

Dorothy Shalk written 1965

### American Zen Buddhist Temple

Purpose:

To establish a home or "Temple" where men and women desiring, in their search for an answer to the puzzle of life and death, to follow the Way of the Buddha, may meditate and study under the guidance of a Zen priest of any race or nationality.

An oriental Zen-Buddhist master (rōshi) will be invited to visit the Temple during the summer months through its newly developing years, to help guide both the directing monk and the students. When necessary the Rōshi will be asked to bring his interpreter with him, and if he wishes, a monk (jisha) to assist him in the Zendo.

As time passes and American Zen matures sufficiently to invite its own rōshi, such a teacher will then, presumably, make the Temple his home: a house being provided for his use. He will become its "abbot", and receive his own pupils in his own temple, inviting oriental teachers, monks or nuns as guests and friends as he wishes.

This year the members of the Northampton Zen Center assemble at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Schalk at 74 Lyman Road. The Schalks have returned from a year's visit in Kyoto, Japan, where Mrs. ( Dorothy ) Schalk was in formal training at the Zen temple Antaiji. She has resumed direction of the Northampton group, which was supervised last year by Mrs. Helen Walker and Mrs. Phillip ( J.J. ) Wilson.

The Center was established in the Fall of 1966 by Dorothy Schalk, and has since grown to its present membership of approximately fifteen people, including residents of the Valley area and faculty and students from the University of Massachusetts and Smith College. The group meets four times weekly for formal zazen, or sitting meditation ( zazen ) sessions. Additional self-training takes place in the home, for longer or shorter periods, depending on the experience of the individual. Formal zazen is conducted according to procedures which have been developed in the Zen monasteries, only in a necessarily abbreviated version. Periods of zazen of about thirty minutes in length are alternated with shorter periods of kinhin, or walking meditation. Sutra chanting begins and concludes the zazen. Complete silence is observed at all times, except during sutra chanting. Every aspect of activity and repose is pursued with the same intensity of concentration - or immersion in the act - which ultimately transforms exertion into its own ease, activity into repose, and repose into activity. For the Western student, the ritual aspect of Zen practice, particularly the sutra chanting, which is performed in an alien language, can be very annoying at first in its apparent meaninglessness; but it is an important part of the discipline. It is first of all an expression of reverence for the tradition out of which Zen has developed. Furthermore, its formalized movements, even to the rhythmic chanting of Buddhist doctrinal tracts, are in themselves a posture of meditation; concentration, alertness in stillness, prevails here as much as in zazen and kinhin. The patterned movement of ritual, in which every gesture is significant in the creation of the pattern, also reflects the Zen way in all facets of life: economy, control, the absence of any wasted or wasteful action.

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On Saturday, November 9, members of the group and guests from the Yoga Institute at Hartford participated in a full day sesshin, an extended period of intensified training which traditionally lasts for a week. Silence prevails during the entire sesshin, and communication is accomplished by means of hand or bell signals. The sesshin on Saturday began at 6 a.m. and ended at 6 p.m. The full day of zazen was interspersed with kinhin, sutra chanting, brief rest periods, half-hour breaks for meals ( which are served and eaten in silence ),



PLUM AND SPARROW

by Hakuin Zenji

Dear Mrs. Schalk,

What a nice long letter with so much news of yourself. I am very happy to know that you have found a real master in Rev. Suzuki. We are glad to have you remain a member here, however, and your Zen Dust is already on the way to you. All look forward to seeing you and your husband this autumn. I hope nothing interferes with you coming. As with the relation to Rev. Suzuki, it should become a very fruitful time.

Sincerely  
PJS.

May the fragrance of the  
plum blossoms linger with  
you through the year.

Gift Fuller Sasaki

New Year  
1967

# NORTHAMPTON ZEN CENTER

## NEWSLETTER

June, 1967

### Incorporation

This May, it was decided to legally incorporate our Northampton Zen Center as a non-profit religious organization in order to insure its continuity. The incorporating members met with Attorney Paul Rogers of Amherst, to elect five Directors, three Officers, and to draft preliminary by-laws. The Directors of the Northampton Zen Center are: Mrs. Dorothy Schalk, Northampton; Professor Leland Varley, Amherst; Mrs. Janice Wilson, Northampton; Miss Esther Wyman, Northampton; and Mrs. Dora Parsons, Easthampton. The Officers are: President, Mrs. Dorothy Schalk; Clerk, Mrs. Helen Walker; and Treasurer, Mrs. Janice Wilson. The by-laws state the purpose of the organization to be the study and practice of Zen Buddhism under the religious guidance of the San Francisco Zen Center.

