent by ProgramFlash. Daily fee: \$40; \$75 for non-members. Housing and linen fees additional. ☎

SAVE THE DATE: Growing a Plum Blossom Sesshin, led by Roshi Egyoku Nakao. Tuesday evening, May 22 to Saturday, May 26.

Precept Practice

A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts will take place on **Saturdays, March 17 and April 21, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

March 17 will be led by Shogen Bloodgood on Precept #3: The practice of chaste conduct;

April 21 will be led by Enduring-Vow Brown on Precept #10: The practice of not speaking ill of the Three Treasures. Open to everyone.

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

During this ceremony of Renewing our 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. Sensei Shingetsu will officiate.

Classes and Workshops

Introductory Zen Practice Classes. Our introductory Zen practice program includes beginning meditation instruction (ZP 1 and ZP 2, offered weekly) as well as a full day of practice at ZCLA (ZP 3, offered monthly). For information on times and dates for these programs, see the “beginners” section of our website, at www.zcla.org.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Practice Group. March 5, 19, April 2, 16, May 7 & 21, 7:00-9:00 pm. Led by NVC Facilitator Anne Walton. ZCLA is offering a special NVC Practice Group series on the 1st and 3rd

(Continued on page 9)

Mondays of the month. A commitment to all six classes is appreciated but not necessary. Open to all. An excellent opportunity to develop and strengthen Nonviolent Communication skills. Please register in advance by emailing programsteward@zcla.org or signing up on the Sangha House Bulletin Board. Fee: \$15-20 per class. No serious practitioner is turned away for lack of funds.

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY LEVITY LABORATORY

Led by Moshe YooHoo Cohen
Saturday, April 7, 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and
Sunday, April 8, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Performance: 11:15 a.m.

Come join us in the levity laboratory! Engage mindfulness and presence while connecting to, and expressing (without words), your inner funny. Dig into your ludicrous, your ridiculous, your absurd to conspire in creating an environment filled with lightness, levity, and laughter.



We will be investigating, creating, and rehearsing a performance to be presented to the Sangha following the Buddha's Birthday service. The Saturday and Sunday class frameworks include Taoist health exercises, butoh walks, object manipulation, and improvisation.

This levity laboratory is open to everyone, whether you have experience in levitation or not. Full-time and part-time comers all welcome. *Tuition: \$50 for members; \$75 nonmembers.

Moshe Cohen has played over 2,000 performances in 40 countries in the 30 years since his beginnings in 1981. He has led clowning workshops at ZCLA for many years. For more information, including about his performances in refugee camps around the world with Clowns Without Borders, see his website at www.yoowho.org.

Class Series On The Ox Herding Pictures. Roshi Ekyoku will initiate a series of classes on "The Ox Herding Pictures: The Journey of Practice." Beginning April 19, the series will be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The Ox Herding pictures and accompanying verses, which date to 12th Century China, depict the ten stages of our individual journey to awakening. In addition to the traditional interpretation, we will also explore the stages in terms of a collective journey to awakening. We will use the original Chinese-style *nanga* ink brush paintings by the late Sensei Gyokusei Jikihara, a National Treasure of Japan and calligraphy master and Zen Obaku School teacher, who painted these for ZCLA in the early 1980s. The series will continue until we complete the Ten Stages. The classes are \$15 each, or \$125 for the entire 10 class series if paid in advance.

2012 Precepts & Jukai Series

Led by Sensei Daishin Buksbizen and Sensei Shingetsu Guzy. The Precepts and Jukai series classes are being offered at ZCLA, led by Sensei Daishin, and at the Valley Sangha, led by Sensei Shingetsu. We encourage interested members to enroll in these two series of classes. Contact Senshin for information about a combined class package with reduced fee.

