

# Walking Mountains

“The green mountains are always walking” — *Daokai*

*Dear Sangha and Friends,*

On June 17, our dear, dear Dharma brother, Jorge Quiros, passed from this world to the next. This newsletter is a tribute to him paid by his Dharma brothers and sisters from Costa Rica, Toronto, and Vermont.

One of my most memorable moments with Jorge was a few years ago here in Vermont. It was summer and I had taken him and Gerardo Vargas shopping. When we were finished, we stopped at Healthy Living to get some coffee, bread, cheese, and other goodies that we took to my house. We laid out our small feast on the patio table in my back yard and for the next hour or two were completely entertained by Jorge’s jokes and stories. We laughed and laughed and laughed – the kind of laughter that brings tears of joy to your eyes. What I loved most about his sense of humor was his tremendous ability to lovingly laugh at himself. I remember at one point thinking to myself: This is what life is all about – some bread and cheese and coffee, and friendship.

— *Joan White*

## Jorge Antonio Seijin Quiros Carvajal

**December 27, 1946 — June 17, 2016**



Jorge was one of seven Ticos who became my first students in 1987. He was at every sesshin I conducted, attended every training program, came to every Sangha outing, and was always, always there. As much as anyone else, he was the face and personality of the Casa Zen. I could say so much more about my dear student, but instead I’ll let his Dharma siblings tell his heart-mind. They loved him as did I. Hasta luego, Jorge.

— *Roshi Sunyana Graef*



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Casa Zen Sangha Tributes to Jorge	1
Vermont Zen Center Sangha Tributes	6
Calendar	9
Term Student Program	9
Water Baby Ceremony	10
Workday	10
Rakusu Requests	11
Annual Yard Sale	11
Metta Course	12

*The Vermont Zen Center’s mission is to create a peaceful and inviting environment to support those who seek wisdom, compassion, joy, and equanimity within a Buddhist context. The two-fold practice of the Center is to overcome the causes of suffering through spiritual development and to alleviate the world’s suffering through outreach activities and the cultivation of a caring attitude to the earth.*



## Casa Zen Sangha Tributes

### This Special Being

by **Rose Marie Ruiz**

It is impossible to summarize the deep value of Jorge Quirós' presence in our Sangha.

All of us who arrived after his start at the Casa Zen carry in our hearts his warm smile and timely words of welcome, and – without his saying too much – his willingness to help with one's process of becoming part of the Sangha and beginning spiritual practice.

His pleasant personality, wittiness, and sense of humor helped in a fundamental way to ease the difficulties that we all face when trying to incorporate and walk a serious and rigorous spiritual path. An affectionate conversation, a question, a timely joke, a spot-on remark by him, followed by a smile or laughter that would elicit complicity and lighten-up the situation – all this turned into a tool that would help ground us in our practice.

Maybe, while we were fortunate to share our lives with him, we did not treasure or understand clearly this bodhisattva's work with members new and old in the Casa Zen. Sometimes, initially, we were silently annoyed or

a bit uncomfortable with his approach until its mission was fulfilled in whole or in part. Now we value it in its true dimension and richness and thank him for his permanent and full presence in the life of the Sangha and with each one of us.

Another important aspect of his constant companionship with us in the Sangha was his subtle example in humility and generosity. I do not remember ever asking him for help and receiving no as a response. Likewise, observing his willingness to do the least wanted jobs, even sometimes per his request, and the dedication with which he performed them. Very frequently, when he came early to a sitting, he would ask me for the bathroom that needed the most work or was the



dirtiest. And he would put himself into cleaning it and leave it immaculate. He was an expert in detecting and cleaning difficult-to-find spaces, and teaching us when we asked for instruction about the best way to clean those spaces so that the bathrooms came out perfectly.

These, and many other kind acts of this special being who sat with us for so many years, we now remember and value. Thank you Jorge, for your moment-to-moment contributions to the Sangha and how you renewed and strengthened us even with your parting: on the seventh day of a sesshin, in the zendo, in the hands of our teacher, and surrounded by the vibrant chants of our Sangha. —

### Always Present

by **Margoth Vargas**

The life of Jorge was a great story in and of itself because he always found a way to make each moment, event, and activity more fun, more special, or easier to overcome. He was always present in all the activities of the Casa Zen and willing to collaborate whether he was feeling well or not. In recent years, Jorge suffered from physical pain caused by past accidents, but in spite of that, he said that he was unable to say no if he was needed.

