

Wind Bell



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Cover: *Time lapse view of The Pines property.*



Bowing-in at the Green Gulch Greengrocer

IMPORTANT NEWS AND CHANGES

In April of this year, Zen Center's Abbot, Richard Baker-roshi, began an indefinite leave of absence. The precipitating event which brought this about was his relationship with a married resident woman student, and the upset which this caused for those principally involved, and for others in the community who knew about it. Although we have never been primarily a traditional celibate monastic community, we have clearly established guidelines for the conduct of intimate relationships: no deceiving, no harming of anyone or their practice, and, if one is a practice leader, setting a good example for others. Because the matter involved the Abbot, and because he had been involved in similar situations before, the Board of Directors convened to

discuss this situation and an appropriate response. The Board's first decision was to inform each student personally and individually so that everyone would have the same information. Then, after several more days of community response and discussion, the Board and Baker-roshi agreed on an indefinite leave of absence, to be reviewed in one year, in April, 1984.

These events brought up for examination many fundamental issues for our Buddhist community: the student-teacher relationship in Zen, the nature and limits of spiritual authority, the way information is shared and the way we communicate with one another, and the way men and women relate to each other in spiritual practice. The events also highlighted questions about Zen Center as an institution which have been ongoing for some time, having to do with our size, finances, decision making, and priorities.

It is not easy to write about what we are going through in a way which includes the larger membership of *Wind Bell* readers, but which also respects the privacy of individuals and the contextual nature of the facts. It may seem odd to someone reading the preceding paragraphs that this incident could, by itself, give rise to such far-reaching consequences. This event, however, was the catalyst which created an opening for us to examine many fundamental questions concerning our understanding of Buddhism and Buddhist institutions. Some of these questions had to do specifically with the Abbot: e.g., why was there such a difference between his lifestyle and the lifestyles of other members of the community? Other issues involve everyone: how do power and authority function in a spiritual community, and in what ways did all of us, not just the Abbot, contribute to perpetuating dubious assumptions about the role and authority of the teacher? For resident members, especially, whose work, spiritual practice, social life, and, in many cases, financial support are all provided within the institution of Zen Center, these questions, understandably, have become very important and disturbing.

To understand the depth of our questioning, it is important to remember that Zen Center, like many Zen Buddhist groups in America, has been organized as a "person church", in which each student's primary spiritual and personal relationship is with a single person, the Roshi or teacher. Many of the religious groups in America which are trying to adapt Asian traditions to the West are experiencing some of the same problems. We are unfamiliar with the context and structure of Asian societies in which spiritual leaders exercise their authority; our expectations have been formed, in most cases, by books rather than by upbringing.

At the same time, we are experiencing many positive aspects to this new situation. Each individual is having to ask deep questions of himself and of the institution. More people now feel responsible for taking care of Zen Center, and feel that they are responsible for their own spiritual practice. It is almost as though this situation has allowed us, as Americans forming new traditions, to realize the next step in the process of developing a more mature Buddhist practice. As we begin to talk more honestly to one another, we have discovered an almost astonishing simultaneity and similarity in each other's experience of practice at Zen Center. A few people have left, but, for the most part, the demands and difficulties of what we are going through have brought people closer together, and have created many fresh possibilities for growth and insight.

To provide a way for us to keep in touch with each other as we pass through these changes, we began, in September, a process of biweekly meetings of residents and non-residents in small groups of eight to ten people at all three practice places. These meetings are helping us to create a flow of information, helping to build consensus on major issues, and allowing everyone to participate in the decision-making process. The sharing groups also give people a sense of having emotional support from their friends and a feeling of increased intimacy with fellow students. During this time, the Board of Directors, which is the legal decision-making body of Zen Center, has been meeting frequently to help safeguard our fundamental purpose during this period of change. The Board includes among its members those senior students who were closest to Suzuki-roshi.

During the months since the leave of absence began, Baker-roshi has been away much of the time. Zen Center has continued to support him and his family financially, and to furnish them with the two houses they have used in the city and at Green Gulch Farm. He has participated a little in the daily schedule of the community, but, for the most part, he has spent his time traveling, either with his family or by himself. It seems that he, too, is examining many things about himself and about Zen Center. He has not yet expressed anything definite about what he would like to do, or would like the community to do, and he has allowed the process of change to go on within Zen Center without trying to participate in or influence it. It seems that he has enjoyed the opportunity to live a much quieter life than he has been able to do in recent years. Since his return to San Francisco on October 30, he has been meeting with individual students.

Although there is a great deal more that could be said, we are so much in the midst of this often trying process that, at this time, it is hard to know what is important and lasting, and what is of only temporary interest. It may be better, and also more accurate, given all that is happening, to err on the side of saying too little rather than too much. The community of Zen Center, which grew from the small group of meditators around Suzuki-roshi to the present rather large institution and sangha, seems fundamentally strong and sound, and becoming more so. Some small changes are already apparent. For example, after years of publishing the *Wind Bell* very infrequently, we are sending you this issue only four months after the last one. We hope you will take this as an encouraging sign of renewed vitality and determination to continue Suzuki-roshi's way in America. We expect to report to you again in the Spring when it may be possible to speak more definitively about our new direction.

FINAL PAYMENT ON PINES PROPERTY

On October 21, 1983 Zen Center made the final payment on the Pines property adjacent to Tassajara, thus preserving this wilderness area from possible development as sites for second home trailers or hunting lodges. We are all deeply grateful to those who were able to make contributions to help us save this 160 acre parcel that acts as a buffer around Tassajara. The cost of \$100,000 was far more than the immediate Zen Center community could ever have raised on its own without help from our friends.

We are happy to be able to report that the Pines wilderness remains as beautiful and protected as ever. This past summer the Forest Service re-established the Church Creek Trail from the Pines up to Pine Ridge, which was destroyed in the 1977 Los Padres Forest Fire, so the beauty of this area is even more accessible now.

In September of 1982 Zen Center made the final payment on Green Gulch Farm, and we are planning to pay off our remaining debt on the building at 300 Page Street this winter. It seems, then, that by the end of 1983, Zen Center will finally own all the properties on which our three main practice centers are located: Tassajara, Green Gulch, and the building at 300 Page Street in San Francisco. In uncertain economic times such as these, this is reassuring news. Needless to say, without the support of our many friends all over the United States, who have never failed to come to our aid when we most needed help, this would not have been possible.



EXPANDED GUEST PROGRAM AT GREEN GULCH FARM

The Wheelwright Center at Green Gulch Farm is now offering an expanded overnight guest program. For three years visitors to Green Gulch have watched construction on the Lindisfarne Fellows House, situated in the meadow at the edge of the upper pond. Though some finishing details remain to be done, its twelve guest rooms are now available to individuals and groups who wish to stay at Green Gulch for retreats and use Wheelwright Center facilities for meetings.

The building itself is a remarkably crafted post and beam structure built by the Zen Center carpentry crew, headed and trained by Paul Discoe. The octagonal design concept was contributed by Sym Van der Ryn, the former State Architect for California, and developed by Keith Critchlow, an English architect who teaches at the Royal College of Art. Both men are Fellows of the Lindisfarne Association, a group whose donation of \$31,000 allowed us to begin the project.

The design concept was given form by Paul Discoe. Paul is a highly skilled carpenter trained in both America and Japan. As a craftsman he combines the skills of designer-builder in a way that is rare in our culture. Ordained by Suzuki-roshi, he was sent to Japan to live and work with temple carpenters for five years. In Japan he also studied other types of building styles, such as the traditional Japanese farmhouse. Since returning to America in 1975, he has applied his training in the design and construction of projects at Green Gulch, Tassajara and the City (including Greens at Fort Mason), and in the process he has trained the carpentry crew in the use and care of Japanese tools. The Lindisfarne Fellows House is the largest project the crew has undertaken, and it demonstrates fully the beauty and utility which a craft tradition offers when it is applied in a Western context with a fresh sensibility.