Zen Precepts Study Series

Tuesdays: 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

April 10, 17, 24; May 8, 15

May 22 (Valley Sangha only)

June 5 (ZCLA only)

This series of classes will explore deeply the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts. Any member may take this series regardless of whether one decides to formally receive the Precepts or has already done so. However, the series is a prerequisite for all those who intend to receive the Precepts (Jukai). Tuition: \$175 for members; \$300 for nonmembers. ☎

Receiving the Precepts (Jukai) Series

Tuesdays: 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

June 12 and 19

This two-class series is a prerequisite for those who wish to receive the Precepts. Class topics include the Lineage, bowing practice, the Jukai Ceremony, the Rakusu (the Buddha's robe), and the mudra of Gassho. Tuition: \$70 for members; \$120 nonmembers. ☎

DHARMA WORDS FOR PARINIRVANA DAY

On February 11, 2012, we observed the Parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha. During the service, Roshi Egyoku offered these Dharma Words:

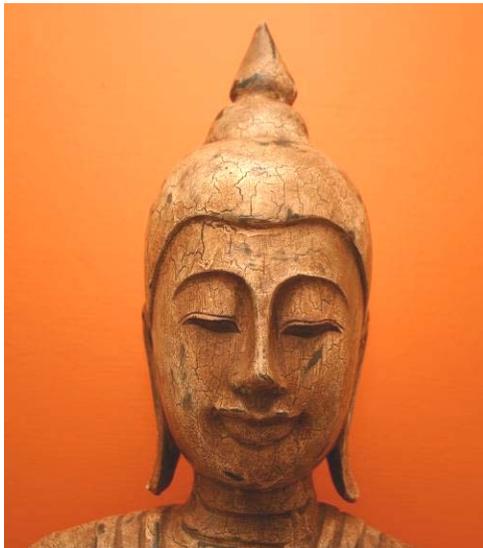
*A canopy of clouds in boundless blue skies -
pale pink camellias falling off the branch
Is there coming and going?*

*This day of Shakyamuni Buddha's Parinirvana -
the Buddha's physical human body, gone.
The aged ill body, gone.
All the disciples and followers, weeping.
All the animals and trees, weeping.
The whole universe, weeping.
Such grief. At Kushinagara one feels it still.
What kind of human being was this?
Awake! Awake.*

*Great Bodhi Mind flowing forth -
reaching everywhere
even here in this small room
to this very body-minds standing here
striving to awaken as you did.*

Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.....

*The Original Face
is beyond Birth and Death.
This birth and death is
the life of a buddha.*



Sangha Rites of Passage

NEW MEMBERS ENTERING CEREMONY March 3, 2012

Chris Shoyu Cather
Mitchell Gordon Lewis
Bill Ware
Tim Zamora

SHARED STEWARDSHIP INSTALLATION

Teachers Circle Steward

Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen

Residents Steward

Lorraine Gessho Kumpf

Buddha Hand Circle Steward

Rosa Ando Martinez

Buddha Hand Circle Steward

Rosa Ando Martinez

Buddha Hand Circle

Tina Jitsujo Gauthier
Ty Jotai Webb

IT Support Group

Ty Jotai Webb (IT)
George Mukei Horner (Web)

SHARED STEWARDSHIP LEAVE-TAKING

Teachers Circle Steward

Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

Buddha Hand Circle Steward

Lorraine Gessho Kumpf

Buddha Hand Circle

Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson

Residents Steward

Sensei Gary Koan Janka

Teachers Circle

Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley
Sensei Gary Koan Janka

Health Circle Co-Steward

John Heart-Mirror Trotter

TEACHER LEAVE-TAKING

Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley
January 22, 2012

Sensei Gary Koan Janka
February 4, 2012

Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt "Thank You!"

Please contact Dharma-Joy (dharma-joy@zcla.org) if you know of bodhisattvas to appreciate. Have we missed anyone?