We joined Casa Zen almost at the same time in 1978 or 1979 and Jorge was the first resident we had. Jorge was a member of the Board of Directors for more than 25 years. And throughout that time he held the roles of Casa Zen's administrator, treasurer, and fiscal adviser. This last role he took very seriously, following the legal requirements closely and never neglecting whatever needed to be done.

Jorge was the most experienced mokugyo player at the Casa Zen. I can remember whenever somebody tried to give him advice about how to play it, he



would always say that he would only follow Roshi's instructions!

For many years, he was in charge of formal sittings and, as far as I know, he never missed a sesshin. He participated in most full-day sittings, and most scheduled activities of Casa Zen. He was in charge of teisho recordings, something he did with commitment and devotion.

Although sometimes we had differences of opinion, we were always able to communicate and address those differences because we understood that we were on the same path and working to become better people. He worked hard to achieve the goals he set for himself. Among the responsibilities we shared was kitchen work, which he did alternating with other chores at Casa Zen. During the last three years, he became a key element of the kitchen crew, attentive, willing, and a team player. This is the Jorge I knew in the last few years.

Jorge's specialties were guacamole and a beautiful vegetable soup called *Olla*

*de Carne Vegetariana*. He wanted Roshi to have a chance to taste vegetables native to Costa Rica such as *tiquisque*, *ñampi*, *malanga*, and *tacos*. He used all these vegetables to make the special soup that we served at the beginning of the training programs. What are we going to do now? Roshi loved that soup and Jorge loved that she loved it!

He always told me that I had a dog's nose because of my sense of smell. He trusted me so much that he would ask me to smell his clothes and even his bedroom in case there was something not right. This was such an intimate gesture, opening himself to me with his shortcomings in order to do something about it.

We were able to develop a really nice relationship based on trust that lasted until the day he died. The pilgrimage in March was also an opportunity to share great moments with him, and I think he did this not only with me, but with all the pilgrims from Costa Rica, Toronto, and Vermont.

During one of our visits to the Vermont Zen Center, we learned to play the Dharma drum from Nowa, so we spent many hours practicing so we wouldn't forget Nowa's instructions.

About a year ago, he showed up with a recording of Nowa's Dharma drum. He asked me to save it in a digital form so it would be preserved for future players. This is one example of how concerned he was to keep the teachings of the Dharma alive. The same can be said about the way he was committed to promptly give people their teisho recordings so the Dharma would continue to be spread!

The stories about Jorge are endless, as many as 35 plus years of being a member at Casa Zen. He was a fundamental part of our house, always attentive and happy to receive new members and guide them during this first period.

In the last years he became a tireless hiker. He joined many hiking groups

and visited very remote places in the country. He loved everything about it—the landscape, the food, the walking, and the people. He had an innate capacity to socialize with anybody, knowing what to talk about at any moment. Language was never an obstacle for him. I so admired the way he always found a way to communicate, whether he was in places that spoke English, French, Chinese, or Japanese!

Jorge left us a great legacy, remarkable teachings, loving friendships, and an example of great determination. He also leaves a huge hole because he was a wondrous being. As he used to remind us every time we used that word: "No, dear friend, wondrous is the robe of liberation!" How wise! I can only give thanks for knowing Jorge in this life—a very special friend, invaluable member, senior mokugyo player at the Casa Zen and a being full of life and joy. May you find your path in the Dharma again dear Jorge! We are going to miss you!—

## He Brought Warmth to my Heart

by Alejandra Aguilar

I was outside the country when Jorge died. When I woke up at the hotel I had two text messages on my phone. One said: "Urgently call Casa Zen," and the other said: "Jorge died, call Casa Zen." I have not cried enough. I did not see him lifeless and I could not say good-bye. My heart is sad for not having seen him one last time. My dear Jorge.

I am writing so I can tell Jorge he was a light in my life. Seeing him always made me happy because we laughed together and talked about silly things. Seeing his happy face saying, "*Alita linda*," brought warmth to my heart. Above all, whenever he remembered I liked sweet lemons he would bring some to me as a present.

I lived with Jorge many years as residents in Casa Zen. We knew each other very well and we had many quarrels, sometime serious ones. He was a little bit messy and I was not very tolerant and lacked humility. Nevertheless, no matter how serious the quarrel could be and how angry I could be, Jorge always would forget whatever I had said. His kindness would always conquer and I would end up smiling and my resentment would vanish away.