The Lindisfarne Fellows House is a contemporary American building complete with solar heating, but it clearly comes from an Oriental lineage. The way the wood in the building is selected, joined, planed and exposed — all this comes from the Japanese tradition. The proportions of the building — the high roof and wide overhanging eaves, the pedestal base — have antecedents in Chinese tradition brought to Japan through Buddhism. The contrast of the heavy structural elements with the light interior walls and doors is also characteristic of Japanese buildings, though here we have not used the traditional shoji screens. The reduction-fired tile on the ground floor is a dark non-glazed tile made in America, but it is one that is similar to a traditional Japanese tile.

The plastering of the building was actually done by three Japanese craftsmen. It was no more expensive to have them come over to do the work than to contract out the work here. And there were definite advantages because of their skill in working around exposed wooden beams and their knowledge in mixing a "softer" finish plaster than the concrete stucco that was used on the Wheelwright Center. Complications arose because the materials they are accustomed to using are not all available in this country. The carpentry crew resorted to borrowing the kitchen's large commercial blender to chop up fiberglass for the white plaster and chop wheat straw for the four dark mud-plastered bedrooms. The crew then sorted through four garbage pails of the cut wheat straw to separate out the pieces with a nubby joint. The rice straw traditionally used is smooth, and the texture of the wheat straw joint caused problems in



Lindisfarne Fellows Hall

the trowelling. The rich color of the walls made from Green Gulch clay proved ample justification for the extra effort.

Finding wood suitable for the building frame was a major undertaking, since only well-aged timbers are stable enough to accommodate the complex joints. An intensive search for the eight main octagonal posts (13" x 13" x 18') finally located suitable Douglas fir in Oregon — old logging booms which had been chained together to guide other timbers down the river. They had been underwater for 60 years in a pond beside an old lumber mill. A small independent logger retrieved them for us and sent them down with a larger load of Port Orford white cedar — a supple wood used for the secondary interior posts.

Since none of the wood in the building came from a lumber yard (none of it is a standard commercial dimension), each piece has its own history. The redwood panels used in some of the doors were cut from a six-foot stump that was initially logged in Mendicino in the 1880's and came to Zen Center years ago when a sculpture of Suzuki-roshi was to be done. The sculptor chose to work in cedar, and the block was kept for a future use. Cabinets downstairs are of Tassajara maple, and upstairs from a Marin County Birch that a friend took down. Some beams are from seasoned used timber, identifiable by the nail hole marks still visible in the planed wood.

Brother David, a Benedictine monk and old friend of Zen Center, was one of the first guests to stay in the building. He noted that it was a different experience, one that asks for an involvement and special awareness of how things come together and how things work. It is clearly a labor-intensive building, designed to bring people together. Although it is a more refined structure than the one we originally envisioned, its

actual construction cost on a square-foot basis was no more than the standard custom home in Marin County. The carpenters who worked on the project did so for wages far less than the market rate because of the commitment to their craft. Buddhist practice emphasizes personal effort and care in every aspect of our relationships. Certainly these qualities have been invested in this building by the many people who have worked on it.

A letter announcing the opening of the expanded guest program at Green Gulch was sent out in the middle of November:

The completion of the Lindisfarne House means that we can now host overnight conferences with up to thirty overnight guests. Individuals, couples and families may also arrange to stay with us for awhile, as at Tassajara, except that Green Gulch is only forty minutes from San Francisco and is available throughout the year. We do not yet have hot baths at Green Gulch - although we plan to - and the landscaping around Lindisfarne will have to be a gravel path and a bit of grass until next spring. But the building is beautiful and the Green Gulch valley, hills, trails, and beach are here for you to enjoy.

Individual guests will be welcome to join the residents at Green Gulch for vegetarian meals in the dining room, by arrangement with the guest manager. Conference or group visitors can arrange for separate meals.

If you are interested in using this new facility — and we welcome you to do so — please call Green Gulch Farm. The Wheelwright Center office telephone number is 415-383-3086. Office hours are 9 a.m. to twelve o'clock, Monday through Friday. Messages can be left anytime at 415-383-3134.



GREEN GULCH FARM COOKING CLASSES

Tomato-Basil Gazpacho * New Potatoes Baked in Parchment with Herbs
Whole Baked Garlic * Red Chili Butter on Fresh Corn
Warm Green Bean Salad with Grilled Red Pepper * Caramelized Pear Tart

This was the menu selected for Deborah and Dan Welch's first Green Gulch cooking class in the beautifully re-modeled Green Gulch kitchen. It featured produce from the farm and included a walk through the fields and garden. The space was quite perfect for the class, which included lay members of Zen Center, some Greens' restaurant regulars, and other friends. Deborah and Dan mixed a stimulating blend of solid information on food preparation and presentation with some interesting anecdotal material. The atmosphere was warm, humorous, and informal, just the right setting for enjoying the delicious lunch the group created together.

The classes aim at using seasonal produce from Green Gulch Farm when possible — and feature dishes that are straightforward and uncomplicated, but perhaps unfamiliar to most people. The classes hope to teach not just recipes, but more, a sense of cooking itself, as well as some emphasis on basic techniques. The class — which includes the “instructors” — participates in the preparation. It is something to see eighteen people in the kitchen busy peeling, cutting, and chopping.

It is hoped we will be able to hold two classes a month.

Some of the dishes cooked in the subsequent classes were: pepperonata — stewed red peppers and tomatoes, five different ways to use it; poached pears and honey mousse; wilted spinach salad; white bean salad with late summer vegetables and walnut oil dressing; olive oil bread with herbs; perfection squash soup (two kinds made with Green Gulch squash); cheese and nut loaf with mushroom sauce; toasted croutons with roquefort cheese and walnuts; quince compote and baked stuffed quince; and prune-walnut tart.



ALAYA STITCHERY

In the Spring of this year, Zen Center decided to sell Alaya Stitchery to two members of Zen Center: Karin Gjording and Wendy Matlow. Alaya is the clothing store which grew out of a stitchery started many years ago by a student who made sitting cushions in her living room. The store is now located on Cole Street in San Francisco, a block away from the Tassajara Bakery. The selling of the business to Wendy and Karin is an experiment on the part of Zen Center and the *sangha* in exploring different ways of supporting ourselves. Our underlying intention is to find out how two or more people can support themselves in lay practice while attempting to follow the Buddhist path of Right (or "complete") Livelihood.

Wendy and Karin want to be fully attentive to the people who come to the store; to offer a service to people; to be part of the neighborhood in which the store is located; to stay honest; and to do business with other businesses which are also predicated on the intention of being honest and being of service. Although their primary emphasis is on relating well to other people, they also want to offer clothes which are wholesome, non-restricting, tasteful, made well from natural fibers, stylish, but not "fashionable" in the sense of going "out of fashion", and which are suitable for many occasions. And, not incidentally, they also want to have fun!

For Zen Center, part of this experiment includes looking for ways of encouraging individual members to use their best energies to work creatively in the world. We are asking ourselves how we can work together and offer something to the larger Bay Area community, while also keeping Zen Center an institution with a clear focus and within a manageable scale. Wendy and Karin are experimenting for all of us. We wish them well!



