



Water Wheel

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

— Gate of Sweet Nectar

The Seven Wise Women

by Wendy Egyoku Nakao



The Story: The Seven Wise Women were all daughters of kings of great countries. One spring, while their communities were headed out to see the wild flowers, one of the women said, “Sisters, you and I should not go to enjoy the flowers. Let us go together to enjoy the charnel grounds.”

Another woman said, “That place is full of decaying corpses. What is such a place good for?”

The first woman said, “Sisters, let’s just go. Very good things are there.”

When they arrived at the charnel ground, the first woman pointed to a corpse and said to the others, “The corpse is here; where has the person gone?”

All of the women had a realization. Heavenly flowers fell from the sky and a voice praised them and said, “Excellent, excellent.”

The first woman asked, “Who is praising us?”

The voice said, “I am Indra, Guardian of the Dharma. Because you have realized the way, my attendants and I rain down flowers upon you. If you need something, please tell me, so that I may supply it to you for the rest of your lives.”

The first woman said, “At my house, all our material needs are completely provided. I only want three things: first, a tree without roots; second, a piece of land without north or south; and third, a valley where shouts do not echo.”

Indra replied, “I can give you all material things, but these three things I do not have. Let us go and discuss this with the Buddha.”

Upon hearing of this, the Buddha said, “Indra, all of the great arhats among my disciples cannot decipher the meaning of this. Only the great bodhisattvas understand this matter.”

Today is a bright sunny day in Los Angeles. Let’s not go to the beach or sit under the shade of the chinaberry tree, let’s go to the morgue – *very good things are there.* Let’s



Under the Zen Center Bodhi Tree.

go to the cemetery or to the Intensive Care Unit – *very good things are there.*

In June, two Sangha members – Myokai and Nagy – died suddenly within a few days of each other. Everything and everyone dies. We know this and, in some ways, we don’t quite know it either. Many people are well into adulthood before they encounter the death of a loved one or even see a corpse up close. Surrounded by our material comforts and caught up in the busyness of everyday demands, we can easily lose sight of the transient nature of it all.

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THE SEVEN WISE WOMEN (*Continued from page 1*)

Fortunately, we are Zen folks – we do not shirk from our mortality. And among the seven women, there was one, too, who did not turn away. Instead, she showed up, and she asked her sisters to show up, too, for the reality that we are living.

Seeing a dead body, one of the women asked, *There is a body, where has the person gone?* When Nagy was removed from life support, where did he go? When Myokai died even with maximum life support, where did she go? Where are they now? Or, more to the point, knowing that one day this very body of mine will no longer be sustained, how do I live my life today?

Seeing a dead person, the women had a realization. They are sometimes called the “seven wise sisters” – women in kinship with each other. What better context to explore mortality than in the bosom of sisterhood, or of the Sangha. Our willingness to look at our mortality liberates the vulnerability and intimacy already inherent in our situation.

“... Very good things are there ...”

The Guardian of the Dharma, Indra, celebrates their awakening by showering them with flowers and promising anything that they wish. “We have everything we need,” responds the woman. Most likely those reading this have enough of the basic necessities to get by. So given the fact of our own mortality, you may say, “What I really want is something that will assuage my fears of my own death, of the death of my parents, of my partner, and of my children.” The women themselves say, “This is what we want: *first, a tree without roots; second, a piece of land without north or south; and third, a valley where shouts do not echo.*”

When the seven wise sisters counter Indra’s offering, they invite him, and you and me, into the depths of spaciousness and clarity beyond the sense of a separate self. We are invited into that place where the heart is no longer ruled by fear, no longer being torn asunder by, or clinging to, one’s own self-serving ideas or relying on those of outside authorities.

What *very good things* have these seven women realized among the decaying bodies? What *very good things* can we realize at the mortuary, the cemetery, or at the ICU before and after life support is removed? What *very good thing* can we realize every time we enter the Buddha Hall and see photographs and cremains of Nagy and Myokai?

We want a tree without roots. Tell me, is there anything you can root your life to? The usual things, such as your

job, your loved one, your home, your Zen practice – aren’t all of these conditioned and transient, just as it is written in the Diamond Sutra, “... all conditioned things are like a drop of dew, a bubble in a stream, a flash of lightning ... ?”

A box of ashes on the altar – can anything take root in the nature of this life when its very essence is unfixed? And yet, there was a man named Nagy who ministered to the incarcerated, and there was a woman named Myokai who continued to teach in impoverished South Central after her retirement. How are you and I living the life of the tree without roots?