Years went by. Jorge knew my lack of tolerance and how hard I can be at times. He knew everything about me and he always was kind to me unconditionally. Sometimes I would talk to him about the behavior of someone that I could not understand and he would help me see the situation through the light of compassion. Jorge's humility, very special way of being, and above all his unconditional love, helped me become more humble and tolerant.

I am going to miss you so much my dear Jorgito. Thank you for always being there if I needed anything. Thank you for your compassionate words. Thank you for your profound love for life, for your special way of enjoying life. Thank you for your love of the Dharma, for being an example. Thank you for loving me unconditionally.

Now that you are no longer with us, I am going to try to enjoy life and be less of a fundamentalist, and to embrace the Dharma with the same humility and determination you did. —

## A Sincere Heart

by Stella Viaud



It is as if a new page opened in my life that brought me to Costa Rica, to a sesshin in Casa Zen only four years ago. Jorge offered me his friendship with all of his sincere heart since the day I arrived.

I had the joy of traveling to Sri Lanka in 2013 along with Jorge. We were both delegates of our countries (Costa Rica and El Salvador) for the Second Festival of Buddhist Culture. Even if we were in different hotels, we had lunch together and met other people from around the world. Jorge always had nice words and a special ability to make friends and be loved. He frequently said, "This is the trip of my life, Estelita."

After arriving in Colombo we went for a walk to see the city. Then we visited the Temple of Gangaramaya, where there were many relics. The museum guide said there was a hair from Buddha in a cup made of crystal and gold. We made offerings with beautiful lotus flowers.

At the end of the trip, we went on a tour to see temples in caves and high rocks. We wanted to get to Sirigiya (a rock with some palace ruins), but the guide advised us to visit first the Golden Temple, and climb to the caves of Dambulla.

On the road Jorge said, "I don't want to die without riding on an elephant!" As it happened, we found a place to do that. Jorgito told me, "Take pictures of me Estelita, so people will believe me, ha ha ha ha." I could not follow him on foot so I could not take a photo when he was on top of the elephant. He was really excited and told me how the elephant's big ears were like fans on his legs, and how he gave a plantain to the elephant. I think that for Jorge it was one of his dreams come true. Afterwards, we went to a place where there were hundreds of elephants in their natural habitat, and we were able to walk among them. He was delighted!

Jorge thought that I took care of him and that I was helping him with his English, but the truth is that I felt protected by my friend. I would have not been able to see those historical places so far away on my own.

When the June sesshin came and he saw me, the first thing he did was show me the pictures of the latest newsletter, where there were some photos of his pilgrimage to Japan. I told him, "Jorgito,

another trip of a lifetime, right?" "Yes, and it was very beautiful," he replied.

Since I came to Casa Zen he was that friend who would talk to me, sweetly and lovingly, and whose absence will leave an enormous void. Thank you Jorge, for opening your heart and being a true friend. —

## Kyosaku

by Maria Julia Westphal

The funniest memory I have with Jorge was something that happened during our first sesshin. I was 19 years old and Roshi Kapleau was in Costa Rica. Everything was very impressive during those seven days: the bells, the teishos, the sounds of the kyosaku... Back then they would use the kyosaku to give a pair of hits on the shoulders to stimulate the energy, but I got hit softer and less often than other people. Among those other people was Jorge. Therefore, at the end of the sesshin we heard him comment that he seriously considered putting a very thick sock on each shoulder under his robe to soften the blow! —

## An Example of Effort

by Gerardo Selva

Casa Zen of Costa Rica will never be the same without Jorge, a partner in laughter, and an accomplice in every kind of practical joke. We shared a brief time as residents in Casa Zen. During that time I always saw a person committed to greeting and helping any newcomer with an interest in the Dharma.

For me he was always Jorgito or Quirosito. In Spanish "ito" means little or small and expresses love and care for the person, and it is used a lot in Costa Rica. But one day he approached me and said, "I don't want you to call me Jorgito or Quirosito anymore, from now on I want you to call me plain Jorge or plain Quirós." I didn't ask why he didn't want me to call him Jorgito. I only replied, "Okay." Margoth Vargas was with us and she asked, "Can I call you Jorgito?" And he answered, "Yes, you can." I respected his request up to the last moment of his life.

