

MOUNTAINS TALKING

FALL 2016

Baizhang and the Wild Duck

Ken Tetsuzan Morgareidge

BAIZHANG AND THE WILD DUCK

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From a talk delivered during a zazenkai, Sept. 18, 2016.

A fundamental teaching of the Buddha is impermanence. Things, phenomena, dhar-mas (small “d”) arise and pass away according to causes and conditions. Here today, gone tomorrow. Now you see it, now you don’t. Everything is up the conjuror’s sleeve. Our

lives are just appearance and disappearance. Can we look at all things like that – appreciate them in the moment and then let them go, realizing that they have no independent existence?

Today we will look at case 53 in the Biyanlu, The Blue Cliff Record (Hekiganroku in Japanese): Baizhang and the Wild Duck.

Once when Mazu was out walking with his disciple Baizhang, he saw a wild duck fly past. Mazu said, “What is it?”

Baizhang replied, “It is a wild duck.”

Mazu said, “Where has it gone?”

Baizhang said, “It has flown away.”

Mazu then twisted Baizhang’s nose. Baizhang cried out in pain. Mazu said, “Has it indeed flown away?”

Mazu (709 – 788) was a dharma grandson of the sixth Chinese ancestor, Huineng. He and Dharma brother Shih-t’ou were the seminal figures of 8th century Chinese Chan. Here is what Heinrich Dumoulin writes in his history of Zen Buddhism :

In the center of the new Zen movement stand two masters Ma-tsu and Shih-t’ou, both belonging to the third generation after Hui-neng. The Zen chronicles describe the new surge of energy in moving terms: “West of the river the great Solitary One (Ma-tsu) is the master. South of the lake Stone Head (Shih-t’ou) is the master. People gather there in crowds. Whoever has not seen the two great masters is regarded as an ignoramus.”

Generations later, monks still made pilgrimages to the provinces of Chiang-hsi (west of the river) and Hunan (south of the lake). Maybe they hoped to get something via osmosis.

Mazu himself was one of those characters who filled any room he walked into. It was said that he walked like a bull and had the gaze of a tiger. His rough and ready style (as seen in the present case) of hitting, shoving and shouting became the model for many later teachers. And many of his paradoxical statements live on as koans in the Rinzai tradition.

Baizhang (720–814) was Mazu’s most eminent disciple. He is credited with formulating the rules of monastic practice, and also for the development of the self-sufficient Chan (Zen) monasteries that were not dependent on government largess. He emphasized the value of samu, manual labor, as a central practice for the Zen monk. His most famous saying is, “A day without work is a day without eating.” He was the teacher of such worthies as Huangbo and Guishan.

Once when Mazu was out walking with his disciple Baizhang, he saw a wild duck fly past. Mazu said, “What is it?”

Baizhang replied, “It is a wild duck.”

Mazu asks a seemingly innocent question and Baizhang gives a seemingly innocent answer. So, do we all know what will happen here? Aha! The naïve student and the brilliant master. Baizhang is about to get nailed. But the commentator Yuanwu pulls a switch; he writes:

If you observe this with the correct eye, unexpectedly it’s Pai Chang who has the correct basis, whereas Great Master Ma is creating waves where there is no wind. If all of you want to be teachers of Buddhas and Patriarchs, then study Pai Chang. If you want to be unable to save even yourselves, then study the Great Master Ma.

What is that? It’s a wild duck. What is that? It’s a crow perched in a tree. What is that? It’s a car passing by, it’s a child playing, it’s a homeless man at the intersection. What is this? It’s a lectern. Why get “Zenny” about

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COLUMBINE, WE MEET AGAIN

We've purchased a property! Well, nearly.

After a great deal of sangha discussion and consideration, the ZCD's board of directors has voted to proceed with the purchase of a 12,000-square-foot property at 1856 South Columbine Street, not far from the University of Denver campus. (Old-timers may note with some amusement our return to Columbine Street, where the ZCD's original temple was founded in 1974.) We have been under contract for some time now, and the official closing date is October 13.