To our cooks and snack coordinators: **Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Gemma Cubero, Lynda Jikai Golan, Gary Belton, Pam Smith, Chris Shoyu Cather, Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson, Katherine Senshin Griffith, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, Bob Gido Fisher, Tom Yudo Burger, and Andy Mugen Handler;**
Co-Tenzo Coordinators **Jonathan Levy and Miguel Rojas** for their tireless efforts to keep us well fed;
Gessho for many years coordinating the Tangaryo program;
Mark Shogen Bloodgood for his tenzo efforts during the February Zazenkai;
George Mukei Horner for leading the Zendo service position training class, and **Dharma-Joy and Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen** for leading the Buddha Hall service position training class;
Parking steward **Tina Jitsujo Gauthier** and members **Cassie Riger, Chris Shaw, Jolene Beiser, Jane Chen, Tara Jiho Sterling, Mugen, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, and Kaizen;**
Gessho and Rosa Ando Martinez for obtaining the leis for our leave-taking ceremonies for Sensei Ryodo and Sensei Koan;
Bookstore manager **Burt Wetanson** and bookstore volunteers **Enduring-Vow, Jiho and John Heart-Mirror Trotter;**
Susanna Knittel and Jikai for organizing the Sangha ensos for Sensei Ryodo and Sensei Koan;
The **Altar Flowers Group: Gessho, Jikai, Diane Enju Katz, Nina Reiju Wasserman, and Pat Way;**
Yudo for handling registration for the recent Non-Violent Communication workshop;
Enduring-Vow for stewarding the Day Manager program and **Kaizen, Shogen, Luminous-Heart, John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Ando, Faith-Mind and Ty Jotai Webb** for serving as Day Managers;
Jotai for helping to administer the Non-Violent Communication classes;
J Fong and Tom Pine-Ocean Cleary, as well as the Heath Circle and Disaster Preparedness Group, for organizing the CPR class;
Burt for editing and proofing the *Water Wheel* under short deadlines, and **Heart-Mirror** for helping produce and mail the *Water Wheel*;
Conrad Butsugen Romo for leading the recent Dharma Chat and for coordinating the Dharma Chat program year after year;
Zendo jikidos for the first quarter of 2012: **Ando, Jane**

Chen, Kaizen, Jiho, Luminous-Heart, Z Zeller, David Hilton, Diane True-Joy Fazio, Nina Harake, Enduring-Vow, Jotai, and Ellen Reigen Ledley;

Ven. Mujin Sunim for her visit and Dharma Talk;
Reiju and Faith-Mind for organizing and maintaining our Dharma Buddy program for new members;
Gessho for many years of service on the Buddha Hand Circle;

Heart-Mirror for coordinating prayer chains for members and their families;

Buddha Hall Service Leaders for the winter quarter:

Mukei, Kaizen, Jitsujo, Luminous-Heart, Enduring-Vow, Ando, Dharma-Joy and Faith-Mind;

Butsugen for his steadfast work, year after year, at the sink washing dishes;

Carla Flowing-Mountain Schmitt for coordinating resident samu duties;

and to

Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley and Sensei Gary Koan Janka for many years of service on behalf of ZCLA;

Thank you!!! ■

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 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 us at info@zcla.org for information.

* Affiliated groups are led by Dharma Successors of Roshi Egyoku or coordinated by practitioners actively practicing at ZCLA with a teacher. Those interested in leading a ZCLA-affiliated sitting group may apply to the Teachers Circle.

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

Our mission is to know the Self, maintain the precepts, and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism. **Our vision** is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized, and compassion flows unhindered. **Our core values** are available upon request or on our Web site, www.zcla.org.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi
Abbot 1995-1999: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao
Staff: Mary Rios, Business Manager; Katherine Senshin Griffith, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Deb Faith-Mind Thorsen, Grounds & Membership Steward; John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Development Steward.
Water Wheel: Editor, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson; Photographers: Lynda Jikai Golan, Dharma-Joy, Roshi Egyoku Nakao, Kaizen Venners, Jonathan Levy; 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 dharma-joy@zcla.org. The *Water Wheel* is also available through electronic distribution and on the Web at www.zcla.org.



**ZCLA Great Dragon Mountain
Buddha Essence Temple**
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Los Angeles, CA 90006-1301

Address Correction Requested

Special Observance

Buddha's Birthday Service, Sunday, April 8, 11:00 a.m. in the Center's Garden. Join in celebrating the birth of baby Buddha. A bower will be erected in the garden; come help decorate it with flowers at 7:00 a.m. Sensei Daishin will officiate the garden service at 11:00 a.m., after which Mr. YooWho will lead a clown performance with a troupe of sacred mischief makers. A birthday lunch and cake for the Buddha will follow. Children, friends, and family are welcome. Please contact Senshin in the office, info@zcla.org, if you can join in the fun of decorating the Buddha's house.



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You don't need to be a Facebook member in order to see our page. Just go to facebook.com/zcenterla to see what is going on! And if you are on Facebook, you can "like" it to receive regular updates in your news feed.