Jorge was an inspiration, an example of

effort and hard work even in the most difficult conditions of pain and fatigue up to the moment of his death. He inspired me to continue to practice the Dharma with peace, equanimity, and understanding. —

## My Dear George

by Katia Rodriquez

Everyone remembers his smile. After he passed away all the people you can imagine asked for him. They sent emails, texts, messages or called from everywhere, including Costa Rica, Central America, the US, Canada, France, Germany, and Spain. Some of them knew Jorge for forty years, some of them had only met him once, perhaps many years ago, but time and place did not matter. It seemed that he had somehow created strong bonds out of the blue. And there was no magic—only that he made everyone feel welcome, at home whenever they were lonely, far away, or just needed to talk. Jorgito was fully present for them.

Jorge was not only a member of the Casa Zen for around thirty five years, but he also welcomed all new members during these years, helping create our current Sangha. Many people stayed or practiced with us because of him. Since he had an incredibly extraordinary memory and used to read a lot, he remembered all detailed information worthy of talking about with any person. But most important of all, he remembered all the people, their faces, names, addresses, and lives. He would connect directly to any person. He could talk with anyone about anything. Jorge had no barriers. His mind, heart, and arms were open to greet people from any place, age, creed, status, nationality, sex or language. He met people, smiled, started a conversation and made friends with everyone. He was very good using words to comfort people in bad times, maybe finding a kind comment, giving some good advice or just throwing a joke that would relieve anyone from a stressful life or an unbearable moment.

Jorge, alias Keerosawa, Master Koo, Giorgio, John, Kiros, George and more, also gave the Sangha his time and his life. He participated in all activities. He had a simple attitude, humble and available, with free hands to contribute to any job. He was also the best guide that visitors could ever meet, either in Costa Rica, Shelburne, or Burlington. He knew many places because he loved to walk around just for pleasure.

Over so many years in Casa Zen he was administrator, treasurer, trash cleaner, driver, receptionist, accountant, attorney, gardener, cook, ambassador, tour guide, resident chief, compost man, and more. He worked in all the areas and with all committees: the kitchen, newsletter, board of directors, administration, library, ceremonies, garden, residents, workshops, trips, cine-paellas (movie nights with paella for dinner), study groups, maintenance, and more. He was an early pioneer of our now well-established soup tradition, by inviting everyone to his weekly *olla de verduras* (vegetable pot) when he lived in Casa Zen.

Even when most people were on vacation at the beach, Jorge was still there, smiling and cleaning the house by himself, without any special purpose. And whenever there was an emergency, it was Jorge who saved the day. It is quite surprising that most of what he did was really some unofficial job for which no credit was ever taken, and the reason was that he had fun doing it. It was just his life.

Jorge's life was a great example of effort, and still is an inspiration of hard work, happiness, generosity,

loving kindness, and compassion. An unbelievably real life of practice, a joyful life. —

## Jorge in Vermont

by Roberto Camacho

One of the most fulfilling things for Jorge in his later years, and that made a big difference in his practice, were his visits to the Vermont Zen Center, invited by Roshi. I remember that after his last visit to the VZC, I gave him a compliment on something he was wearing and he said, "It was a gift from someone in Vermont. Everyone loves me there." —

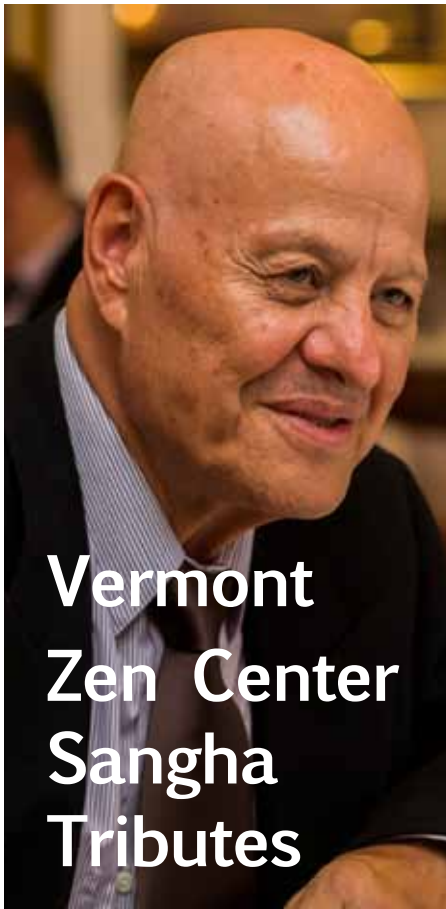
## Wondrous

by Dora Gamboa

What a wonderful friendship you had with each one of us, with your forever bright smile, even in adversity, and with your sense of humor. You would crack a joke and wonderfully everything changed. If you were reading this now you would say, "No, wonderful is the robe of liberation," and you would smile knowingly, as every time you heard that word used as an adjective you would correct us immediately!