Karin and Wendy during the opening ceremony on November 20, 1983

GREEN GULCH LAY GROUP

In the past several years, a growing number of people have been coming to Green Gulch Farm on Sunday for meditation, classes, and lecture, and to join in working with the resident students. Some of these "Sunday Student" members have also been practicing zazen in their homes on a daily basis, as well as at Green Gulch, and have also been going to Green Gulch and the San Francisco Zen Center for one day sittings and sesshins. About two and a half years ago several people started meeting together as a Zen Center lay members' group, and since that time this group has taken on an increasingly important role in the life of the Zen Center *sangha*. The group now meets once a month, on Sunday, at Green Gulch, and has sponsored visits to Tassajara and to other zen centers. It has also organized a members' dinner at Greens, has had a work day at Green Gulch, has raised money to help with a remodeling project for the Green Gulch Kitchen, and has made regular financial contributions to support the Farm. There are usually about forty people at any given meeting, though the group is much larger than this.

Originally, it was thought that this group would be made up primarily of people who had spent some time at Tassajara for formal practice periods who were now working in "the world". These first members thought that they would find ways to support each other in their practice away from a formal meditation center like Tassajara or Green Gulch. What has evolved, however, is something new, and the members of this new group are not only inspiring each other, but they are also inspiring the community of residential students whose lives have been largely within Zen Center as far as their practice, work, and daily life are concerned.

The new group includes middle-aged people who have professional work outside of Zen Center, and who usually have families and a home-life to take care of, but who are, nevertheless, very serious about living a life which follows the basic path suggested by the Buddha himself. They are expanding our idea of the ways in which it is possible to practice mindful awareness in our daily lives, and breaking down the dichotomy between formal zazen practice with others and zazen alone at home. For those of us who have been members of Zen Center for a long time it is encouraging to come together with lay men and lay women living in the "ordinary" world, who are as serious about practicing mindfulness in every moment of their lives as those of us who have been following a more monastic way of living. Once again, we all have the opportunity to find Beginner's Mind and to be inspired by each other.

Here is no Rinzai
no Soto —
autumn sky.

The fireplace season starts
dim lamp
scroll: "Possess nothing".

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MITSU SUZUKI, who is known in Japan as a poet, recently composed the two haiku shown above. The one on the right took first prize in *Sansho*, a publication sponsored by Eihei-ji temple, and the other also received a high-ranking prize. They were written out by Suzukusensei and translated by Kaz Tanahashi.

ZEN CENTER PRACTICE LEADERS

Over the last few years, the following individuals have taken on many of the teaching and practice responsibilities at Zen Center. We present a short introduction of them to the *Wind Bell* readership.



HAROLD "REB" ANDERSON
Tenshin Zenki — (Naturally Real/Full Function)

Reb was born in Mississippi in 1944, and raised in Minnesota. He first visited Tassajara in the Summer of 1967, and then became a member of Zen Center in 1968. He was ordained by Suzuki-roshi in 1970, and shortly before Richard Baker became Abbot of Zen Center, Suzuki-roshi commanded him to be the *jisha*, or personal attendant, to the new Abbot. He was head monk at Tassajara in 1972, and was the *Tanto*, or head of practice, at Green Gulch Farm from 1973 to 1977. He became *Tanto* of the City Center in 1977 and continued in that position until he was appointed *Godo*, or Assistant Abbot, in 1983 after receiving the Dharma Transmission Ceremony from Baker-roshi in January of this year.

EDWARD BROWN

fusan Kainei — (Longevity Mountain, Peaceful Sea)

Suzuki-roshi said about my name: "You will be like a mountain surrounded by a sea of people."

Birthdate: March 24, 1945.

Began sitting zazen in May, 1965.

Thought I would get enlightened in a year or two (by trying harder, those other people did not know what effort meant) and go about my life. It did not happen that way.

Went to Tassajara in May, 1966 when the Becks still owned the place. Suzuki-roshi said we were "carrying water and gathering wood." Learned how to cook. Decided it was crazy to sit zazen, if one took the conventional or parental viewpoint, it was useless, but there are other scales and measures.



Became head cook Tassajara Zenshin-ji May, 1967. Expectations of becoming a famed cook and respected monk were thoroughly crushed, people did not go for it. Stuck it out, anyway. Decided it was most important to acknowledge each person's authority and capacity, and not just mine.

Ordained a priest September 11, 1971. Suzuki-roshi said that if you become a priest you cannot be a baker.

Was *Shuso* at Tassajara, Fall of 1973. This completed nearly seven years residence at Tassajara. Thirteen practice periods. Looking back I remember the benefits: heat in the summer and cold in the winter.

Authored the *Tassajara Bread Book* somewhere in there (pub. 1970) and *Tassajara Cooking* (pub. 1973).

Climbed the position ladder at ZC, 1974-78, or should we say, "pushed up"? Guest manager, 1974; *Ino*, 1975; *Tanto*, 1975-1977; President, 1976-1978. Approximate dates, *Tanto* and president overlapping.

Taught study center classes for years, gave lectures, did practice instruction, burned out. stopped.

Dropped out to practice zen and attain true realization summer of 1979. Became bus-boy at Greens. Did therapy. Lost my seat in the zendo. Stopped trying to enlighten others by "correcting" their understanding. What's the point of a golden tongue, when my life is a mess ?

Started teaching study center classes again, fall, 1980. Have taught Intro. to Zen, Intro. to Buddhism, beginning *Abhidharma*, *Genjo Koan*, *Gakudoyojinshu*.

Left out getting married in June, 1970, daughter born April, 1973, divorced June, 1977. Daughter Lichen now living in France. Lately have been particularly interested in studying and working on communication skills which reveal, clarify, and support the individual and the discourse, rather than "mucking up" everything. Zen is not something to do to avoid developing communication skills.

March, 1983, decided I was a nice person, and it really is OK to make mistakes and have problems.



LINDA RUTH CUTTS

Ji Ko Ei-jun — (Endless/Infinite
Compassion, Suchness Mind/Heart)

Linda Ruth was born in Minneapolis in 1947. She first encountered Zen Center in 1968, but then went to Italy for two years to study literature and art history. She returned to Zen Center in 1971. She was ordained a priest in January, 1975, and was *Shuso* at Tassajara in the Spring of 1980. She was assistant *Tanto* at 300 Page Street from November of 1981 until she left to go to Tassajara again this fall to become Resident Senior.

Linda is married to Steve Weintraub; daughter Sarah was born in April, 1981.

BLANCHE HARTMAN

Shunpo Zenkei — (Spring Mountain/
Inconceivable Joy)

Blanche was born in 1926 in Birmingham, Alabama. She majored in Chemistry and Biostatistics at the University of California, Davis and Berkeley. She married Lou Hartman in 1947 and had two sons and two daughters between 1950 and 1959. She graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1964 and worked as a chemist and biostatistician until 1972. She began sitting zazen at the Berkeley Zendo in July, 1969. She was lay ordained together with Lou and older daughter Trudy in March, 1974, and ordained as a priest, together with Lou, in 1977. She has been living and teaching in San Francisco since 1981.



As a guest student she began studying the sewing of traditional monk's robes (*okesa* and *rakusu*) with Yoshida Eshun-roshi in May, 1970. She continued this study with Kasai Josin-san in 1972, 1974, 1977, and 1981, and she has been teaching this sewing practice to all students preparing for lay ordination and monk's ordination since 1974.



LESLIE JAMES MEYERHOFF

Sai Sho So Kan — Settle/finish,
Encourage, White/original, Mirror)

Leslie was born in Idaho Falls in September, 1947. She attended Concordia Lutheran Teacher's College where she majored in Theology. She came to Zen Center in October, 1971, and lived at Tassajara for six and a half years from 1975 to 1981. She was lay ordained in September, 1979. She was head student at Zen Mountain Center from July to September, 1981, and has been assistant *Tanto* (the first lay person to hold such a position) at 300 Page Street since January of this year.

Leslie married Keith Meyerhoff in 1975. They have two children: Jamie, 5, and Jessamyn, 3.