We want a piece of land without north and south – without light or dark, without yin or yang – without any divisions whatsoever. So how about the undivided immediacy of the charnel ground, of the morgue, of the ICU – of the right here, now! How do we live without being entangled in the push and pull from one thing to the other and live settled and free in the midst of these very conditions?

We want a valley that does not echo when someone shouts. When someone calls your name, how do you answer? There is just your response, isn’t there? This valley without an echo is boundless and without dividing lines, immediate and alive!

The Buddha said, *Only the great bodhisattvas understand this matter.* What is it that they understand? What did the seven wise sisters understand? What did I encounter when I was at the ICU when Myokai’s life support was removed? Only stillness, only openness – there was no need to turn away. Only the moment, only the mystery – there was no need to embellish. Only the grief of her husband, only the gentle, precise movements of the nurses – there was sadness and tenderness side by side.

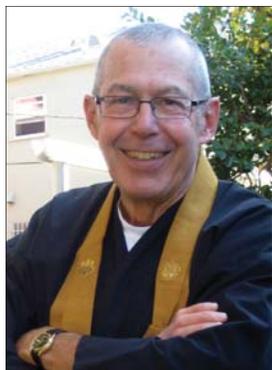
And there was something else, too – the through-line of *very good things*. The great bodhisattvas, in their infinite capacity to clearly see through the unfixed, empty nature of all, liberate this most important through-line, the heart beat of the *very good things* – love itself.

On Veteran’s Day, I walked the rows at the cemetery. The *very good things*, love itself, were palpable – the two buddies kneeling side-by-side at the grave of a fellow soldier, the widow holding the hands of her two small children, the large family having a picnic beside their son’s grave. *Very good things are there.* Like the great bodhisattvas and the seven wise women, you and I can tap into the liberating intimacy of love – being vulnerable in our wakefulness, living out life *exactly* the way it is.

*Roshi Egyoku is ZCLA’s Abbot & Head Teacher.
Story adapted from Dogen’s Extensive Record (Wisdom).*

The Buddha's Toolbox

by Gary Koan Janka



How difficult this practice of Zen would be if we did not have the written record and collected wisdom of the Buddha, Masters, and Ancestors. The Buddha himself lived a long life and left an extensive legacy of talks and advice that he gave to his disciples. One of the questions the Buddha was asked many times by his students was, "How do I deal with thoughts that arise and distract me from my breath or concentration?" I hear the same question from my students, both new and old.

Throughout his teachings, the Buddha stresses the importance of our thoughts and our awareness of them, and that until we get a grip on our minds and our thinking, we will forever be the victims of them.

He gives four reasons for this: first, the mind cannot contain two thoughts at the same time; second, thought is the forerunner of actions which have karmic consequences; third, craving is the origin of dukka which is ended by eliminating craving and directing the mind to renunciation; fourth, our thoughts are one of the four foundations of mindfulness. (One example of the Buddha's response is found in Chapter 20 of the Majjima Nikaya, "The Removal of Distracting Thoughts.")

During a recent sesshin, I gave a talk about some of the practical ways (tools) the Buddha offers us for dealing with distracting thoughts and the Five Hindrances, and I thought to share some of them here.

The Buddha learned very early in his own practice that he had the ability to observe his thoughts and to perceive the natural course of thought if it was left unchecked. This gave him the ability to judge whether his thoughts would lead to something wholesome or something unwholesome.

"Hear, Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is giving attention to some sign (object of concentration), and owing to that sign there arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should give attention to some other sign connected with that which is wholesome." In other words, since the mind cannot hold two thoughts at the same time, it is possible to replace an unwholesome thought with one that is wholesome, much the same way a carpenter would knock out a



broken peg with a new one. This is called "thought substitution." But what if thought substitution doesn't work?

"If, while he is giving attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then he should examine the danger in those thoughts." This is called "projecting the consequence." When I see that a particular thought will lead to something unwholesome or dangerous, that is usually enough to enable me to let go of it, and my mind becomes more settled.

What if examining the danger in thoughts still allows evil, unwholesome thoughts to arise? Then the Buddha suggests that we should "try to forget those thoughts and should not pay attention to them. When he tries to forget those thoughts and does not give attention to them, then any evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion are abandoned in him and subside." But "forgetting" unwholesome thoughts may not be easy. (I've found it helpful to switch to a task that requires a different physical, and perhaps mental, track.)