With this purchase, we may now move forward in planning the construction of a new Zen temple tailored to our needs. It must be said at the outset that we are only in the preliminary phases of this process, and many questions of cost and feasibility remain. It must also

be said that there remains a possibility – a small one, perhaps, but a possibility – that we may yet encounter insuperable problems that prevent us from building as planned. However, given the strong Denver real estate market, the board believes the purchase presents limited financial risk to the Center in the event we decide to sell rather than build.

Disclaimer aside, the Columbine property offers many advantages for our sangha. At 12,000 square feet it is fairly sizable, allowing a building footprint of about 4,300 square feet with plenty of space remaining for a garden and up to nine or ten parking spaces off the alley. The building footprint should allow us to fulfill our base requirements on a wheelchair-accessible first level, including a 1,500-square-foot zendo and ancillary spaces

such as dokusan rooms, bathrooms, kitchen, foyer and dining room.

Auxiliary spaces needed for sesshin, such as dorms and showers, would require the addition of a second floor. While we will certainly investigate these costs, it is possible we will not be able to afford the additional square footage with the funds on hand, and the board is firmly committed to avoiding taking on any debt. This being the case, the ability to hold overnight retreats may have to wait on a second phase of construction at some point in the future.

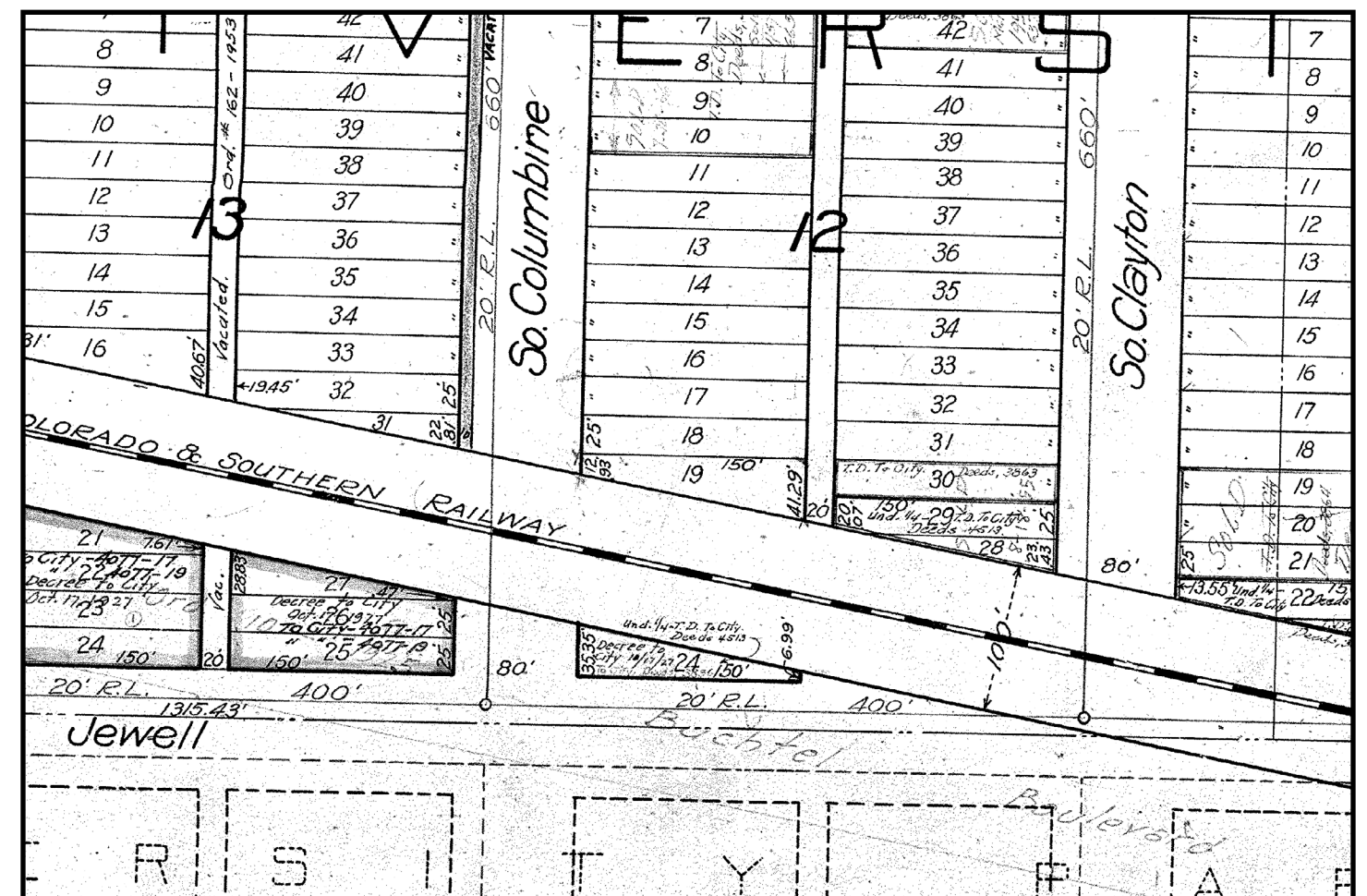
Even so, we are confident we can build a beautiful temple exceptionally well suited to our daily practice needs, while continuing to hold sesshin off-site as needed. The Columbine property is very accessible via most modes of transportation, including by car (via I-25), light rail, bus and bicycle. As our current practice spaces (the Rocky Mountain Miracle Center and Mayu Sanctuary) are both located nearby, we enter the purchase with some assurance that most members will not be too inconvenienced by the new location.

