



Jizo Ceremony Leadership Training

for Buddhist clergy, chaplains, lay leaders, & the like

led by Chris Fortin, Sarah Emerson, and Jennifer Block

February 10, 2017

9am to 5pm

Green Gulch Farm, Muir Beach, CA

This is a unique opportunity to learn to lead a Buddhist memorial ritual. As Buddhist spiritual practice grows in our society, there is both an opportunity and a need to provide Buddhist memorial ceremonies in a variety of community settings. Three Jizo ceremony leaders are offering this training to support its reproduction in the wider Buddhist community.

Background: Jizo Bodhisattva is one of the most beloved figures of Japanese Buddhism. Clusters of Jizo statues are common in cemeteries where mourners leave offerings in hopes that Jizō protect their lost loved one. As one who has vowed to bring all beings out of the vast ocean of suffering, Jizo is the protector of those who have died, particularly children, travelers and firefighters. He represents the open hearted presence that witnesses all beings as they enter and leave this life. The Jizo Ceremony is a traditional Japanese Zen ritual for children who have died. It was adapted and offered in the U.S. first by Yvonne Rand, a Dharma heir of the late [Dainin Katagiri](#), who began practicing with Shunryu Suzuki at the [San Francisco Zen Center](#) in 1966. Since then, this ceremony has been evolving as a deep and meaningful container for those grieving loss of many kinds.

Description: In the morning, we will consider the significance of Jizo Bodhisattva in the Zen tradition, the history of this Jizo ceremony as it has been adapted in the U.S., and the characteristics of grief that can lead to both suffering and liberation from a Buddhist perspective. Through wisdom teachings on the inseparability of life and death, we will explore how to compassionately support people as they experience the loss of a loved one to death. In the afternoon, we will conduct the Jizo Ceremony itself. Through an enactment in an instructional setting, participants will learn the power and meaning of the ceremony. It is not necessary for participants to have personally experienced the loss of a child or loved one, but a willingness to enter the realm of grief and its accompanying pain and meaning are essential. At the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the components and significance of a Jizo ceremony
2. Explain 2-3 characteristics of grief that are often encountered by participants and leaders in the ceremony
3. Develop and lead a Jizo ceremony that honors the lineage of both the ceremony and Jizo bodhisattva
4. Name 3 ways in which a Jizo ceremony supports mourners in coping skillfully with a significant death

Who Attends: Buddhist priests, chaplains, and lay leaders who work with the bereaved and offer guidance from a Buddhist perspective. Anyone else who feels a calling to offer this ceremony in their community is welcome too.

Fees: \$10 per person for the materials that we supply, payable at the event itself, not in advance. There will be an offering of dana (the practice of giving or generosity) to support the teachers and the teachings. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Instructors: [Chris Fortin](#) is a Soto Zen teacher and a licensed MFT psychotherapist and Spiritual Counselor who trained in this ceremony with Yvonne more than a decade ago, and has been offering it regularly to communities since that time. [Dojin Sarah Emerson](#), also a Zen Buddhist priest, became involved with Jizo ceremonies both through her training in Zen and through her personal experience with the loss of a child. [Jennifer Block](#) is a chaplain, educator, and counselor for individuals who are facing the spiritual and emotional challenges related to aging, sickness, dying and grief.

Registration: <https://jizo-ceremony-leadership-training.eventbrite.com> **More Info:** dojinemerson@gmail.com