The Buddha goes on: "If while he is trying to forget those thoughts and is not giving attention to them, there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, or with delusion, then he should give attention to the formation of those thoughts." Here, the Buddha encourages us to look for what is causing the thoughts. This may also not be easy and may take repeated investigation into deeper layers of causation. What is the cause of the thought? On and on until the genesis of the thought pattern becomes clear. Then, without much effort, we can let it go and move on to a more wholesome state.

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THE BUDDHA'S TOOLBOX (*Continued from page 3*)

If all of the above fail us, what do we do? The Buddha suggests: "If there still arise in him evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, with hate, and with delusion, then, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he should beat down, constrain, and crush mind with mind." Since this involves the use of force to "crush" the troublesome thought pattern, the Buddha cautions us to do this with a wholesome state of mind born of compassion and the intention of enlightenment rather than frustration, anger, or hopelessness.

The Buddha assures us that the mind of one who is able to apply the five tools outlined above "becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to singleness, and concentrated. This bhikkhu is then called a master of the courses of thought. He will think whatever thought he wishes to think and will not think any thought that he does not wish to think. He has severed craving, flung off the fetters, and with the complete penetration of conceit, he has made an end of suffering."

The Buddha gave us many tools for ending suffering.

As I mentioned earlier, the Buddha's toolbox offers methods of working with the Five Hindrances as well as distracting thoughts. Here is a quick overview of the Five Hindrances: Desire, Ill Will, Dullness and Drowsiness, Doubt, Restlessness and Worry.

Desire, as we know from the Four Noble Truths, is a major troublemaker, the source of our suffering, or dukka. We want something we don't have or don't want something we do have. We believe that we're just one raise, new car, or bigger house away from happiness and freedom from pain. Of course, in our rational moments, we know that's not true. Fulfillment of desire is not a route to happiness. What does the Buddha suggest?

First, we meditate on impermanence, the fact that all things are the result of causes and conditions which eventually change. Cars wear out, trees die, my wife doesn't look the way she did thirty years ago. The Buddha encourages us to put our faith and effort in the Way, which is the only thing that does not change.

Because so much of human desire centers on sex and the drive to procreate, the Buddha suggests that when it arises (remember, the Buddha was speaking to a congregation of celibates), we should contemplate the unattractive nature of the body. The body is said to consist of thirty-two parts, including feces, bile, phlegm, pus, and mucus.

Charming! The point is that by meditating on these various parts, the human body becomes viewed as unattractive.

In the case of Ill Will – disliking another person or wishing them ill – the Buddha suggests as an antidote: Meditation on Loving Kindness. Often referred to as "Metta Practice," it is a way to wish others well and, more importantly, the practice transforms our "inner space," leaving us more disposed to kindness, generosity, and acceptance of others. For more about Metta practice, please refer to Sharon Salzberg's book, *Loving Kindness*.

Do you ever become sleepy during zazen? If yes, then the Buddha suggests as the antidote for Dullness and Drowsiness, first, the visualization of a brilliant ball of light. But really bright, so bright that the force of the sun penetrates every part of our being.

Secondly, the Buddha suggests brisk walking meditation. Usually, the Chinese-style kinhin we do at the Zen Center fits the prescription. He also suggests that we reflect on death. Our own impermanence and pending death should give us a sense of urgency, driving us on to attain enlightenment while we are still in human form. (Once we pass on, who knows what form we may take?)

Doubt. In our Zen Practice, we often are told that the three requisites are Great Doubt, Great Effort, and Great Faith. And yet, there are times when we wonder what we are doing here and if practice really makes a difference. What does the Buddha say? Dig in! Identify and investigate the nature of doubt, ask questions of our teachers, study the confusing portions of the sutras. Keep going until our doubt is resolved. Often, it is the energy of questioning that keeps us moving ahead.

Finally, restlessness and worry. If we find ourselves restless or worried, simply come back to the breath. A single inhalation into the hara can settle us down and bring a sense of peace. If your body feels as though it's about to climb out of its skin, go outside and do walking meditation for a period. Many times, when the body is in motion, the mind settles. Finally, holding the vision of something calming, like a still pond, can bring us home and back to calmness.