Already placed in a quiet neighborhood, the property is bounded on its south side by Prairie Park (pictured left), a narrow stretch of open grassland that rings with cicadas in the summer and fall. Perhaps a year or two from now we may accompany them with the ringing of densho and keisu.

As Ken Sensei wrote in the board's announcement of the sale:

"It occurred to me in our discussions that one of the most important things a sangha can do is build a temple – a sacred space in which to engage in the most important work any of us can do in our lives. After over a year as nomads, we are embarking on the next phase of our transition to a new home. It is a huge project and a very exciting one. We hope that all who wish to will get involved."

As a last note, if you would like to drive by to see the property, feel free; however, please note that the current resident will continue to live there under a rental agreement for some months to come, so please do not disturb her.



The property occupies lots 17, 18 and 19 on the survey.



Diamond Sangha Teachers' Circle

This was the fourth DSTC meeting that I have had the privilege to attend. As you can imagine, it is rare to be able to share the ins and outs of Zen practice, training and teaching with such wise and wonderful friends in the dharma.

Our meeting was rich and full of laughter, insight, warmth and sharing. Our agenda included daily koan study, translation topics starting with the Four Vows (more to come on that), history of the Diamond Sangha with wonderful stories of Robert Aitken, a bit about our strengths and weaknesses, and a few business topics.

We began each morning with zazen together in their beautiful zendo listening to the dancing calls of the thrush and rooster. (Their zendo, by the way, is around 900 square feet, a very nice size and food for thought as we embark on our journey.) We had the opportunity to share meals with sangha members each day. These meetings are not possible without sangha and we are tremendously grateful for their hard work, organization, delicious meals and steady presence.

One evening was a sitting with the whole sangha, followed by a panel of five teachers addressing various topics with questions and answers. Karin Sensei was one of the panelists. The topics were timely and brought forth by the Honolulu Sangha and included suggestions for strengthening lay practice, how is the current mindfulness trend impacting Zen and how we deal with the self that needs bolstering while simultaneously forgetting the self. Apparently there were a few first-time attendees to the Honolulu Diamond Sangha sitting that evening who wondered if this happens every Wednesday night. Good timing on their part, and too bad it doesn't!

The week ended with a lovely celebration at Clark and Kathy Ratliff's home that overlooks Honolulu and the ocean. Clark was one of the original group leaders at the Denver Zen Center on Columbine in the 1970s. There was a bit of entertainment at the celebration that included our own Sara Bauer, who has quite a voice, as many of you know. She was joined in harmony and on guitar by Sarah Athanas, who is her good friend and the DSTC assistant. Sara B. sends her good wishes and a big "Aloha!" to the sangha. We are happy to be home, feeling inspired and enriched. Aloha!