YVONNE RAND

Ji Kai Myo On — (Deep or Incredible Sound of the Great Sea of Mercy)

Yvonne Rand was born in San Francisco and has lived in the immediate Bay Area all of her life. After graduating from Stanford University she returned to live in San Francisco where she taught High School-age students for five years. She has two children, Hilary and Christopher.

She came to know Suzuki-roshi and Zen Center in 1966 and has been a student of Buddhism at Zen Center since then.

During these years she has held a number of administrative positions, including Zen Center secretary and president. She has also worked in the Wheelwright Center guest program and with dying people during the past twelve years. She was Suzuki-roshi's secretary during his last five years and was fortunate to be able to take care of him with Mrs Suzuki during the last year of his life, in particular. Simultaneously she has continued her studies of natural history and environmental biology as a way of knowing Green Gulch and to a lesser degree Tassajara. She has also studied informally in the areas of psychology emphasizing communication, human development, process and systems — especially family systems — and group and individual dynamics. In recent years she has been interested in and studying the death and dying process.



LEWIS RICHMOND

Chikudo Tekkan — (Bamboo Tao, Clear/Wise)

Lew Richmond began practicing at the Berkeley Zendo in 1967. He was at Tassajara in 1970-71 and was ordained by Suzuki-roshi in September of 1971. He has held many different positions at Zen Center and has been *Tanto* at Green Gulch Farm since 1978, and has been lecturing and leading classes since 1975. He is married to Amy Richmond and has one son, Ivan, who is now ten years old.

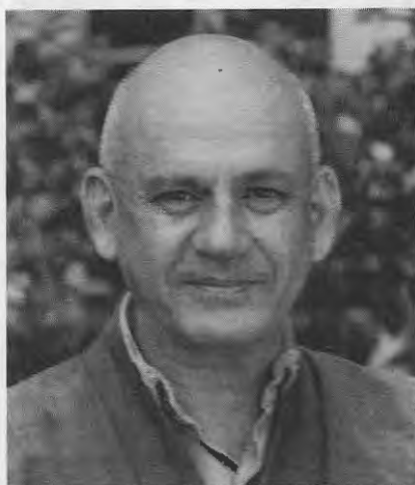




STEVEN WEINTRAUB
Daito Ryokan — (Great Way/Right
Insight)

Steve was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 17, 1947. He graduated from Queens College in New York in 1967 with a BA in English Literature. He came to Zen Center in the fall of 1968. He spent three and a half years at Tassajara and was *Shuso*, or head monk, there in his last training period in the fall of 1976. He has been lecturing and giving classes at Zen Center since that time. This fall he became *Tanto* at Tassajara; before returning to Tassajara he had been Treasurer of Zen Center for five years, and President from 1981 until this summer.

Steve married Linda Ruth Cutts in September of 1979. Their little girl Sarah was born in April, 1980.



MEL WEITSMAN
Sojun — (Essence of Purity, Pure Practice)

Mel started sitting at Sokoji in 1964. In February, 1967, at Suzuki-roshi's request, he found a house in Berkeley on Dwight Way to start the Berkeley Zen Center (the Berkeley Zen Center was an affiliate of Zen Center until 1972). He participated in the Winter-Spring practice period at Tassajara in 1969, and was ordained as a monk in May of 1969 at the Berkeley Zendo. He went back to Tassajara as *shuso* in the Winter-Spring of 1970 under Tatsugami-roshi, and stayed through the summer. He was back at Tassajara again in 1972 and was director there for a year and a half. Since that time he has been the head priest at the Berkeley Zen Center. He has taught classes and lectured both at Zen Center and Berkeley, but his main effort has been devoted to the development of the Berkeley Zen Center.



DAN WELCH

Koyo Dojun — (Turning towards
Dogen/Follow the Way)

Editor's Note: Dan gave us the following account of his life. Born in California in August, 1942, of warm-hearted parents dedicated to a life of voluntary poverty of the Quaker persuasion. Intensely aroused the desire to practice the way in senior year of high school, 1960, after reading Kerouac and Gary Snyder. Lived in the Koko-An zendo, Honolulu, 1961-62 and at Ryutaku-Ji, a Rinzai monastery in Japan from 1962-64. Studied art at UC Davis, 1964-66, working closely with William T Wiley and Bruce Nauman. Entered Tassajara Springs, 1967, and was deeply moved by intimate practice association with Suzuki-roshi during the last years of his life. Received monk's ordination from Suzuki-roshi in May, 1970. *Shuso* under the guidance of Katagiri-roshi Spring practice period, 1972. Since that time worked, studied, and practiced in San Francisco and Green Gulch in various positions. *Tanto* in San Francisco, 1973-75. Married Deborah Madison in 1979. Looking forward to a year's leave of absence in 1984 to live under a bridge.



PHILIP WHALEN

Zenshin Ryufu — (Zen Heart/Mind
Dragon Wind)

Philip was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1923. He was in the Army from 1943-46, and got his BA from Reed College in 1951. He lived in Japan from 1966-67, and again 1969-71. He became a resident of the San Francisco Zen Center in 1972, and moved to Tassajara later that year. He was ordained in 1973 and was *Shuso* at Tassajara in 1975. He has been an instructor in Mountain Gate Study Center and a lecturer since then, and was the priest at the South Ridge Zendo from 1981 to 1982. Outside of Zen Center, Philip is best known as a poet. He has written more than 15 books, including two novels. His most recent poetry has been collected in *Heavy Breathing: poems 1967-1980* (Four Seasons, 1983).

SESSHIN STATEMENTS

At the conclusion of our City Center's October sesshin, the staff of our kitchen joined us for the final period of zazen. We were asked by Tenshin *Sensei* to join *Tantos* Blanche Hartman and Ed Brown, Assistant *Tanto* Leslie James, and *Ino* Peter Overton in sitting facing outward.

After we had settled in Tenshin *Sensei* asked Ed Brown if he had any parting words. Ed spoke, and then some time passed. Then Tenshin *Sensei* asked *Tanto* Blanche Hartman if she had any parting words. After Blanche spoke, our silent zazen continued.

Then there began a spontaneous request from Tenshin *Sensei* to hear from various people sitting in the zendo. Before the period of zazen was ended, everyone had spoken parting words, prepared only from sitting and practicing intensely together for the preceding seven days. What follows are some of the comments from the sesshin participants which the *Wind Bell* staff would like to share with you.

A Gentle rain settles the dust.
A cool refreshing breeze cleans the air.
Breath absorbed in breath.
The ancient sand castles are nowhere to be found.
— *Jusan* Ed Brown

The refreshing air wells up
from the bottom of my breath
and pours over my head.
What a pleasant evening
— *Shunpo* Blanche Hartman

This unwashed,
sharp smelling,
hurting, sore
body is my home
— Edgar Arnold

As animals, as vegetables, as brothers and sisters,
we shared this room for seven days,
cultivating the mind that can give life
and receive life

— Mick Sopko

We did it! Thank you so much.
— T.S.*

This is like returning, going
home, except there is no
special place.
— *Karei* Yushin

Once more, the great matter has been settled
— Jerome Peterson

I'm grateful for everyone here giving up one week of usual life to experience the negative and positive parts of sesshin. I also appreciate the *Ino* and the *Tantos* for being so accessible to talk with. And also for giving us this opportunity to share our experiences in the zendo. It feels very good.

— *Kosen* Eric Arnou

My heart hasn't beat so hard since grade school.
We can say *yes*.
We have this chance
And this chance.
And we give it All that we have.

— *Shigetsu* Diane Burr

I wonder what it is that makes us go
to the zendo and sit hour after hour,
day after day, sesshin after sesshin

— Elizabeth Vestor

Some translate it as "baba wah wah", some translate it as "goo goo wah wah".
I don't understand the difference.

