

# Wind Bell



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## MERGING OF DIFFERENCE AND UNITY

San Do Kai (*Can Tong Qi*)

Composed by Sekito Kisen (*Shitou Xiqian*)

*Translated by Thomas Cleary*

The mind of the great sage of India  
Is intimately communicated between east and west.  
People's faculties may be keen or dull,  
But in the path there are no 'southern' or 'northern' patriarchs.  
The spiritual source shines clearly in the light;  
The branching streams flow in the darkness.  
Grasping things is basically delusion;  
Merging with principle is still not enlightenment.  
Each sense and every field  
Interact and do not interact;  
When interacting, they also merge —  
Otherwise, they remain in their own states.  
Forms are basically different in material and appearance,  
Sounds are fundamentally different in pleasant or harsh quality.  
'Darkness' is a word for merging upper and lower;  
'Light' is an expression for distinguishing pure and defiled.  
The four gross elements return to their own natures  
Like a baby taking to its mother;  
Fire heats, wind moves,  
Water wets, earth is solid.  
Eye and form, ear and sound;  
Nose and smell, tongue and taste —  
Thus in all things the leaves spread from the root;  
The whole process must return to the source;  
'Noble' and 'base' are only manners of speaking.  
Right in light there is darkness, but don't confront it as darkness;  
Right in darkness there is light, but don't see it as light.  
Light and dark are relative to one another  
Like forward and backward steps.  
All things have their function —  
It is a matter of use in the appropriate situation.  
Phenomena exist like box and cover joining;  
Principle accords like arrow-points meeting.  
Hearing the words, you should understand the source;  
Don't make up standards on your own.  
If you don't understand the path as it meets your eyes,  
How can you know the way as you walk?  
Progress is not a matter of far or near,  
But if you are confused, mountains and rivers block the way.  
I humbly say to those who study the mystery,  
Don't waste time.



## SANDOKAI LECTURE VIII

by Shunryu Suzuki-roshi

June 17, 1970

NOTE: This lecture covers the following lines of the Sandokai: *Manako wa iro mimi wa onjo. Hana waka shita wa kanso. Shiki mo ichi-ichi no ho ni oite ne ni yotte habunpu su. Hommatsu subekaraku shu ni kisubeshi. Sonpi sono go o mochiu.*

In my last lecture I explained the meaning of the "independence" of everything. This means that although things are interdependent with respect to each other, at the same time, each being is independent because each being includes all other beings. When each being includes the whole world, then each being is actually independent.

NOTE: *The previous Sandokai lecture was incorrectly numbered. The correct number is VII.*

In the *Sandokai* Sekito was talking about the nature of reality while most people, forgetting all about this point, were discriminating about which school of Zen was right or wrong. That is why Sekito Zenji wrote this poem. Here he is talking about reality from the viewpoint of independency. The Southern school is independent and the Northern school is independent and there is no reason why we should compare the two (as to which is correct). Both schools are expressing the whole of Buddhism in their own way. Similarly, the Rinzai school has its own approach to reality and the Soto school has its own approach. Sekito Zenji is pointing at this. Actually he is not so much talking about the dispute between the Northern and Southern schools but about the nature of reality and what Buddha's teaching is in its true sense. He is pointing out this mistake of the two schools of his time.

Tonight I want to explain these six lines which denote reality from the viewpoint of independency: *Manako wa iro mimi wa onjo. Hana waka shita wa kanso.* "For eyes there is color and form; for ears there is sound; for the nose there is smell; and for the tongue there is the salty or sour taste." *Manako* is "eyes"; *iro* means "color and form."

It looks like Sekito is talking dualistically about the dependency of eyes on their object. But when you see something, if you see it in its true sense there is no thing to be seen and no one to see it. Only when you analyse it is there someone who is seeing something and something which is seen. It is one activity which can be seen in two ways. I see something. But when I see something really, there is no one seeing it and nothing to be seen. Both of these are true, and here Sekito is talking about this oneness of eye and form. That is how Buddhists observe things. We understand things in a dualistic way, but we don't forget that our understanding is dualistic. I see. Or someone or something is seen by someone. These are interpretations of subject and object which our thinking mind produces. Subject and object are one, but they are also two.