— Peggy Metta Sheehan



a beautiful thing

It is a beautiful thing
to wake in the dark chill
and go out into it
where a crescent moon
and two stars appear both ahead
and in the rear view mirror
before you even leave home
to sit on the floor with it
kneecap to kneecap
inhaling the dark clarinet
of your body
only the breath of the tires
the train's long choo-choo
searching in the rubble of itself
your pounding throat, a bratty knee
a molecule of coffee still clinging
to the root of your tongue
your eyelids lower now
and in front of you wrapped shoulders
of a robe folded with her empty hands
that her, that you, that teacher

with the one word lesson

- Jacqueline St. Joan



Upcoming: Zazenkai and Rohatsu Sesshin

A zazenkai at Santosha Yoga studio in Wheat Ridge will be held on Sunday, October 23. This zazenkai takes the place of the weekend sesshin with zazenkai at Benet Hill Monastery, which was cancelled. Karin Ryuku Sensei will lead this all-day sitting and will offer teisho and dokusan. Since this is a local sitting, partial attendance is an option. There will be no food prep, so bring your own lunch. Please register on Signupgenius.com by Friday, October 21. Merilee Schultheiss is the coordinator.

Reflecting the full calendar of events in November, there will be no zazenkai this month.

Our Rohatsu sesshin commemorating the Buddha's enlightenment will occur at the Shambhala Mountain Center December 3-10. Rohatsu at Shambhala in 2015 was remarkable and we will be there again this year. The deadline for applications was September 23, and the sesshin is full. However, if you are interested in placing your name on a backup list in case of cancellations, please contact the office or Laura Menzer (ldmenzer@gmail.com).

Next year we are hoping to pull off one zazenkai each month. Mark your calendars for the third Sundays of January, February, and March for all-day sittings, with partial attendance options, at Santosha Yoga Studio in Wheat Ridge.

— George Mathews



Zazenkai at Santosha Yoga.



Upcoming: Kido at Willow Farm

On Saturday, October 29, the ZCD will co-sponsor a kido ("energy way" chanting retreat) at Willow Farm Contemplative Center, in collaboration with Willow Farm and the Kansas Zen Center.

The kido will be led by Stan Lombardo and Judy Roitman, both teachers in the Korean Kwan Um tradition of Zen, visiting from the Kansas Zen Center. It promises to be a fascinating and revitalizing day of chanting practice.

Zen Master Seung Sahn said, "Chanting meditation means keeping a not-moving mind and perceiving the sound of your own voice. Perceiving your voice means perceiving your true self or true nature. Then you and the sound are never separate, which means that you and the whole universe are never separate."

The kido will run from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Willow Farm, 11898 North 75th Street in Longmont. The cost is \$30 with a vegetarian lunch included, or \$25 if you wish to bring your own lunch. If you would like to sign up, or for more information, email info@willowfarm.org or call 303-772-5338.

Left, from top: Judy Roitman (Zen Master Bon Hae) and Stan Lombardo (Zen Master Hae Kwang).



Sangha Picnic

On Sunday, August 21, many sangha members met on the north side of Washington Park for our annual sangha picnic. The food was delicious, the weather was fair, and the company was delightful. Darren Christensen brought along a bubble maker, and the kids had a good time chasing the bubbles along the grass.