— John Edwards

I've never understood why a bird in
a cage sings, sometimes so beautifully.
This whole week has been so painful,
I've felt like a prisoner inside a cage
of my own making — the Person of my mind
and my body where every bone hurts.
Tonight there's a song in my heart.
There's a joy inside that wasn't here
a week ago.

— A.I.

Nearly the end of a seventh day . . .
Pattering of rain on the streets:

Figures — doesn't it?

Well, lovely anyway

Buddha washes away buddha —
back into the earth

— S.C.

I don't know who it is who is touched
everywhere, engulfed, by this fresh,
moist, autumn breeze.

— *Unzan* Peter Overton

We are all so different, yet we all practice the same Way.

— Olivia Gunn

This stuff:
body
speech and
mind
is Buddha

— *Fuyo* Genryu

Seven days in the same room
Each in our separate world
But the same world
The air is so close

— *Gan Sho* Ken Sawyer

I feel that we have many weighty matters to live with — in our own lives, in our
community and in the world. I don't know any guide for how to act
except mindfulness,
moment after moment.

— Leslie James

THE VENERABLE THICH NHAT HANH

Baker-roshi, *Chikudo* Lewis Richmond, and *Koho* Arnie Kotler met the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen master, in New York in June 1982 and marched with him in the large anti-nuclear demonstration. At that time, Thich Nhat Hanh, who is also a poet and author, agreed to come to Zen Center sometime to help instruct the students here. He was an instructor of novice monks for twenty years in his monastery in Vietnam. He visited Zen Center for nearly the entire month of March, 1983, and inspired and encouraged us very much.

Thich Nhat Hanh is internationally known and respected. He left Vietnam in 1966 to speak to the American people about the devastation our soldiers were causing in his country. During his trip he gave many speeches and interviews and had meetings with State Department officials and an audience with His Holiness Pope Paul VI. Because of his radical, outspoken neutrality, caring equally for *all* his brothers and sisters in Vietnam, the governments of both the North and the South threatened to harm him. So for seventeen years, Thich Nhat Hanh has remained in exile in the West, mostly in France, where he has a hermitage and a vegetable garden near a small community of practitioners.

After two days in San Francisco, Thich Nhat Hanh spent ten days at Tassajara, where he led two seminars: one for the students, in which he presented his Buddhist understanding in a very clear and tangible way, and another seminar for about 25 social activists, mostly from the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The latter group included Robert Aitken-roshi, Gary Snyder, Jack Kornfield, Bob Gnaizda, and David Harris.

Sojun Mel Weitsman wrote of those seminars:

"Several qualities that impressed me about Thich Nhat Hanh were his sweet gentleness, constant meditation, and his ability to experience painful tragedy without a trace of hate or vengeance.

"Each time we met with him was a moving experience. Frankly, I was always moved to tears. I think it was the way he could talk about momentous catastrophe and brotherly love at the same time, or to have experienced such deep sorrow and still be able to smile and say, 'Please enjoy your breath,' or, 'it's wonderful to just stand on the green earth,' or, 'this chair has no special self, yet everything belongs to the world of this chair.' "

In his first talk at Tassajara, Thich Nhat Hanh told us about venerable Doc The's book of short mindfulness verses (*gathas*) which he and other monks in Vietnam had to memorize and repeat throughout the day about such subjects as waking up in the morning, bathing, sitting down, and so forth. He suggested that students at Tassajara might write a new, updated *Tassajara Practice Book*. Some verses which the students submitted follow this article.

After Tassajara, Thich Nhat Hanh spent the remaining four days of his visit at Green Gulch Farm, lecturing and meeting with the students; he also gave the Sunday lecture at Green Gulch and a large lecture at the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco. And along with Gary Snyder and Robert Creeley, he gave a poetry reading in Berkeley to benefit the work of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

An excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh's lecture on 3/26/83 at the Berkeley Zendo follows:

The first effect of awareness, as you know, is awareness. Awareness is wonderful because in an awakened state of mind and body, you are a Buddha. That is true. Before being awake is being a Buddha, being aware of what is going on in your body, in your feelings, in your mind, and in the world, because the world is only the object of your mind. Seeing is always seeing something. So the world is the object of your knowing, of your seeing. And object and subject are one in Buddhism.

You can practice mindfulness, awareness, whenever and wherever you can, standing in line to catch a bus, or washing dishes. In that way, you do not lose any moment of your life. Being turned on to life, each second — that is our secret. So the effect of meditation is there right away, the moment you begin to practice.

When I became a novice, my master handed me a small book of short verses called "The Daily Practice." This book is entirely in Chinese, and I had to memorize all the *gathas* (verses) in it. There is one for sitting down, one for standing up, one for finding your slippers, one for washing your hands. So that during your daily life you can live in perfect mindfulness. It means that you can live in quite an awake state of mind.

At that time I thought learning things by heart was extremely old-fashioned. I did not realize it is actually the best way of learning. When you are about to do something, like picking up a glass of water, there is a *gatha* which comes to your mind, and with that *gatha* as a help, you produce awareness of drinking that glass of water. This is to keep yourself completely awake.

What makes a Buddha different from a non-Buddha is that a Buddha lives in perfect mindfulness twenty-four hours a day. We non-Buddhas live mindfully only a few minutes or a few hours a day. That is why an effort to be awake more of the day helps us approach the state of becoming a Buddha. It is quite simple.

When you sit down for meditation, your chief business is to become awake — not to meditate on a koan or some subject. The primary task is to keep yourself awake, to do everything in order to be awake. You can also do this while walking, standing, and lying down. In *The Book of Practice* that I learned by heart, there is one verse for you to button up your vest, and another for you to use the toilet. And there is the one to use after you wake up and put your feet on the floor searching for your slippers. I would like to share that one with you. I recite mentally each time I search for my slippers:

From the early morning to the end of the day
Living beings have to take good care of themselves.
If unfortunately someone is crushed under my slippers,
I pray that he will be born immediately to the Buddha's land.

This verse expresses compassion and also awareness.

At Tassajara, in California, the monks and the students collaborated in order to write a new *Practice Book* for Tassajara. You may like to learn some of these verses by heart to recite during your daily practice. There is one verse to use before picking up the telephone, one for you as you place your hand to open the refrigerator. So it is quite a

modern book, and it is the duty of Buddhists in our time to update the practice. I have asked the poet Gary Snyder to read the manuscript and make some minor changes in the use of the words in order for the *gathas* to be very pleasant when you practice mindfulness.

While you read this, please enjoy your breathing.

Here are a few verses from the draft of the Tassajara Practice Book:

On filling a car with gasoline:

From numberless ancient living beings has this energy been distilled.
May it burn for the benefit of numberless present and future beings
And not be wasted.

On parking a car:

Parking this car, carefully, attentively,
I vow to help all beings to their resting place.

On turning on the television:

Turning on the television, I see all these images as my own mind.
May all these imaginary beings become Buddha.

Walking to the Zendo:

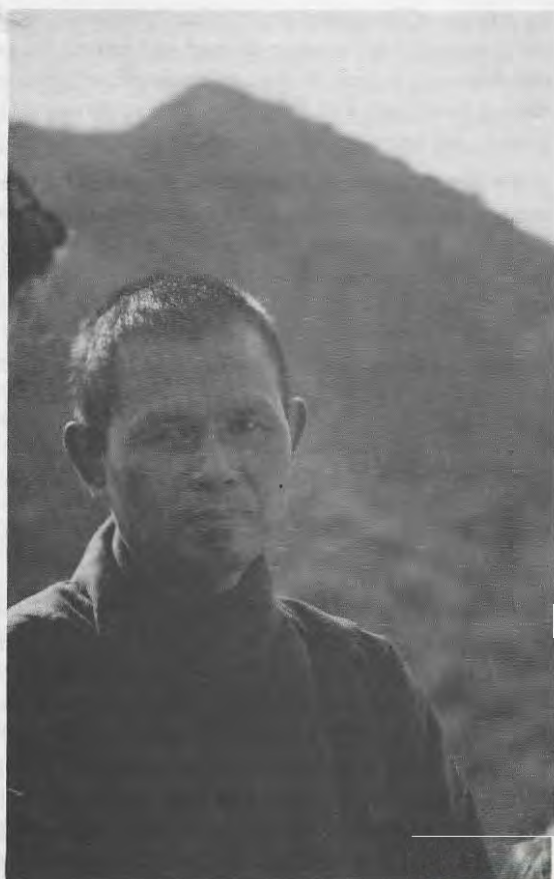
On my way to the zendo
I wish that all beings may realize
this precious opportunity.