So what Sekito is saying is that, for eyes, there is form. But at the same time there is no form and no eyes. When you say eyes, eyes include the form. When you say "form", form includes the eyes. If there is no form and nothing to see, eyes are not eyes anymore. Because there is something to see, eyes become eyes. The same is true of ears, nose and tongue. Dogen Zenji says, "If there is no river, there is no boat." Even though there is a boat, it will not be a boat. Because there is a river, a boat becomes a boat. Usually the reason that non-Buddhists become attached to the objective world, or to something they see, is because they understand in only one way. Their understanding is that something exists independent of us. That is the normal way of understanding. "Here is something very sweet to eat." But cake becomes cake because we want to eat it. So we make a cake. There is no cake without us. When we understand in this way, we are seeing cake, but we are not seeing cake. This is how we keep our precepts.

Maybe you will kill some animal or insect. But when you think "There are many earwigs here and they are harmful insects, so I have to kill this one." You understand things only in a dualistic way. Actually earwigs and human beings are one. They are not different. It is impossible to kill an earwig. Even though we think we have killed it, we have not. Even though you squash the earwig, it is still alive. That

tentative form of earwig may vanish, but as long as the whole world, including us, exists, we cannot kill an earwig. When we come to this understanding, we can keep our precepts completely.

But even so, we should not kill anything without a reason, or we should not kill by making up some convenient reason. "Because earwigs eat vegetables I must kill them." "There is nothing wrong with killing animals, so I am killing earwigs." To kill an animal, excusing your action through some reasoning, is not our way. Actually, when you kill an animal, you don't feel so good. That is also included in our understanding: "even though I don't feel so good, I have to kill; even though it is not possible, tentatively I may kill an animal." In this way, something is going on in the big world.

So sticking to some idea of killing or not killing, or to some reason why we kill, or don't kill, is not the actual way of observing precepts. How to observe precepts is to have complete understanding of reality. That is how you don't kill. Do you understand? How you understand my lecture, how you understand zazen, is how you don't kill. In other words, you should not live in the world of duality only. You can observe our world in two ways: from the dualistic viewpoint, and from the viewpoint of the absolute. So, "It is not good to kill," and "Even though you think you killed, you did not kill." Even though you violate your precepts, if after doing it you feel very sorry, if you say "I am sorry" to the earwig, it is Buddha's Way. In this way our practice will go on and on. You may think that if there are precepts, we should observe them literally or else we cannot be Buddhists. But if you feel good just because you observe some precept, that is not the way. To feel sorry when we kill an animal is included in our precepts. Everyone is involved in this kind of activity. But the way they do it and the feeling they have may not be the same. One person has no idea of precepts or attainment. The other is trying to make himself feel good by some religious activity or by observing some precepts. That is not the Buddhist Way.

The Buddhist Way is, in one word, *jiki*. *Jiki* is encouraging people when they have a positive feeling and helping them get rid of their suffering. That is true love. It is not just to give something or to receive something, or to observe precepts, or to attain something that we practice our way. We practice our way with things as they are naturally going. To go with people, to suffer with them, to help to relieve their suffering and to encourage them to go on and on. That is how we observe the precepts. We see something but we do not see something. We feel always the oneness of the subjective and objective worlds, the oneness of eye and form, the oneness of mouth and taste. So we don't have to attach to something especially, and we don't have to feel especially good because of our Buddhist practice. When we practice in this way, we are all independent. That is what Sekito is talking about.

*Shiki mo ichi-ichi no ho ni oite*: "Each being comes out from the root." *Ichi-ichi* means "each"; *ho* means "dharma." Eyes, nose, tongue, ears, sight, smell, taste, and hearing: all these are dharmas, and each being or dharma is rooted in the absolute which is Buddha nature. *Ne ni yotte habunpu su*: "as branches and leaves come out from the trunk." Observing the many things we should look beyond their appear-

ance and know how each thing exists. Because of the root, we exist; because of the absolute Buddha nature, we exist. When we understand things in this way, we have oneness.