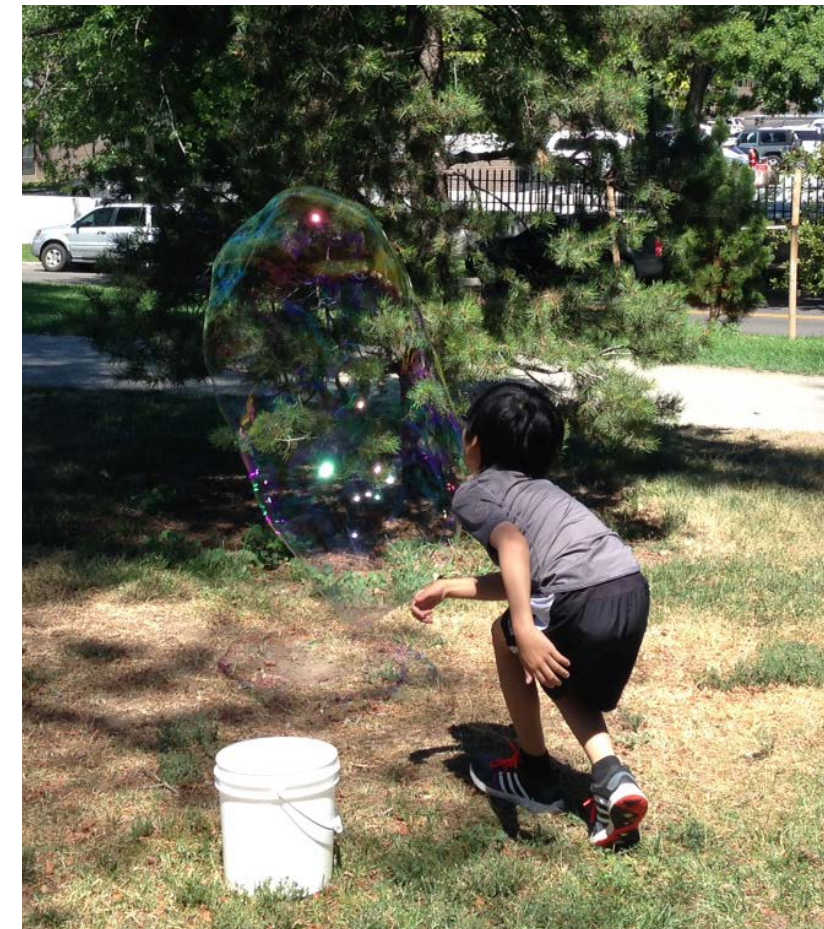




Photo by Ken Tetsuzan Morgareidge

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it, as Robert Aitken might say?

It's a wild duck, then it flies away. The sun rises and sets. Rain falls, the earth gets wet. It really is that simple. Or rather I should say that it can be that simple. But it depends on what is behind that "It has flown away." Is there an image? Is there an idea, a concept, something that we conceive of as a "real" or "existent" duck that we can attach to?

Mazu said, "Where has it gone?"

Baizhang said, "It has flown away."

The duck was there, then it's gone. Where's the problem? There isn't any, if there is no attachment to phenomena, which is to say no creation of phenomena. Coming and going is important only if we attach to the label, only if we create something of substance to cling to. Concepts like "duck," "here," "away." If a bird were to fly by the window of this zendo, and I asked you, "What is it?" how would you respond? Where are the ducks,

where have they gone?

Impermanence is really just another term for cause and effect. If something were really permanent, then it would be without cause. The notion of cause and effect only means anything if things arise and pass away. So our lives, we ourselves, are really nothing but the process of arising and passing away, cause and effect. It is our practice on and off the mat to observe all this: the constant arising and passing away of everything.

But acceptance of this fact, this observation, is only part of the story. Yes, I think we can all acknowledge, intellectually at least, that nothing is permanent, not even the physical universe. But if we stop there, it can lead to a kind of nihilistic despair. Five hundred years from now we'll all be dead, so what does anything matter?

But cause and effect is not predestination. There is always a choice, and that choice exists in this moment. It is in this moment of sitting, walking, standing, lying down or changing a tire that we have the choice: to at-

tend to the moment or not. All other notions of freedom or liberation are illusion. In this moment there is neither time nor space, no existence or nonexistence. No duck, no Baizhang, no Mazu, no you, no me.

So what brings us to this moment?

Mazu then twisted Baizhang's nose. Baizhang cried out in pain. Mazu said, "Has it indeed flown away?"

Well, that's one way to do it.

Mazu twists Baizhang's nose. Ouch! What happens to coming and going when we get a sudden shock to the system?

Case 28 in the *Wu-menguan* reads in part:

Te-shan went to Lung-t'an and questioned him sincerely far into the night. It grew late and Lung-t'an said, "You had better retire." Te-shan made his bows and lifted the blinds to withdraw, but was met by darkness. Turning back he said, "It is dark outside."

Lung-t'an lit a candle and handed it to him. As Te-shan was about to take it, Lung-t'an blew it out. At this Te-shan had sudden realization.

Suddenly everything goes dark. What happens to coming and going?