Jorge, your joke foreshadowed your departure, as you left chanting, "Wondrous is the robe of liberation." You left in the company of the Sangha, of our teacher, of the sesshin's joriki, and of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Your departure was luminous and wonderful. Have a good journey. Thank you friend, we love you. —





# Vermont Zen Center Sangha Tributes

## Joyful Heart

by Kelly Story

Jorge was such a joyful member of our Triple Sangha and a person who really embodied the first and tenth precepts. In particular, I will always remember Jorge as a Zen brother who cherished all life and had a deep love of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. This was evident in his many years of living at the Casa Zen, his many visits to the Vermont Zen Center, his commitment to daily practice and regular sesshin attendance, and most of all his delight in spending time with Sangha brothers and sisters.

When I first met Jorge in Vermont many years ago, he didn't speak a lot of English and I was definitely not fluent in Spanish, but somehow we did our best to carry on conversations. One time when he was visiting the Vermont Zen Center in winter, he was excitedly trying to communicate something that I was having trouble understanding. He asked Ramiro to translate and let me know

“ I see Hotei in the garden—round, joyful being, and happy smile—and there is Jorge, one and the same. It brings a smile. Gratitude for being you, Jorge, full of joy! ”

— Susan Grimes

that he was really hoping Glenn and I would take him sledding. We bundled Jorge up and went out to a very steep hill behind the Zen Center with several other Sangha members. Jorge laughed and laughed that day. He raced down the hill at top speed and looked like a laughing Jizo bundled up in layers of winter jackets. For years, whenever I saw Jorge after that he would remind me about the time we went sledding. Jorge would also always ask about my children and with happiness and love shower compliments on them saying, *Lindo! Lindo niños!*

When I learned about Jorge's death I was sad to realize I wouldn't get to see his joyful face and experience his pure heart again in this life. But I was also happy thinking how lucky he was to die in the way he did, chanting the verse of the kesa, surrounded by his beloved Sangha, at a sesshin in his beloved Casa Zen. His beautiful smiling face immediately came to mind and for the whole week until his memorial service, while we chanted for him together at the Vermont Zen Center and privately I could feel his pure, joyful heart, that shined through his sparkling eyes and that he shared so freely with all of us.

We are all so lucky to have known Jorge and to share in this wonderful Triple Sangha. Jorge, may you continue to be surrounded by Buddha, Dharma, Sangha! —

## Quiet Presence

by Marcela Pino

My dear Dharma brother Jorge and I met before I came to Zen practice. I remember that when I told him that I was interested in this

philosophy (that is where I started!), he was encouraging but not pushy. He said something along the lines of, "It would be nice to have you there." Then, after I joined the Casa Zen, he became one of the comforting faces that I could turn to if I was having a hard time.

Jorgito was a great story teller and he would keep you entertained for long periods of time if you let him. He had a wonderful and kind sense of humor; the person people wanted to sit beside in sickness or health— in health because you would laugh a lot, in sickness because the hardship would be less hard. He also had the great virtue of seeing the best in people. He would spontaneously say, "That person is such a bodhisattva," even if he had just met them!

But, looking back, what I am going to miss the most is his quiet and loyal presence. After all these years living far from Costa Rica, I never felt distance between us. I knew in my heart that he would always be there for me, supporting me and helping me in whatever I needed, without judgment or hesitation and without asking anything in return. I will truly miss this generous, fun, curious, and loving brother, who I had the great honor to call my friend. —

## Seijin, Compassionate Strength

by Dave Tisdell

I first met Jorge in Costa Rica in 1989. From the moment I met him, I felt a deep kinship. Even though he spoke little English and I spoke little Spanish, we had almost no trouble communicating. Jorge was a Dharma

brother and we sat many sesshin together. I always looked forward to seeing Jorge.

When foreigners came to the Casa Zen in Costa Rica, Jorge loved to show them around the many beautiful parts of the country. He took me to the Pacific coast and to Monteverde as well as other places. I referred to him as the *bodhisattva de viaje* (bodhisattva of travel). One time we played ping pong. The main rule was that he had to keep score in English and I had to keep score in Spanish. We laughed a lot.