On inviting a bell to sound:

May your sound fill the
entire universe, penetrating
the darkest and most painful
areas of life so that every living
being can hear it. May the hearer and the heard
become one, so that all living
beings can attain perfect
enlightenment.

On contemplating a child:

When I see a child, I must
think about the world we
will leave him or her. I vow
to do whatever I possibly
can to prevent nuclear
holocaust.



Thich Nhat Hanh at Tassajara.

THE PRACTICE OF MINDFUL AWARENESS

by *Chikudo* Lew Richmond

Recently, in my lectures and classes, I have been stressing the practice of mindful awareness. This kind of practice is usually associated with the *Theravada* tradition, or Early Wisdom school, of Buddhism, and the sutras which describe it in detail are to be found in the Pali Canon, the *Theravada* collection of scripture. Traditional Zen teaching seems not to refer much to this tradition; one of the minor rules in the *Brahmajala* Sutra, from which our precepts come, actually prohibits discussion or study of these so-called *Hinayana* scriptures. This seems strange to me. Perhaps there are historical or doctrinal reasons why in China this was the case, but still I wonder.

Suzuki-roshi used to say our way was *Hinayana* practice with *Mahayana* spirit, and he used to remind us that Dogen, the Japanese founder of our lineage, spurned the use of the term Zen. As I understand it, the Zen movement in China was an effort to cut through sectarian and academic distinctions and return to the fundamental practice of Shakyamuni Buddha. Yet Zen has tended over the centuries to emphasize its own special literature of *koan*, dialogue and commentary, more than the actual sermons of Shakyamuni, such as the Mindful Awareness Sutra. Many different teaching streams of Buddhism are entering America in our era, and while it is important not to be a spiritual window-shopper and respect the integrity and thoroughness of each tradition, I think we have an extraordinary chance to examine the whole panorama of Buddhism with fresh eyes. This opportunity comes very rarely in Buddhist history; our age is probably unique. I think we are very fortunate.

When I began to speak of the practices of mindful awareness here, I discovered many of us had the notion that it meant something like being careful when cutting the carrots, or not dropping your spoon — a kind of useful side practice. But when we read the *Sattipatthana Sutta*, the Scripture of Mindfulness, we find it begins as follows: "There is but one path for the purification of beings, for passing beyond sorrow and grief, for destroying pain and misery, for attaining the way, for realizing nirvana: and this is the four-fold establishment of mindful awareness." I find as a follower of Buddha's way I have to take such a statement quite seriously. One finds similar statements scattered throughout the Pali Scripture.

The Mindfulness Sutra provides descriptions of many specific awareness practices, which are divided into four broad categories, or "foundations": mindfulness of breath and body, mindfulness of what is pleasant and unpleasant, mindfulness of thoughts, and mindfulness of dharmas, or truths.

In my view, although each school or tradition of Buddhism has its own characteristic emphasis, the basic function of the Buddha way shared by all schools is to be fundamentally aware or awake, to be aware of what is so in this world, particularly the profound connection and relationship between every being and thing. And what is central to this path of being awake is the capacity and effort to give attention.

There is a story, attributed I think to the Japanese Zen teacher Ikkyu, but it could be any Buddhist teacher. As I understand the story, a prominent lay supporter of Ikkyu came to the famous master and asked for a piece of calligraphy from him expressing the truth of Zen. Ikkyu immediately wrote the single character "attention". The lay-

man asked if there couldn't be something more. Ikkyu picked up his brush and wrote the same character again, "attention". As this was not exactly what the layman had in mind, once again he asked if the scroll couldn't have something more. Ikkyu then wrote the same character three more times, "attention, attention, attention".

Of course, as attention is a basic function of human consciousness, it is not that we don't pay attention, but that our attention is not flexible or free. All of us are paying attention to something all the time, but this attention follows a deep groove of habitual impulses and patterns. Mostly we pay attention to our own inner dialogues, and the objects of our thoughts and desires. So the first task for a Buddhist practitioner is to re-establish the basic flexibility of our attention, by shifting our attention out of the habitual track to something more basic and trustworthy. For Zen students as well as followers of the *Vipassana* tradition, this new focus is usually the breath, the fact of inhaling and exhaling. Immediately on trying to do this, we become aware, possibly for the first time, of the power of our habitual patterns of attention, and how difficult it is to change, at least in comparison with our expectations. It is very common for beginning meditators to express embarrassment at how badly they think they are doing at following the breathing, and they are genuinely surprised to find that this is so for everyone. We are surprised to discover how much our mental and emotional life is enslaved by our habit, and how much resistance there is at first to change.

Actually, in spite of how it may seem at first, our power of attention when allowed to return to the breath is far stronger than its power when entranced by our shifting thoughts or desires. Our attention wants to be free; this is its deepest desire. We simply forget how long it has been that we have habituated our attention to thinking and the objects of the senses. With some regularity of practice, and especially with the experience of extended periods of sitting, one day or several days, our attention will become soft and flexible, and will remain where it is put.

One of the members of our class in mindfulness recounted that during this period when she was trying to practice mindful attention on the breath she was also taking her dog to obedience school. At first the dog ran all around and would not obey her, and tired himself out. But eventually, with patience and repetition, the dog learned to sit calmly at her feet. She noticed that her mind was the same way. What is most important to the dog in the end is to have a good relationship with its owner, and to please her, but the dog needs guidance to know how to do this. Once it knows how, then it comes to prefer that way. That way becomes who the dog is.

Once the attention has become flexible and pliable, then we can learn to focus it in various ways. This aspect of spiritual practice is called *samadhi* or *dhyana*, and many of these practices are much older than the time of the historical Buddha. *Samadhi*, or concentration, and mindful awareness have a large area of overlap, but they are not exactly the same. Concentration is a particular state or territory of consciousness, one in which the attention is fixed and remains on one object. There are many territories of consciousness — dreaming, sleeping, ordinary awareness, distraction, agitation, and so forth — and *samadhi* is one of them. Mindful awareness, on the other hand, is the awareness of what state or territory the mind is in. "Now I am angry," "Now I am very distracted," "Now I am in a state of good concentration". These are all mindful awareness. You can see that awareness is much more expansive, in fact potentially infinite, in scope, and yet the practice of concentration helps it to develop,

helps bring it about. It is the nourishment and cultivator of awareness, and for most of us the fundamental transformation of mind and body that the Buddha path is about does not occur without some disciplined development of *samadhi*. So these two go together, mindful awareness and *samadhi*, the seventh and eighth limbs of the eight-fold path of the Buddha.

There are many ways to develop *samadhi*, and the different traditions of Buddhist and non-Buddhist yoga have different emphases. I like to summarize *samadhi* practice under five broad headings. First is the breath, which I have already mentioned.