I hope that this Buddha's Toolbox will be helpful. The important point is that we do not have to be the slaves of our mind, our desires, or our random thoughts. We can learn to work effectively with them and have a solid practice. May we all accomplish the Buddha Way together!

Sensei Koan is the Chief Priest and Teacher at the Santa Barbara Zen Center.

Turning Vows Into Action

by Nem Etsugen Bajra



homes.

Almost a year since the earthquakes, rebuilding has been slow and challenging. A trade blockade with India has caused a severe shortage of fuel and materials. A group dissatisfied with the new constitution of Nepal are protesting by blocking the border. And the overwhelmed government of Nepal has been slow to organize rebuilding teams. Reconstruction is still in its planning stages.

In a recent trip to Nepal, my wife Yoko and I, who have been practicing members of ZCLA for eight years, met with the people of Kathmandu and several nearby villages, and listened to their stories.

In the village of Panga, we visited families living in temporary shelters. We were first met by a 73-year-old woman with a wonderful smile, but when she spoke about the earthquake, she became solemn. With most of the men away looking for work, she told us that the women were helping each other care for their community. Another woman spoke of her difficulties in paying rent for her shelter. A third woman spoke about the bureaucracy she faces with receiving government subsidies. Many have lost jobs as weavers and sewers when nearby factories and businesses were shut down by earthquake damage. We, along with 20 women, gathered at the temporary home of a woman named Nirmala. Sitting in a circle, we shared our stories.

One group of six women expressed their wish to start a small business grinding and packaging spices so they could revive their livelihoods. Another group talked about making laundry soap. Yoko and I, along with a friend from Vancouver, agreed to provide funding for the group of six women eager to develop their spice project. Our funds will help them purchase an electric grinder, construct a workshop, and provide training. We felt honored to be a part of their endeavor.

Nepal is a nation of 28 million people living within 57,000 square miles. It is a landlocked country located along the Himalayas, bordered by China and India. With the 250-year-old monarchy abolished, Nepal became a democratic republic in 2008. In April and May of 2015, two massive earthquakes struck Nepal killing 9,000 people and destroying 900,000

In another town called Bungamati, known as the home of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, we visited a dozen families living in temporary shelters. In spite of their hardships, we found them to be cheerfully helping one another within their community. We met with a group of women who told us of their wish to work by making candy, ointments, and soaps. In a meeting with wood carving artisans, we learned about their wish to build a workshop of their own so they would not have to leave their towns or their country in search of jobs.

In Kathmandu, we felt such a strong sense of community. In spite of damaged buildings everywhere, we heard people praying and chanting around the temples. Even when faced with a shortage of petroleum and cooking gas, the people are helping one another and sharing whatever they have. Struck by the stories and ideas we heard in Kathmandu, we decided to fund a compost fertilizer project which would have the potential to create extra income opportunities for the local farmers.

Roshi said: Create not just jobs but quality jobs.

This trip had special significance for my practice. Two years ago, during a meeting of the Mitra group led by Roshi Egyoku, I thought of initiating a small project that would help create jobs. When I shared my wish with Roshi, she advised me to create not just any jobs, but quality jobs. As I contemplated what quality jobs might mean, I heard Roshi Bernie Glassman say in his workshop on “Serving the One,” that one should serve a group of people who can’t get help from the government or state agencies.

Through my engagement in those few projects in Nepal, my vague desire to create jobs has evolved into a vow to serve an underserved community by creating “quality jobs.” I am grateful to the ZCLA sangha members for helping me to develop my vow. My deep wishes are that the spice and compost fertilizer projects in Nepal will be successful. With guidance from ZCLA members, I look forward to helping to create and serve similar projects in the future.

Etsugen is a longtime practitioner at ZCLA and a member of the Zen Peacemaker Order.

It's Your Choice

by Burt Wetanson

This interview with Daniel “Nagy” Buckley was conducted in the living room of his home a few weeks before his last surgery. Nagy looked forward to giving a Dharma talk about how he used his Buddhist practice to navigate his health challenges. Since it was not possible for Nagy to come to the Zen Center, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen and Burt Wetanson went to Nagy and interviewed him. The following is a short excerpt from their afternoon together.

WW: Nagy, you just turned 80 and over the years, and more recently, you’ve had a number of health challenges, including several surgeries on your knee.

NAGY: I’ve been laid up since January, almost a year. In fact, I spent a birthday in the hospital. When I had the original surgery of knee replacement, I got an infection which really laid me out. I recently had the fifth surgery on my knee. Now I’m recuperating and starting rehab.