Jorge dearly loved all creatures. When we were in Monteverde, a bright, multicolored insect landed on his hand. Rather than brushing it away, he examined it closely and beckoned me over to see it. Monteverde is filled with humming birds. He was transfixed by them. When we were walking, we heard a monkey in a distance. He imitated the monkey sound and looked at me and said, "Monkey!" He had a big smile on his face.

Once I had children, it became difficult for me to travel to Costa Rica. Fortunately, Jorge was able to come to Vermont periodically. I got to return some of the travel favors by taking him hiking up to Sterling Pond, one of my favorite spots in Vermont.

Jorge's Buddhist name was compassionate strength. He truly embodied kindness and compassion. He was a shining example of these qualities. The light of the world is a little dimmer with his passing, but I trust his example has inspired others to be like him which will rekindle the flame.

Rest in peace, my brother, you will be sorely missed. —

## The Kindest Host

by Greg Heath

It's been almost ten years since Jorge and I traded language lessons as we wandered the streets of Santo Domingo. Ruth and I had come to celebrate our 30th anniversary and vacationed high up in the mountains

in the Monteverde region. I was able to leave my work at home for only one week and so left Ruth to stay another week working on a cooperative farm.

En route to the San Jose Airport, I stayed overnight at the Casa Zen and found myself in the company of Jorge who was, simply put, the kindest host. We relaxed in quiet cafes and enjoyed visiting various points of interest. Of course, it wasn't the places that mattered. Mostly my thoughts return to his easy curiosity about all manner of things, and about me in particular. I will always remember and cherish Jorge's broad smile, the generous smile which he shared so freely and naturally. —

## Kannon

by Josh Kelman

I've known Jorge for many years mainly from sesshin and his extended visits. Our spoken languages did not mesh well but there were always small things to talk about, and how could one not be drawn to his big smile. During the Japan pilgrimage this past March we visited a temple with a particularly striking life size figure of Kannon. Taking in the figure was a very moving experience. Leaving the temple my eyes met Jorge's. His face showed his own moving experience. We hugged. There is no spoken language for that. —

## Fast Friend

by Marielle LeBlanc

After the June 2002 sesshin in Costa Rica, I stayed a few extra days at Casa Zen and had the opportunity to hang out with Jorge. He took me to town to show me the



sights and we spent the day together as tourists.

He asked me to help him with his English and we spent some time learning new phrases. We became fast friends and I will always remember how joyful and enthusiastic he was. —

## Love and Gratitude

by Dana Graef

I met Jorge when I was eight years old, the first time I went to Costa Rica, so I have known him almost all my life. I remember that he always had a huge smile; he was always friendly and joking and full of love and light. His voice was special as if he was always on the verge of laughter, but for a good reason—not because he was making fun of someone, but because he was full of joy and happiness that he exuded in all directions—through his eyes, smile, and voice.

Jorge loved to travel and get to know new places, and he always expressed his gratitude for the opportunities he had. He went to Vermont several times, and spent Thanksgiving with our family. In Costa Rica, we also went to Arenal Volcano twice. He liked to remember that the first time we went, twenty-five years ago, he was completely lost, but didn't want to say anything. The last time, he drove my husband and me to our honeymoon, and that time we didn't get lost. Jorge was a Jizo.

In the years I have spent in Costa Rica, he was always very generous with his time and his presence. He helped me over the years with many concrete things—for example, he gave me suggestions for navigating the buses, and helped me with my Spanish translations. He also loved food, which is something we shared. Many times, when I was starting to cook dinner at the Casa Zen, he would appear, saying, “¡Qué rico huele!” (“It smells so good!”), and there he would sit, patiently, with a hopeful expression ... and so, we shared many dinners at the Casa Zen.

He lived for many years in the Casa Zen, and he gave life and heart to that house. For that reason, I know that Jorge will always be part of the Sangha and the Casa Zen, and when you are walking through the hallways and you feel like laughing, there he is.

Jorge, thank you for everything; we will miss you, and we send you much love and gratitude for everything you have done in this life. —

## Fun and Attention

by Dharman Rice

Jorge Quiros was a strong and thoroughly compassionate person. His sudden death was a shock

and filled me with sadness. Jorge always seemed happy and cheerful. Whenever there was work to be done, he was always ready to help. He never complained about anything. He just dealt resolutely and cheerfully with whatever came up.

Jorge loved to have fun. I had occasion to share some very interesting time with him following a sesshin in Costa Rica. It was long enough ago that I don't remember exactly when it was. In any case, I was scheduled to fly back to the States the day after sesshin, which ended fairly early on the final day.