Breath is so basic and useful a practice that I do not know of any yogic tradition in which it is not central. The second major category is sound, repetitive or constant sound. Here we have all the various practices of *mantra*, of repetitious formulae such as reciting the name of Buddha, the name of the Lotus Sutra, and so forth. Sound practice is probably the most widespread of all concentration practices and is a very useful practice for householders. I believe D.T. Suzuki was known to say that more people have had an experience of *samadhi* through reciting the name of the Buddha than through zazen.

The third category is that of vision, or visualization. These include simple visual objects like the colored circles or *kasinas* of the *Theravada* tradition, complex spiritual diagrams like the mandalas of the tantric path, and visualizations of the centers and flow of energy within the body.

The fourth category are theme practices, that focus on some theme or phrase of the teaching, such as loving kindness, or death, or impermanence, and so forth. Theme practices have some similarity to sound practice, because they often involve the repetition of a word or phrase in conjunction with the breath, but the emphasis is on the conceptual or intellectual content of the theme, not just the sound. In the *Theravada* tradition, at least, theme practices are not considered to go as deep in their development of *samadhi* as the others, because the thinking mind is still involved to some extent. However, they are very useful, especially as antidotes to particular bad habits. So the meditation on loving kindness, for example, is particularly good for misanthropic or judgemental types of people.

The last category is not like the others. We could call it themeless concentration, or pure focussed awareness, without any special object. In this kind of practice mindful awareness and *samadhi* or concentration merge. Attention rests with itself and does not depend on anything. The boundaries between subject and object, between the various territories of consciousness disappear, and language is not adequate to describe or express our experience. In the tradition of Dogen we have the technical term *shikantaza*, which is often translated "just to sit", and other traditions have other terms. These terms are very useful, but there is a strong tendency for us to imagine that because there is the word that there is a "something" to which the word refers. There is the same problem with the word "emptiness," or "sunyata". These special words in Buddhism are helpful in so far as they hint at or point to an awareness or way of being, and they serve a grammatical convenience by providing some sort of noun to put into the sentence. But we need to remember that the core of spiritual life is not explainable. We express it in how we live and act.

What is also noteworthy about themeless awareness is that in its widest sense it is *always happening*. Unlike the other kinds of practice, it is not a territory you go into

or come out of. It is the territory we are always in which we can awaken to. All of us are in it. It is our home.

These various practices, the specific practices of the Mindfulness or *Vipassana* tradition, or the specific practices of the Zen or other Buddhist traditions, are ways of helping us come to remember that we are living in the midst of our home. Buddhism, as it traveled from country to country, seems to have been willing to adapt the indigenous practices of awareness that already existed in the culture. Much of what we think of as Tibetan Buddhism, for example, already existed as Bön before Buddhism's arrival. The Zen tradition in China absorbed many aspects of Taoist practice and vocabulary. And it was in China and Japan that the practice of *nenbutsu*, the recitation of the Buddha's name, captured the energy of the populace and remains a vital and widespread tradition to this day.

It remains to be seen how the various streams of teaching which are entering the West will sort themselves out, and what, of the richness and diversity of these teachings, will activate the turning of our minds into wisdom. I hope we can all be broad-minded enough to give each tradition or practice its place, if not for us, then for someone else. Our third Bodhisattva vow mentions that there are 80,000 gates of dharma, and we vow to enter them all. I myself am finding great satisfaction in investigating the practices of mindful awareness, and that is what I wanted to share with you.

BIRD WATCHING AT GREEN GULCH

by William W. Stirling

During the past four years I have devoted increasing attention to watching and listening for birds. Most frequently I do so in the watershed formed by Green Gulch and Franks Valley. Steep slopes of coastal scrub define Green Gulch. Redwood Creek, which rises in Muir Woods and then meanders past hillsides of bay and oak, hemlock meadows and alder groves, delineates Franks Valley. The two branches of the Muir Beach watershed meet in the fifth and sixth fields of Green Gulch Farm. Redwood Creek skirts the seaward edges of the fields and loses its current in ponds behind the beach.

Now the first big winter storm has broached the sand bar. The impounded waters have broken through to the sea. The waiting salmon fingerlings have swum out into the ocean and the adults waiting offshore have swum in on their way upstream to spawn in the gravel beds in Muir Woods.

The turning seasons continue their work upon the landscape.

Birds abound in the Muir Beach watershed, both such as flock together — red-winged blackbirds, house finches, pine siskins, pigeons, the several local varieties of swallow — and such as are solitary and secretive, who are nonetheless occasionally visible, more often audible, to a patient eye and ear: winter wren, sora, and varied thrush. Red-tailed hawks and turkey-vultures circle in the sky watching for prey and

carion; towhees (the brown and the rufous-sided) and sparrows of several kinds scratch the ground for seeds and grubs. In all the intervening zones of altitude distinct species fill their respective niches. White-throated swifts dive and dart below the soaring hawks and above the skimming, angled flights of swallows. Varieties of ducks and shorebirds, the snowy and the common egrets, the great blue, the green and the black-crowned night herons dabble and stalk the marshy, flooded perimeter of the lower fields, with occasional picnic outings to the Zendo pond and second reservoir. The burgeoning stands of marsh reed and cat-tails now shelter long-billed marsh wrens and rails as well as the familiar red-winged blackbirds. Depending on the season the willowstands along Green Gulch Creek and Redwood Creek host various warblers: the yellow and the orange-crowned, Wilson's and the yellow-rumped (some call them "butter butts") to name a few, and now (in mid-November), Townsend's warblers are flitting through the ceanothus bushes and creekside foliage. Killdeer, Brewer's blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, crows and ravens can be seen in any of the middle and lower fields most of the year. The dapper black phoebe ranges from the parking lot pond to the beach but always keeps near to water. The red-shafted flicker ranges similarly, but a bit more upslope, preferring the insect delicatessen to be found amidst the coyote bush, scrub oaks and old fence-posts on the hillside. Brown creepers wind their way up, nuthatches pick their way down cypress and pine trees. Three peregrine falcons, two females and one male, were released in the Muir Beach headlands in June; one of these rare and handsome individuals occasionally perches on the telephone lines which loop along parallel to Highway One above the middle fields. Peregrines eat pigeons and quail.

As one walks repeatedly over the same paths and courses, small differences and changes attract the eye. The only real novelty in this is the mind's attention. The successive budding, fruiting and deciduous rhythms of ceanothus and willow take place whether we take notice or not, as do the arrival, courting, nesting, fledging and departures of the seasonal birds. Yet cumulatively, for me, coming to observe the little differences has made a big difference. The process started when I began to differentiate the mass of little brown birds into separate, recognizable species, and then each species into male and female, adult and juvenile. The process continues: I keep seeing additional distinctive, and therefore distinguishing fields marks in the most common birds. And since process is pervasive (as a dear and admired friend has said in another context), an enhanced capacity and interest for seeing out, and noticing in detail what is and is not there, has seemed to sponsor a similar capacity and interest for seeing in, and noticing in detail what is and is not there. The structure, color and shadings of an emotion are complex, distinctive and wonderful as the feather patterns on a song sparrow's head. Watching the birds for joy, watching inner process for understanding: both activities seem to be discrete but related inflexions of a single meditation, a single practice.

The ancients read omens in the flight of birds. I think it is likely, however, that whatever was felt to be ominous emanated from the observer and not from the observed. Sophocles spoke of ". . . the light-hearted race of birds . . ." *Antigone*, line 343. The epithet is apt, and the more I watch birds, the more accurate it seems. The light-hearted quality of the race of birds appears, moreover, to be infectious, which is, I believe, why watching birds is a revitalizing, pleasurable and perspective-enhancing pastime.