WW: You’ve said that your Buddhist practice has really helped you cope with the pain and keep your spirits up. That your Zen training really works for you. How do you explain that?

NAGY: The thing that I’ve learned in following the Dharma is a statement I read once which said, “Pain we’ll always have, but suffering is optional.” That’s always been my way of handling this. It really struck home – I have a choice. I could sit here and moan and groan. The thing is that it’s my choice if I suffer.

Maybe it’s hard to explain, but we all have choices. My mother was a nurse for over 30 years, and the one thing she taught me is how to be a good patient, and I’ll tell you, that has really paid off. Let’s say a nurse or somebody comes in and has to do something. What I try to do is project this upbeat, okay feeling, and that in turn affects the other person. So it works out well for both of us. It’s not such a big ordeal.

Another important thing – Roshi Egyoku and I were talking about this – it’s so important, and you do not see much of it. How often do we laugh, not only at the situation but at ourselves? Don’t take yourself too seriously. You’ve got to bring some humor into it because that’s such an impor-

tant part of being alive. You’re not the only one who’s ever had something like what I have. I’m glad I had this experience because it shows that Buddhism really seems to work.

You know, when you study the life of the Buddha, here’s this man, he’s eighty-some years old, and he’s dying. It’s his Parinirvana. And there’s a big crowd of people around him and they say, “Oh, what are we going to do? The Master’s dying!” And what is he doing? He’s teaching. He’s telling people, “I’ve found something that works for me, and I try to teach it to you. But if it doesn’t work for you, find something that does. Be a lamp unto yourself!” He’s saying, “Hey, you’ve got the power. Do it!” There’s that wonderful saying – Do not desire what the teachers have. Seek what they sought. That saying really breaks it down for you. You have the final decision about what you want to follow.

WW: But something happens – physical or psychological pain – and you feel trapped. Do you personally consciously make a decision to take your pain another way, or is it your natural way?

NAGY: That’s a good question. I think it’s half and half. I sometimes say – well, it’s your choice, buddy. I could be so miserable with this and wondering will I ever be able to get back to normal. But what good does

it do me to worry about something that I can’t really do anything about right now. Just learn to live in the moment and kind of enjoy what you’ve got. Some people don’t do that. They like to hang on.

WW: People who cling to pain or suffering are kind of saying to life, “You’re awful!”

NAGY: That’s right. Absolutely. It vindicates them or it justifies them. It’s an excuse to condemn whatever has come to them. Which makes them maybe even more miserable.

WW: So you choose not to suffer?

NAGY: That’s right. You have to deal with the reality of what it is. Again, the whole thing of choice. What would happen if you hang on to it? What good is it doing you? As opposed to trying to let go of it.

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IT'S YOUR CHOICE (Continued from page 7)

You know, I do prison work in California and one of my favorite practice stories is – we used to give each woman an ordinary Q-tip. One day, a new woman showed up from another prison and oh, she was tough. She could have whipped everybody physically. She was angry one time and she said later, “I don’t know what this place is about. I was so mad at this woman, I could’ve killed her! I didn’t care what they did to me. But all of a sudden, I was surrounded by women waving Q-tips at me.” So what was the meaning of giving all the women cue-tips? What does it stand for? Quit Taking It Personally!

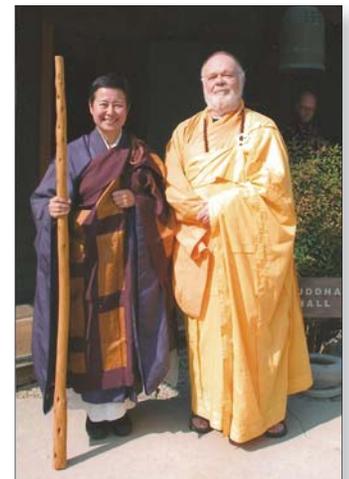
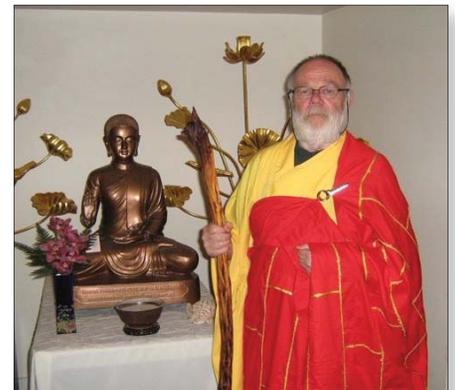
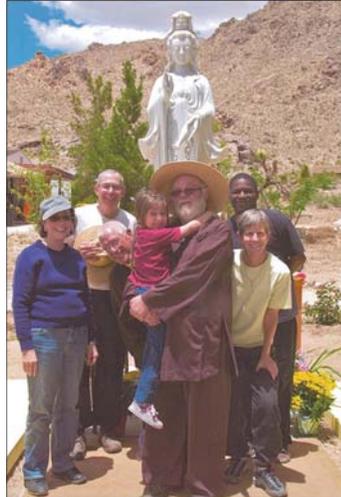
WW: How do you relate that to letting go in the present moment?