I would have been content to relax at the Casa Zen, but Katia and Jorge proposed taking me to Braulio Carrillo National Park, a tropical rainforest about 25 miles from San José. They could easily have left me to my own devices the rest of that day; but they knew there were things in the rainforest I would love seeing, and they were determined that I see them.

At the rainforest, Jorge in particular seemed to relish pointing out the creatures everywhere: the many birds as we traveled in an aerial tram through the canopy of the forest, the huge colonies of leaf cutter ants on the forest floor, a sloth hanging in a tree, a colony of tiny honey-bee like insects in a nest

hanging from a branch. Jorge seemed tuned in to all these creatures, and he wanted to be sure that I saw them all.

Paying attention, as Jorge certainly was, is an act of love. I was so happy to have him as a guide in the rainforest. I will never forget it. That day was memorable for me also, because I realized then that Jorge didn't have to work much at paying attention, at being compassionate. That was just who he was. —

## Friendship

by Ramiro Barrantes

Jorge was a teacher in friendship and compassion to many of us, yet it came so naturally to him that sometimes we might not have given it the appreciation it deserved. One of the nicest memories I have of him was back in around 2001 when we were roommates at the VZC. Two neighbors, one of them close to my age, were taking a walk in the gardens. Jorge, noticing them from inside the Zen Center, ran outside and approached them saying, “I don't speak English!” (One of Jorge's skills was to communicate and be friendly with anyone, regardless of the language.) They started a conversation and he said something along the lines of, “My young roommate Ramiro needs friends and he loves to dance, I will have him call you.” Meredith then went on to become one of my dearest friends in Vermont, and it is thanks to her that I know this story.

Jorge was a compassionate bridge who more than once helped me connect with others here in Vermont. This was also very important in Casa Zen, where he used his awesome sense of humor and friendly, non-threatening personality to help newcomers and guests feel welcome. This was a job he did extremely well. Many shared stories about how Jorge made them laugh and feel relaxed when they first went to Casa Zen. Thank you Jorge! —





# August 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vermont 7-Day Sesshin 7/30-8/6 <b>ZEN CENTER CLOSED DURING SESSHIN</b>						
7 <b>ZEN CENTER CLOSED</b>	8 AM ZAZEN MON-FRI	9 PM ZAZEN Chanting	10	11 PM ZAZEN	12	13 ANNUAL YARD & BAKE SALE
14 Teisho	15 AM ZAZEN MON-FRI	16 PM ZAZEN	17	18 PM ZAZEN Workshop Prep	19	20 WORKSHOP  Ceremony Workday 2 p.m.
21 WATER BABY CEREMONY	22 AM ZAZEN MON-FRI	23 PM ZAZEN	24	25 PM ZAZEN Chanting	26 CR 5-Day Sesshin	27 Indian Cooking Class: Lunch
28 Taped Teisho	29 AM ZAZEN MON-FRI	30 PM ZAZEN FAMINE RELIEF CEREMONY	31 Metta Course Begins			
Costa Rica 5-Day Sesshin 8/26-8/31						

## 2016 Term Student Program III Begins Tuesday, September 13

The first of the three Term Student Programs will begin on Tuesday, **September 13**, and end on **Thursday, November 17**. If you want to strengthen your Zen training, invigorate your sitting, and learn how to

incorporate practice into your daily life, consider joining this program. You will find that it is a shortcut to deeper concentration and greater understanding of Zen. As well, you will discover that you are capable of working far more intensely than

you had ever imagined. Whether you are a new student or a long-time practitioner, there is a Term Student Program that will fit your needs. This program is an unsurpassed way to strengthen your commitment to the Dharma and deepen your practice.

For information about the program as well as Term Student Forms for all three programs, please go to [www.vermontzen.org/termstudent.html](http://www.vermontzen.org/termstudent.html)

# Water Baby Ceremony

## Remembering Lost Children



**O**n Sunday, August 21, the Zen Center will hold a Water Baby Ceremony after a one hour sitting with a short talk.

The Water Baby Ceremony is a Buddhist service for adults who have lost an infant or young child through still birth or early death, have lost a fetus through miscarriage or abortion, or have lost a child of any age, in any way. It is also appropriate for people who wish to remember a child who has passed, even if it is not their own, to attend this ceremony.

Jizo Bodhisattva presides over the Water Baby Ceremony. He is considered to be the protector of women, children, travelers, the helpless, and the needy. In Japan, there are thousands of Water Baby shrines. Often many figures are placed together in a garden or on a mountainside.