When Yunmen went to see Muzhou, Muzhou yelled, "Who is it?" Yunmen said, "It's me, Yunmen." Muzhou opened the door, grabbed Yunmen by the robe and said, "Speak! Speak!" Yunmen hesitated. Muzhou said, "Useless stuff!" and pushed him out. But Yunmen still had one foot in the door, and Muzhou slammed it, breaking Yunmen's foot. Yunmen fell back with a cry of pain and came to awakening.

If a bowling ball dropped on your foot, where is coming and going in that moment?

The duck has flown away. Is there a duck that does not fly away? Are they the same or are they different? If we realize that which does not arise and does not pass away, then there is no loss. But this no-arising/no-passing-away is not about conventional notions of memory. It is not dependent on anything to do with conscious-

ness or any of the five skandhas.

With a twist Mazu destroys everything about the duck except that which is indestructible, never born, never dying. And where is that to be found if not in this moment?

If you observe the surface of the ocean you see waves.

They are constantly changing, rising, falling, catching the sunlight, unpredictable. They have a limited life in the world of time and space. But just under the surface is the deep, silent darkness, the timeless. Which is the real ocean? Can you have only the surface and not the depths, or vice versa? Waves rise and

fall, but the water, the essence, remains regardless. The duck appears and flies away; that's the surface. Deep in our zazen, no arising, no passing away. Buddha nature, the nature that is the nature of all things, is beyond time and space.

Here in zazen, we work to abandon the surface and plumb the depths for a little while. At the end of the day we resurface and go back into our busy lives, but with a greater awareness of that darkness a greater intimacy with it. And we are less apt to get caught up in the impermanent surface nature of things.

Now, this story has a sequel, related by Master Yuanwu in his commentary:

When Ma Tsu went up to the hall the next day, as soon as the congregation had assembled, Pai Chang came forward and rolled up the bowing mat. Ma Tsu immediately left his seat. After he had returned to his abbot's quarters, he asked Pai Chang, "I had just gone up to the hall and had not yet preached; why did you roll up the mat right away?" Chang said, "Yesterday I had my nose twisted by you, Teacher, and it hurt." Tsu said, "Where were you keeping your mind yesterday?" Chang said, "Today the nose no longer hurts." Tsu said, "You have profound knowledge of Today's affair." Chang then bowed and returned to the attendants' quarters, crying. One of his fellow attendants asked, "Why are you crying?" Chang said, "Go and ask our Master." The attendant then went to ask Ma Tsu. Tsu said, "Go ask Pai Chang." When the attendant returned to their quarters to ask Pai Chang, Chang laughed loudly. The attendant said,

If you are indeed the duck in the deepest sense, you are everywhere and every-when.

“You were just crying – now why are you laughing?” Chang said, “I was crying before, now I’m laughing.”

Baizhang cries out in pain, and then he doesn’t. Where did the pain go? Has it really gone? One day he cries, then he laughs. Where did the crying go? Where did the laughter come from? If we see arising and passing away from the standpoint of a constant unchanging self, that is delusion. If we see the self as arising and passing away each moment along with all phenomena, as all phenomena, that is enlightenment.

“All changes in this empty world seem real because of ignorance.” If this moment is all there is, how can there be arising and passing away? And if there is no arising and no passing away, where is the duck? Where is the laughing and crying? Where are you in this moment? Words, concepts and ideas, even flights of fancy, are fine as long as we are grounded in the reality of this moment.

Is the duck anything other than our true nature? If you are indeed the duck in the deepest sense, you are everywhere and every-when. How can there be flying away? Where is the duck in this moment? Where are your grandparents in this moment? Where is the family dog? Be careful here.

It is a duck; it has flown away.

Yesterday my nose hurt; today it doesn’t.

Before I cried; now I laugh.

At kinhin I walk; now I sit.

I breathe in; I breathe out.

Yuanwu is right, that’s all there is. Just practice like that.

Together with all beings, we realize the Way. ☸



Dusting Buddhas

As the first position in Clouds and Water, the role of altar attendant (anja) has long been a doorway to deepening practice while serving and supporting the sangha. The altar attendant is responsible for setting up the altar at sittings, lighting candles and taking care of the altar items.