NAGY: How do I relate it to practice? There’s a wonderful story. A guy lives next door to a monastery, and every morning, he takes his dog out for a walk. And he’d look in the gate of the monastery and he’d say, “What do they do in there?” Then one day, one of the monks is outside working near the gate, so he goes up to the monk and says, “Excuse me, sir, I don’t mean to bother you. Could I ask you a question?”

And the monk says, “Oh yeah, we see you every morning walking your dog. What’s your question?” And the man says, “What do you do in there?” And the monk starts laughing, and he says, “We fall down, we get up, we fall down, we get up....” That’s what it is. A lot of people don’t want to get back up. Or they may not have whatever helps you to get up. A toolbox. Maybe they don’t even know you can get back up.

Getting back to my situation, I think you could tell from my tone that I feel pretty upbeat, happy, and whatever happens, happens. Sometimes I think, this Buddhism seems to work – if you use it.

Daniel Buckley first found a spiritual home in Buddhism in 1983 when he took a course at the International Meditation Center in Los Angeles. In 1985, he was ordained by Ven. Thich An Giao of the Desert Zen Center, a combined Vietnamese Zen and Soto lineage, receiving the name Nagacitta Karuna. Inspired by Roshi Bernie Glassman and Thich Nhat Hanh, Nagy began the Strawberry Dragon Zendo, which became ZCLA’s vehicle for prison volunteer chaplaincy. He embodied a tireless bodhisattva spirit. “Sensei Nagy was both a generous friend and supporter of the Zen Center and a beloved personal friend,” said Roshi Egyoku. “I am so grateful for his many generous contributions to our community, which included the Sujata Fund, the Prison Fund, and the painting of the Buddha Hall.”



Jukai at ZCLA and the Westchester Zen Circle

After a period of preparation and study, the Baby Buddhas shown below have received the Zen Bodhisattva precepts and were given their Dharma names, the Buddha's robe (rakusu), and the Blood Lineage Chart of the Buddha Ancestors in the ceremony of Jukai. The Dharma name expresses their unique Buddhist identity and Jukai expresses the student's public commitment to the Awakened Life of the Buddha.



ZCLA. Left: Nina Dharma-Light Clark, Laos JoKo Chuman, John KyoGen Rosania, Roshi Egyoku (Preceptor), Kamran EnGan Pourmorady, Tim TaiKan Zamora, and Jane Radiant-Joy Chen.



Westchester Zen Circle. Left: Pat Suigen Way, Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley (Preceptor), and Lane Kyojin Igoudin.

Letting Go Frame by Frame

by Reeb Kaizen Venners



How do I approach film and video editing from the perspective of practice? In editing, we stir together visuals, narration, dialogue, and music. I work with feature films, which are about two hours long. There's an infinite amount of possible combinations with the various ingredients of a movie, which we edit into trailers or

TV commercials. Why choose that dialogue line over any other? In that shot, is the character expressing the emotion you need? How does that music make you feel? It's useful to see clearly in order to make decisions.

There are a lot of voices involved. The client has to be heard clearly. My producers have criticisms (Oh, how they can sting! How do I react?). Sometimes I get a bit attached to my work. There are many opportunities to work on letting go. Sometimes, we will go through 30 versions and then start over from scratch.

It's important to not obscure your honest response to the material. But after seeing something 1,000 times, of course, it starts to lose its freshness. Then you take a break...maybe sit for a bit. Also, it helps to hold the "big picture" view, rather than letting unimportant distractions become the obsession. Sometimes, we do focus on laborious details, but other situations become fast-moving and you go with the flow. Sadly, I often find myself lost in my self-centered thoughts. "I think I did this perfectly!" My producers often help me return to reality. "That joke isn't funny." Sometimes, I can find a nice, flowing creative mode. Answers seem to arise naturally without so much intellectualization. Surprises emerge.