For this ceremony we will gather in the dining room after the sitting. The ceremony itself takes

place in the Jizo garden, weather permitting. Everyone is asked to bring some scraps of fabric (red, with or without pattern, is the traditional color, but you may bring other bright colors) as well as scissors, needle, and thread. The Center will provide these items for those who don't have them. In silence, working together, each of us will sew a small, simple garment such as an apron, cape, bib, or hat which will be placed on one of the many Jizo figures at the Center. The garment represents the being we are remembering, and thus commemorates a death and rebirth, a passing from one form of life to another. Those who wish may also write the name of the child or a verse on a piece of paper which will be placed between the rocks in the Jizo garden.

While we work in silence, anyone may speak about his or her experience of loss. When we have finished sewing, we will carry the figures to the Jizo garden where we will chant the Prajna Paramita, the Kannon Sutra, and the Sutra of Jizo Bodhisattva, followed by a special Eko to return the merit of the ceremony to the children. Each person or couple will then offer incense and put their garments on a figure.

Participants are welcome to stay after the ceremony to talk or just sit quietly. This ceremony is not limited to members of our Center. However, everyone who comes should participate. While many people who attend do so to mourn for a personal loss, it is also appropriate to come if you wish to mourn for children not individually known to you – for example, children who have died from starvation or through violence. Such disasters touch us all, even if we have never met those who died. This is the only ceremony at the Center where we ask that you not bring young children. *Om! Ka Ka Kabi Sam Ma E Sowa Ka* —

### Workday for the Water Baby Ceremony

Please help set up the dining room for the Water Baby Ceremony during a workday on **Saturday, August 20**. The work period begins at 2 p.m., after the workshop, and will last an hour or two depending on the number of people who lend a hand.

# Rakusu Request Form



**Please Return to the Vermont Zen Center by August 25**

**Requirements:** If you have been a member of the Vermont, Toronto, or Casa Zen Sangha for a minimum of three years, have become a formal student of Roshi Graef or Henderson through participating in a New Student Ceremony, and have previously taken Jukai, you may request a rakusu and a Buddhist name. Rakus are presented only during Fall Jukai, which this year is on **Sunday, November 13—Great Jukai.**

**Please Note:** To receive your rakusu from Roshi, you must attend the November Jukai in Vermont (Vermont and Toronto students of Roshi) or the Jukai in Costa Rica (Casa Zen members). **Do Not** request a rakusu if you cannot attend Jukai.

**Payment:** Please complete this form and mail it to the Center with a \$175 U.S. check or money order payable to the Vermont Zen Center. If you are paying in cash, place it in an envelope at the Center with your name and this form. If you use PayPal the cost of the rakusu is \$182.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Rakusu Measurement \_\_\_\_\_

**Measuring for your Rakusu:** Sit in your usual zazen posture, in your sitting robe, with your hands in the zazen mudra. Have someone drape a cloth tape measure from the base of your thumb to the base of your other thumb over the back of your neck. The measurement needed is this length. For most people, this will be between 40-50 inches. Measure more than once and use a cloth, rather than metal, tape measure. For greater accuracy, have someone help you. If in doubt, go with a longer, rather than shorter measurement. Too long rakus can be shortened. Too short rakus cannot be lengthened.



**Our Annual Yard and Bake Sale will be Saturday, August 13.**

Donations for the sale may be left in the basement common room after the August sesshin. This is a wonderful fund-raiser for the Center, as well as a great way to clean out your unwanted, unused, and unneeded stuff.



## Vermont Zen Center

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*The Burlington bus—*

*A monk pronounces to all,*

*“I don’t speak English!”*

*— Joan White*

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## Metta Course

*Metta bhavana* is an ancient Buddhist meditation leading to the development of unconditional love and friendliness. Through the practice of metta, we become more empathetic, considerate, kind, forgiving, and in general, happier people.

The Vermont Zen Center is offering a six-week course in Lovingkindness Meditation, or metta bhavana, beginning **August 31**. Each hour-long Wednesday evening session will include meditation instruction, practice periods, and discussion. Please note that the first class is 1½ hours. The course is conducted by Zen priest Dharman Rice.

More information and registration is available at  
[www.vermontzen.org/lovingkindness.html](http://www.vermontzen.org/lovingkindness.html)

**Time: Wednesdays 7-8 p.m.** (The first class is 7– 8:30)

**Dates: August 31, September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5**

**Cost: \$100** for the six classes including all materials

