

Zen Heart Sangha

Issue 21

Fall 2012 Newsletter

Special Upcoming Events

Guest Speakers:

Nov. 19: Rev. Jill Kaplan
(ZHS)

Special Events:

ZHS Sangha Meeting

Nov. 13, Jan 21

Dharma School

Nov. 14

Jukai (Lay Ordination)

**Ceremony: Stephen &
Harumi Boreman**

Nov. 17, 11:00 am

Rohatsu "Commuter"

Retreat

Dec. 3-8

Dec. 7-8: two-day sesshin
from 5:50am-5:00pm

Last Monday (celebration)

Dec. 10

Winter Break

(no meetings)

Dec. 11-Jan. 19

2013 Meetings Resume

Jan. 12, Dharma school

Jan. 19, Saturday sangha

Jan. 28, Monday sangha

Gassho

Gassho is the Zen way of saying 'thank you' by putting the hands together and making a small bow. We would like to thank the entire sangha for their generosity at Segaki, donating food and toiletries for the homeless.

Others Are Not Myself: Stewardship and the Bodhisattva Way

When Zen Heart Sangha was established, we used many of the forms of our root sangha, Kannon Do. We never questioned why the word *steward* had been chosen for leadership positions or by whom, but its specific meaning does have a relationship to practice that is helpful to understand.

According to the dictionary, a *steward* is one entrusted with the management of another's estate; *entrustment* is being assigned the care or duty of safekeeping of something not one's own. In other words, *stewardship* is being trusted to watch over something for others with the same level of responsibility and care one would use with one's own belongings or family. This is a perfect definition of a Bodhisattva—one who takes care of others and vows to help them awaken before his or her own final liberation

There is a story about Zen Master Dogen during his travels to China that offers a wonderful example of stewardship: *"During my stay at Mt. Tiantong, a priest named Yong...held the position of tenzo. One day after the noon meal when I was walking...he was in front of the Buddha Hall drying some mushrooms in the sun. He had a bamboo stick in his hand and no hat on his head. The sun was very hot, scorching the pavement. It looked very painful; his backbone was bent like a bow and his eyebrows were as white as a crane. I went up to the tenzo and asked, "How long have you been a monk?" "Sixty-eight years," he replied. "Why don't you let a helper do it?" "Others are not myself." "Reverend Sir, you follow regulations exactly, but as the sun is so hot why do you work so hard as this?" "Until when should I wait?" So I stopped talking."* (Dogen's *Tenzo Kyokun* or *Instructions for the Cook*)

The phrases "Others are not myself" and "Until when should I wait?" perfectly express the Bodhisattva mind of the true steward. Each life is absolute: no one can live it for us, no one can feel it for us, and only we can do the work directly in front of us right now. And yet how hard we try to avoid or distract ourselves from that work! When we finally own the pain, the joy, and the responsibilities of life—and stop waiting for someone else to do the work that is ours to do—we experience true freedom. Letting go of comparisons, it is not about what others are doing, but what we know *we* should be doing. When we also deeply understand that "others are myself" (the truth of emptiness), we see that there is no "me" or "you," only us. Stewardship is the practice of the Bodhisattva.

In gassho, Misha Shungen