HOW TO OBSERVE PRECEPTS

Lecture by Suzuki-roshi

May 17, 1970

This morning I want to talk about Zen, Zen precepts. As you know, the real meaning of precepts is not just rules, but is rather our way of life. When we organize our life, you see something like rules — even though you are not intending to observe some particular rule, the rules are always there. As soon as you get up, in order to wake up completely, you wash your face. That is a precept, one of the precepts. And at a certain time you eat breakfast, when you become hungry; that is, you are observing some rules when you eat breakfast at some certain time. It is actually the way of life you follow naturally. So if you practice *zazen* there will be rules in your practice. So, at the same time, *zazen* practice is precepts, one of the precepts and all of the precepts. If you really understand how Buddhists come to the idea of precepts you will understand the relationship between Zen and precepts. Precepts are just our way of life.

As a Zen student we put emphasis on our everyday practice, including *zazen* practice. And when you think about how to cope with the problem you have in your everyday life, you will realize how important it is to practice *zazen*. Only the power of practice will help you in a true sense.

For instance, when you hit the *mokugyo*, or wooden drum, if you try to control the chanting, if you think, "This is too fast, so I must make their chanting slower," or "Oh, this is too slow, I must make it a little bit faster," if you try to do it by way of your hand or your mind, it doesn't work. Only when you do it from your *hara*, by the feeling you have in *zazen* practice, can you do it. Just by your mind or your hand, you cannot do anything. It does not work. The students will not follow your *mokugyo*. Only when you do it with your *zazen* power can you control it. When you can control yourself very well without having any idea of controlling anything; when you set the right pace, then you can control yourself. And when you can control yourself just as you sit in *zazen* posture, then you can control the chanting perfectly. This is also true with your everyday practice.

When you do something just through your skill or just by your mind, you will not be supported by people and so you will not help others. Only when you do it with *zazen* mind can you help others, and you'll be naturally supported by people. So if the precepts are just some moral code which you have in your mind, those precepts will not work at all. When you forget all the precepts and, without trying to, observe them in the same way as you eat when you are hungry, then naturally precepts are there.

When you forget all about precepts and when you can observe them quite naturally, that is how you keep the precepts, precepts are there.

In your *zazen* practice you just sit. You have no idea of attaining anything. You just sit. What do we mean by just sit? When we just sit we already include everything and we are not simply a part of this cosmic being — we are one with everything. This is just an explanation, but the feeling is that you include everything, and actually this is not true just for *zazen*. When you drink a cup of tea, that activity includes everything. Actually it is so. When you say this is tea, and this is me, it does not include

everything — you are here and tea is there. This is just tea and it does not include everything. But when you drink it without any idea of tasting what it is, being completely one with the tea, then you have no idea of tea and no idea of you. This activity includes everything. So, as Dogen Zenji said, if your everyday activity doesn't include everything, it is not Buddhist activity. It seems almost impossible to feel that way, but actually if you realize, if you experience what is zazen practice, then you will understand what is your everyday life and how everyday life should be for yourself, for others, and for each activity. You will realize that each activity should be zazen.

The words of the famous Zen Master Ummon are often used as koans, and are very well known for their subtlety. The point of his words is difficult to explain, the only way to understand his words is through practice. It almost impossible to understand through words, but he tried to express it in Zen *mondo* — question and answer — in various ways. Later Zen Masters said Ummon's words are like a cup and its lid which fit perfectly. Or, we can say, follow the wave and drive the wave. Do you understand? The boat follows the wave and drives the wave like the *mokugyo* follows the chanting and drives the chanting. If you just follow the chanting the *mokugyo* will get slower and slower; still, unless you listen you will lose control. So you have to listen and at the same time you should lead, you should drive the chanting. It is not just to follow the chanting, you should drive the chanting too. Following the chanting and driving the chanting — how do you do it? If you asked Ummon how you do it, he may say, "What are you thinking about?" He may say, "Just sit."

How can I make the perfect cover for this cup? The only way is just to make a lid and cover it. But if you think too much about it and if you work on it too much, the lid will become smaller and smaller and it will not fit. If you do not observe the cup, it may be too big. Observing the cup and making the cup, that is the way and that is how you practice zazen. That is the power of practice.

So to know the center of things or to have a whole picture of things or events is the point of our practice. And how you do it is to find, to know the center of yourself. When you know where your center is in zazen, that is the center of yourself and everything. When you do not lose your center wherever you are, it means that you are boss. But, if you lose your center you are already mixed up and, even though you insist yourself, you are not in the center.

How you keep the precepts is how you organize your life. And how you organize your life is how we practice zazen. This point can be explained in various ways. When we practice zazen there is nothing outside of us — everything, whole being, is included in our practice. So the merit of practice is just for you yourself because there is just one whole being. There is no you and no objective world. Objective world and subjective world are one and the same in our practice.

We explain it in this way, but that is just an explanation of our zazen practice. When you just sit without being involved in the thinking mind or emotional activity, when you just remain on your black cushion, then that is the practice we mean which is explained in various ways. So as Bodhidharma said "no merit." What will be the merit of practice? "No merit." Because there is nothing but practice, there is no merit to give to anyone or to have for yourself. Merit itself is zazen. Zazen itself is merit. So no merit, just zazen. If you say merit, there is no zazen. So he said "no merit." Whatever you do there is no merit. If there is merit, that is dualistic practice. If you

observe precepts in that way, that is heresy. If you think "I have to observe the ten precepts, one by one," that is wrong practice.

For a long time, many Buddhists tried to observe our precepts with great effort. But that kind of practice violates the precepts because observed in that way, precepts become dualistic, something outside of ourselves. "I have to observe!" That is not the way we practice *zazen*. For *Mahayana* Buddhists dualistic practice is a violation of practice. Why is it? Because when we observe rigidly, or when we are caught by precepts, what will happen? This may also be a violation of the precepts.

There are precepts, but you know, precepts should be observed without any idea of observing. That is how to practice, how to observe precepts. In short, when you observe precepts in the same way as you practice *zazen*, that is perfectly transmitted precepts from Buddha to us. So as *Mahayana* Buddhists, whether or not we know each of the sixteen precepts or the two hundred and fifty precepts, we should still be able to observe precepts. And when we practice *zazen*, we should not practice in such a way that we think "this is just *zazen*." This *zazen* includes all the various studies of Buddhism.

This morning when I joined you I felt a deep feeling. I think that is because you were sitting just before you came to lecture. This kind of feeling is important. This is real *sangha*. With this feeling I think we can carry on our practice and our life in this *zen*do and in this building.

Thank you very much.



Narcissus Quagliata's watercolor sketch for a stained glass window depicting Suzuki-roshi purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The sketch is hanging in the stairwell of 300 Page Street.

SCHEDULE

	SAN FRANCISCO	GREEN GULCH
ZAZEN & SERVICE	Monday through Friday: 5:00 - 7:10 a.m. 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. 8:30 - 9:10 p.m. Saturday: 5:00 - 7:10 a.m. 9:10 - 9:50 a.m.	Monday through Friday: 5:00 - 7:00 a.m. 5:30 p.m. service / 8:00 p.m. zazen (except Friday evening) Saturday: 6:20 - 7:20 a.m. Sunday: 9:00 a.m. zazen
LECTURE	10:00 a.m. Saturday	10:00 a.m. Sunday
SESSINS	One-day sittings, usually during first weekend of each month except June and Oct. Seven-day sesshins usually in June and Oct. (Please phone to confirm)	Weekend sittings usually the third weekend of each month except Feb. and Aug. Seven-day sesshins begin the third Sat. of Feb. and Aug. (Please phone to confirm)
WORK	Regular resident's schedule	Open to non-residents Sunday p.m. Other times by arrangement.
ZAZEN INSTRUCTION	8:30 a.m. Saturday	8:30 a.m. Sunday

Fall Practice Period: September 15 to December 15
ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER Spring Practice Period: January 15 to April 15
 Guest & Summer Practice: May 1 to Labor Day

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