

Zen Center

OF SAN DIEGO

ZCSD Newsletter

November-December 2025



Celebrating Our Longtime Home

Barring a sudden, magnanimous act of philanthropy, ZCSD will be moving from Felspar Street sometime next year. With the sangha taking the lead, willing volunteers are already scouting to find our next practice location. When a Zen Center has had only one home since its founding, it's easy for the center and the setting to be fused in our minds; they permeate one another. But ZCSD will continue even after the Felspar era has drawn to a close. As we clarify and embrace the distinction—practicing letting go and not knowing—we are deeply grateful to those whose vision, resources and goodwill have allowed Felspar to be a sanctuary for practice since the early 1980s.

Participating members were invited to write a few

2025 Sesshin Dates

December 27–31, 2025

<https://www.zencentersandiego.org/schedule/sesshin.php>

Wednesday

Programming

<https://www.zencentersandiego.org/>

The Sexual Misconduct
Complaint Procedure and
Code of Ethical Conduct
for Teachers/Practice

words of appreciation. Here's how they responded:

The first time I arrived at 2047 Felspar Street, I inexplicably felt the loving, nurturing embrace of Home. Each time I've returned in the 7 years since, my first glimpse of the courtyard has been accompanied by Home's embrace warming me up from the inside out. My deepest thanks to everyone who made that feeling possible.

Having participated in a couple of sesshins overseas, I was looking for a place to practice in San Diego. I found ZCSD and showed up one evening. The minute I sat, I felt I was arriving home. It was not being in the wonderful zendo, which was new to me. It was the practice itself—sitting, bells, walking—and going out and meeting welcoming teachers and sangha.

What affects me most in the zendo is the starkness and openness of the meditation space. It's a combination of feeling supported by the presence of other meditators and being held in the emptiness. I feel a stillness in the air which resonates and allows for an inner stillness. It is this stillness that brings me back to the physical space of the zendo time and again.

When I'm working in the zendo garden by myself on a sunny morning, I feel I'm in paradise. I feel one with everything and perfectly content. Change is inevitable, but I'll miss this place, nonetheless.

2047 Felspar is a part of me by this point and will never be "the past." Such a haven—created and sustained solely by volunteer efforts and the patience to listen for the unadorned present.

The roof that never leaked, the floor that

Leaders can be found on the ZCSD website under "Policies."

<http://www.zencentersan diego.org/Policies/>

"No complaints whatsoever."

never gave way, the reliable sound of traffic from Felspar, Garnet, and beyond, the jacaranda high above and deep below. Thank you, dear friend: I bow to you.

Appreciating and caring for ZCSD has been deeply meaningful for me. Just to arrive on a Saturday morning and grab a broom, dustpan, and bucket and get to work is such a privilege. There is a simple joy that arises when I sweep leaves and focus only on the task at hand—the satisfaction of making sure that each leaf is swept up and the sidewalk and patio and walkways are neat and tidy. The Felspar property has been a true home and a wonderful place to practice and learn. I will miss it so much!

Joko didn't want to live in a communal setting, so she found two houses on a lot in Pacific Beach. She lived in the back house with Elizabeth and worked with the tiny, fledgling sangha in the front house, where I lived off and on from 1983 to 1989. It was a sweet, small group: about 16 committed local students, with numerous others coming from ZCLA for our bi-monthly sesshins.

Don't forget the house next door where Joko lived later on and watched tennis. I believe that was her baby grand piano on the ground floor. And, of course, don't forget "Jack the Cat," who is buried in the rear garden between the two houses. One sesshin I was mortally embarrassed to have walked "through the screen door" in the dimly lit back "sitting room"—and insisted on getting a new one during sesshin!

My dear old Zen Center
Thank you for teaching me
How to listen
I'll miss

The mad percussionist who lives in the wall heater
and wakes from hibernation in November
Whoever it is playing the windchimes
The crows, the creaky floorboards and the planes
It always smells good in the backyard
The purple jacaranda buds
The lemons
And the ants who guard the lemon tree
and bit me during sesshin
Thank you
I forgive you
I have no complaints

Some of us remember when the picnic table and
wooden benches in the yard were made by a
sangha member, and the years of discussion
about whether and how often they should be
brushed with polyurethane. That debate is long
over, and the furniture is deeply weathered now,
gray, and a bit rickety. In a word, venerable.

One thing I find heartbreakng when an old house
makes way for a new one is losing
the established greenery. At the zendo, this
includes the sentinel junipers at the front door
and the camellias in the garden. In winter—and
this will only be my second winter—the red
camellia blossoms drop like blood on the hot
grass. Or like kisses. They glitter against their
evergreen leaves.

And then, again, the wind chime reminds me
of time passing, and I return from the Land of the
Eternal Beauty of this World, take off my shoes,
bow, and sit.

The jacaranda tree has been a dear friend for
many decades. I remember in my very first
sesshin at ZCSD having the unusual experience
of peeling the inside of post-sunburned skin from
my ears while taking in the then slender tree. As

the years have passed, I have almost always enjoyed a brief rest on the grass under the jacaranda during the afternoon break. These days, when I look up into the lacy canopy of shelter and shade, I feel a rush of love and gratitude for my old friend.

The Zen Center has been an important part of my life for more than 40 years: the people, the practice, the teachers, the teaching, the land, and the buildings. As we continue, going ahead, regardless of the form we may take, its importance and my appreciation will continue.

2047 Felspar had always been there. The front house was the Zen Center. A refuge from the world. A place to sit and practice. The house provided comfort and security—goods we almost did not know we had. And now we are going to lose it. What had been a rock of permanence becomes a teacher of the truth of impermanence. A final gift from a place we all held dear.

I ... came to believe there is a fourth Treasure as well, the entity of the Zen Center itself.

—*Wendy Egyoku Nakao, abbot emeritus of ZCLA*