I start at the beginning, but my mind will start worrying about something downriver. "What am I going to do about that?" Suddenly millions of words and images are clamoring for my attention and it has to be done immediately! I have to bring myself back to where I am in the story, breathe, and ask, "What do I need here?" Solve the problems one at a time, proceed forward, and when I'm really stuck, ask for help.

Kaizen is a longtime practitioner and Resident Steward at ZCLA.

Celebrating a New Preceptor and Dharma Holder

On Saturday, June 18, 2016, Deborah Faith-Mind Thoresen received the empowerment of a Preceptor from Roshi Egyoku Nakao. Sensei Pat Shingetsu Guzy served as her Precept Teacher during the ceremony, which was witnessed by several Zen teachers and preceptors. This empowerment marked the culmination of many long years of practice and study with Roshi, other Zen teachers, and the Sangha. Faith-Mind is now empowered to confer the Zen Bodhisattva Precepts in the ceremony of Jukai.

In addition, Faith-Mind was recognized by Roshi Egyoku as having completed her formal Zen Buddhist Priest training. She can now officiate at weddings, funerals, and all other rites of passage that mark our lives. She will continue to hone and expand the art of liturgy and ceremony.

On Sunday, June 19th, at our Sunday morning Sangha gathering, Roshi Egyoku conferred the title of “Dharma Holder” on Faith-Mind, explaining that she was now an Assistant Teacher at Zen Center and entering into the final years of her formal Zen training with Roshi. She will continue to offer Face-to-Face, give Dharma Talks, lead sesshin and retreats, and offer classes and other forms of instruction under Roshi’s tutelege.

For the Dharma Holder ceremony, Faith-Mind chose Case 20 of the Book of Equanimity: Jizo’s Most Intimate. It was, indeed, an intimate celebration of Faith-Mind’s clarity and no-nonsense compassion, and the Sangha expressed their gratitude and appreciation for her practice. Congratulations to Roshi Egyoku, Faith-Mind, and all of the Sangha, past, present, and future!



From top to bottom: Faith-Mind presents her koan, Roshi Egyoku explains the term Dharma Holder, and the Sangha celebrates.

Dharma Training Fund 2016

Compassion flows Unhindered

“Subbuti, so it is with the merit of a bodhisattva who practices generosity without cherishing any notion of a sign, it is beyond measure like space.”

– From the Diamond Sutra

Dear Bodhisattvas:

We end our Evening Gatha at the Zen Center with Awaken – Take heed – Do not squander your life. We wish this for everyone who passes through our gates – indeed, for everyone in the world. We encourage everyone to practice zazen and to participate fully in our programs to ensure that deep wisdom is realized and compassion flows unhindered. Through your generosity in giving to the Dharma Training Fund, we turn no one away for being financially challenged.

This past year, twenty people directly benefited from the Dharma Training Fund. They were able to practice zazen, maintain their memberships, and participate fully in the Zen Center’s many offerings, including Zazenkais and Sesshins. One such student wrote to us:

“The Dharma Training Fund is a generous offering from the heart of the Zen Center community. Making DTF available helped me to participate at a deeper level in the programs and practice. Accepting such great generosity was not easy for me. But in this practice, realizing that the giver, the gift, and the receiver are one has been the greatest gift of this program. Deep bows to Sangha.”

In addition, all of us benefited from the Dharma Training Fund through its support of all of the Zen Center’s regular offerings and programs. It helps to support Roshi Egyoku’s Vow Classes, our Jukai Class series, and our Priest Training Retreats.

Our need this year is to reach a goal of \$12,000. We are so blessed to have a sangha where compassion flows freely and everyone is encouraged to awaken. Please join us by giving as generously as you can to support the Dharma Training fund.