In a recent discussion with teachers and Clouds and Water members, we decided to open up the opportunity to learn about and take the role of altar attendant to all members of the sangha. This is a lovely practice opportunity and offers members a way to contribute to the sittings more actively.

Francine Campone, our current Clouds and Water coordinator, will hold an introductory session after an upcoming sitting. If you are interested in attending, contact her at Francine@reinventinglife.net or by phone at 303-862-7710.

– Francine Campone

Comings and Goings

Several people performed the Entering the Gate ceremony recently:

- The Vo, who works as a software engineer and enjoys hiking and the outdoors with his wife, son and daughter. The has been very active already in the sangha, bringing his delicious biryani to several Sunday sittings.
- Fred and Lois Becker, like The, have dived right in, and we’ve seen them often at sittings and events. Fred works as a truck driver, and enjoys handyman work and acrylic painting. Lois is retired and enjoys Spanish translation, reading, drawing and crocheting. Together they have two adult children.

- We also welcome back yoga teacher Mark Roddy.

Welcome all, and we look forward to sitting with you and getting to know you better!

Gassho Corner

We offer special thanks to our relocation search committee, including Clark Dollard, Greg Fellman, Mike Griffiths, David Lee, Laura Menzer, Ken Tetsuzan Sensei, Jeff Sorkin, Jackie St. Joan and others, whose ongoing efforts this last year have culminated in the purchase of our new property on Columbine Street. We also thank Karin Ryuku Sensei, who has been instrumental in overseeing the many details of the sale, including the initial feasibility study.

Calendar Highlights

Sunday, Oct. 23 - Zazenkaï at Santosha Yoga

Saturday, Oct. 29 - Kido (chanting retreat) at Willow Farm

Saturday, Oct. 5 - Introductory Seminar at Rocky Mountain Miracle Center

Sunday, Nov. 13 - Sangha meeting

Sunday, Nov. 27 - Taking Refuge ceremony

Dec. 3 - 10 - Rohatsu sesshin at Shambhala Mountain Center

Dec. 18 - Holiday party

Farewell, Blue Mountain

Recently our much-loved Becky Wethington announced that she will be retiring this year and is considering moving from Denver; consequently, we will also be retiring the Blue Mountain Zendo, which she built and owns, as the location of our summer sesshin.

For ten years now we have gathered each summer at Blue Mountain, and along with the stunning mountain scenery and beautiful straw-bale zendo, we have enjoyed Becky’s seemingly limitless hospitality. She has also been the tenzo at every one of these sesshin, and attendees will have fond memories of her BBQ tofu and other dishes.

In the Marketplace

In the Marketplace allows ZCD members to reach fellow sangha members with business, for-sale or want ads. If you would like to place an ad in our next issue, email office@zencenterofdenver.org.

Synergy Photographics: Commercial Photography, Graphic and Web Site Design, Full Color Printed Products from Postcards to Posters. Low minimum quantities available at very competitive rates. Contact Jeff Black at 303-757-1866, synergyphotographics@gmail.com.

Jason Polk, LCSW, LAC. Helping couples and individuals get along better. Couple therapy & individual therapy. See Paramitacounseling.com or email jason@paramitacounseling.com.

Photography by Geoff Keeton: Family pictures and portraits, picture editing, or if you wanted to combine a picture and Zen saying or koan together I can do that as well. Contact gkeeft@gmail.com or 720-227-2997.

Steel stringed Yamaha FG (Folk Guitar) 403S. Played by high school student one year and hardly at all by me! Holds intonation really well. Great deal on a nice instrument. No case. Bill Hamaker at wahamaker@gmail.com.

Beautiful Takamine Acoustic Guitar with lots of accessories: \$395.00. Jeff Black at synergyphotographics@gmail.com.

What Remains by Jacqueline St. Joan, from Turkey Buzzard Press: “*What Remains*, with its dramatic, gorgeous cover enfolded a tour de force of memory, openness, linguistic dexterity, human pain and inextinguishable love, is a triumph of heightened perception over brutal reality, of human spirit over human degradation.” Email jackiestjoan@earthlink.net or see <http://jacquelinestjoan.com>.



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