### Northampton Zen Background

The Northampton Zen Center had its beginning in October, 1965, when Mrs. Dorothy Schalk invited a small group of people to meet with Shunryu Suzuki, Roshi, of the San Francisco Zen Center, to discuss the possibility of a summer Zen retreat at her Vermont property near Wardsboro. Plans were made and the development of the retreat has begun. The interest shown at this first meeting encouraged Mrs. Schalk to begin regular sittings during the winter at her home at 74 Lyman Road in Northampton.

Rev. Suzuki returned in April, '66 and in February, '67; formal sesshins ( extended zazen, or meditation, for one or two days ) attended by ten to fifteen people were held in October, '66, in January, '67 when Philip Wilson visited ( Janice Wilson's husband, now assisting Rev. Suzuki at Tassajara Springs ), and in February, '67 during Rev. Suzuki's visit. Two or three additional days were set aside for special zazen; one before Christmas, one in honor of Buddha's birthday and one at the concluding meeting of the year.

### Mrs. Schalk in Japan

This next year, Mrs. Schalk will be studying and practicing Zen in Kyoto, Japan. Her address will be: c/o Y. Kuroda-san, 30 Hagigakikuichi, Shimagama, Kyoto. We will miss her greatly and hope that her year will be a good one.

Other members of our group who will be away next year are Joe and Terry Havens of Amherst, who will be in England. Robert and Judith Hurley of Vermont, who attended our sesshins, will also be in Kyoto, Japan.

This summer, several members, including Mrs. Schalk, Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Louis Musto, plan to visit San Francisco Zen Center's mountain retreat at Tassajara Springs.

### Plans for Next Year

In Fall, our weekly meetings will continue at Smith College's Helen Hills Hills Chapel, at Elm Street and Round Hill Road. Notifications will be sent out in late September, as soon as the day and time have been set.

An annual business meeting will take place on the first Saturday in October. We hope to make plans then for sessions and for a visit from Rev. Suzuki.

All those interested are warmly invited to join us. Inquiries may be directed to Northampton Zen Center, c/o Mrs. Helen Walker, 76 Elm Street, Northampton, Massachusetts 01060 ( 584-3988 ).

Have a good summer!

NORTHAMPTON ZEN CENTER

NEWS LETTER

April, 1968

This week we remember Buddha's birthday with an observation by Suzuki-Roshi from the April, 1966 Wind Bell:

Zen Center is not a group of persons setting themselves apart from society, each striving for his own personal enlightenment. All of us... are Americans responsible to the society which supports us... to help others is to help ourselves... Our daily responsibilities is the field in which we incessantly strive to actualize Buddha's way.

The Northampton Zen Center has met every Thursday evening this winter at the Unitarian Church at 220 Main Street in Northampton. In February, at the request of several of the students, Saturday morning zazen was begun, from 7:00A.M. to 10:00A.M. including breakfast and a brief work period. Recently, due to a conflict with another meeting at the church, the group met at the home of Mrs. Janice Wilson, 54 Prospect Street, and found the sitting there so satisfactory that for the time being they will meet there instead of at the church for both Thursday evening and Saturday morning sessions. Since this is not a permanent arrangement, those wishing to attend should first check with Mrs. Wilson by phone: 584-1464.

Mrs. Dorothy Schalk, who began the Northampton group and will return to lead it again in September, has been in Kyoto, Japan with her husband this winter, practicing Zen, doing art work, and writing. She attends daily zazen at Antaiji, where a strict and austere practice is followed under the guidance of Uchiyama-Roshi. She writes:

My life here is much more quiet, though growing busier now and it's absolutely wonderful in a thousand ways. Do tell the students that I look forward to meeting them. I hope that the young people will show more and more of a genuine interest in zazen, and I look forward to working along with them... and helping them in any way I can.

Her address is c/o Y. Kuroda, 30 Hagigakakuichi, Shumigamo, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan.

With best wishes to our friends and members both far away and near, and secure in the wisdom of Buddha's unfolding way, we remain,

Yours truly,

*Helen Walker*

Helen Walker, Secretary,  
Northampton Zen Center