With deep gratitude,

The Development Circle:
 Darla Myoho Fjeld
 Patti Muso Giggins
 Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen
 Tara Jiho Sterling
 Janet KoRen SagerKnott



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 **Nem Etsugen Bajra** for his presentation on the current situation in Nepal;

To **Roshi Egyoku, Roshi Merle Kodo Boyd, Sensei Gary Koan Janka, and Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley** for leading Buddha’s Birthday Sesshin and to **Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen, Sensei Pat Shingetsu Guzy, and Raul Ensho Berge** for attending;

To **Jim Dojun Hanson** for leading the April Day of Reflection;

To **George Mukei Horner, Pat Suigen Way, Diane True-Joy Fazio, and John Heart-Mirror Trotter** of the Brown Green Circle for the tour of the plants and trees of the Zen Center grounds in honor of Earth Day;

To **Jared Oshin Seide and Camille Ameen** for leading Council Training 2 and their assistant **Arrowyn Ambrose**;

To **Mukei** for Garden Zazen;

To our 2nd Quarter Jikidos: **Patricia Keian Pfof, Z Zeller, Bob Doetsu Ross, Dave Kakuon DeFrank, Frank Genku Martinez, Chris Hackman, and Tim Taikan Zamora**;

To **Diane True-Joy Fazio** for leading May’s Day of Reflection;

To **Kane Buzen Phelps** for the Dharma Chat;

To **Sensei June Ryushin Kaililani Tanoue** and for the Compassion of the Hula Workshop;

To **Tina Jitsujo Gauthier** for leading the June Zazenkai;

To **Carol Flowing Mountain Schmitt** for leading the June Day of Reflection;

To **Kakuon** for the June Dharma Chat;

To **Roshi Egyoku** for the Living With Vow classes;

To our Tenzos for this quarter: **Nan Reishin Merritt, Maya Rock, Charles Duran, Jane Radiant-Joy Chen, DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, Reeb Kaizen Venners, Hilda Bolden, Jitsujo**;

To all those who prepared a snack for Day of Reflection: **Gerri Bryan, Doetsu, Nikki Starrett, Maya Rock, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf**;

To **Bill Earth-Mirror Cocoran and Darla Myoho Fjeld** for their Dharma Talks;

To those who provided cookies for after our Thursday night Dharma Talks: **Tom Yudo Burger, Reishin, and Katherine Senshin Griffith**;

To **Roshi Egyoku, Sensei Pat Shingetsu Guzy, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Jitsujo, Shogen, and Mukei** for their roles and help in the Preceptor Transmission Ceremony.

To **Officer Lucy and Officer Joseph** for meeting with the Resident Members about the exciting and diverse Koreatown neighborhood.

To our 2nd Quarter Security people: **Doetsu, Geri, Kaizen, Jitsujo, Kyogen, Mukei, Burt Wetanson, Gessho, Jiho, Ty Jotai Webb, and Yudo**;

To our Parking Bodhisattvas: **Jessica Oetsu Page, Dylan Neal, and Joko**;

To our Intro to Zazen instructors: **Heart-Mirror, Gojitsu, Rosa Ando Martinez, Diane Enju Katz, Etsugen, Alan Taigen Turton, and Mukei**;

To all those who made Sensei Nagy’s funeral possible: **Roshi Egyoku, Venerable Thich An Giao, Sensei Gary Koan Janka, Gail Buckley, Shogen, Gessho, Tom Dharma-Joy Reichert, John Kyogen Rosania, Laos Joko Chuman, Jitsujo, Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown, Reishin, Earth-Mirror, Taikan, Conrad Butsugen Romo, Heart-Mirror, Kaizen, Geri Bryan, Doetsu, Yudo, Jotai, Tara Jiho Sterling, Ellen Reigen Ledley, Myoho, Senshin, Dylan Neal, Mukei, Jonathan Keigen Levy, Faith-Mind, Mary Rios, and Genku**;

To all those who made Myokai’s funeral possible: **Roshi Egyoku, Gojitsu Snodgrass, Dokai, Myoho, Jitsujo, Shogen, Kaizen, Enduring-Vow, Kyogen, Senshin, Mukei, Earth-Mirror, Faith-Mind, Kaigen, Mary Rios, Geri Bryan, Ando, Doetsu, Dylan Neal, Joko, Robert Diaz, Reigen, Jiho, and Nina Dharma-Light Clark**.

Celebrating Jukai at the Zen Center.



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 Egyoku Nakao

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Sangha Rites of Passage

Welcome New Members

Lisa Margolis
Joe McGowan
Denise Jishin Rosemont
Pamela Smith
Julie Suhr

Resident Leave-Taking

Cassie Riger

Deaths

Daniel Jerome Buckley, Jr. (Thich Minh Nhat - "Nagy")
Kei Myokai Snodgrass

2016 Sesshins

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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