*Hommatsu subekaraku shu ni kisubeshi.* *Hom* is "root" and *matsu* is "end". "Root and end," we say. "But both root and end should return to the original nature."

*Sonpi sono go o mochiu.* "the words we use are different, good words and bad words, respectful words and mean words, but through these words, we should understand the absolute being or source of the teaching." That is what is said here.

In the *Bommokyo*, the important scripture of the precepts, it says, "to see is not to see, and not to see is to see." To eat meat is not to eat meat; not to eat meat is not to eat meat. But you understand the precepts in only one way. You observe the precepts by not eating meat. But not to eat meat is to eat meat. Actually, you are eating meat. Do you understand? That is how we observe the precepts. "Don't commit unchaste acts." To see a woman is not to see a woman. Not to see a woman is to see a woman.

There were two monks traveling together and they came to a big river where there was no bridge to cross. While they were standing on the bank a beautiful woman came. So they were very encouraged and at last one of them carried her on his back across the river. Later, when they were on their way, the other monk became furious. "You are a monk! You violated the precept not to touch a woman. Why did you do that?" And the monk who helped the lady said, "You are still carrying the woman. I already forgot about her. You are still violating the precepts." Maybe

*Building the Suzuki-roshi memorial cabin at Tassajara*



according to the rules for a monk it was not completely right for him to carry her. Even so, as all human beings are friends, we should help them even if we violate a Buddhist precept. But if you think about it uselessly, when there is no need to think about it, that is actually violating the precepts. So to see the woman was not to see the woman. When the monk crossed with her on his back, actually he was not helping her. Do you understand? So not to help her was to help her in its true sense.

When you are involved in the dualistic sense of precepts, of man and woman, or monk and layman, that is violating the precepts and is a poor understanding of Buddha's teaching. Without any idea of attainment, without any idea of doing anything, without any idea of meaningful practice, just to sit is our way. To be completely involved in sitting meditation is our *zazen*. And this is how we observe our precepts. Sometimes we will be angry and sometimes we will smile. Sometimes we will be mad at our friends and sometimes we will give a kind word to them. But actually what we are doing is just observing our way. I cannot explain it so well, but I think you must have understood what I mean.

*Question:* I don't feel that talking about Buddhism or the *Sandokai* is the same as my life, or my practice. I feel some separation. Talking about it seems like something else. It's way out there.

*Suzuki-roshi:* I felt that way myself for a pretty long time. It is rather difficult to give you some actual feeling through lecture. That is why the old masters twisted their students' noses or hit them. "Right here! What are you thinking about?" In short, that is the point. I am going around and around the point so I am using words. We say, "to scratch our itchy foot with our shoe on." It doesn't help so much, but even so I have to talk.

*Question:* You said that when we kill an earwig or any insect we can't kill it as long as everything is here. Do you mean that each thing will always be each thing, this lecture will always be this lecture?

*Suzuki-roshi:* When you see things "as it is," it is so.

*Question:* If the body of the earwig dies, what happens to the earwig's karma, where does the earwig go?

*Suzuki-roshi:* Earwigs go to the source of reality. They know where to go. When we speak in this way you will feel that it is just talk. But when you suffer a lot it will be a great relief to know that.

*Question:* Roshi, what is the difference between you and me?

*Suzuki-roshi:* There is difference and no difference — that is why we practice together. Because there is some difference we practice together, and because we are not different we practice together. If you are quite different from me, there is no reason why you should practice with me; and if we are truly the same, there is no reason why we should practice together. Because we are different, we practice our way, and because we are originally the same, we practice our way. Not different and different. This kind of thing is not easy to know. Traditional practice starts from this source of the teaching which is nothingness, which is absolute, which is



*Tassajara*

non-duality. Usually you are attracted to something by your eyes or nose, sight or smell, or some form, but not by this original source of the teaching. The original source is not something which can be described, so we say, "tongueless speech." We are talking about something which it is impossible to talk about. That is called *reisho*, not lecture. We can explain with words, but we are explaining what is empty, so we call these words, "the finger pointing at the moon." If you understand what the moon is, the finger is not necessary any more. So what you should understand is not my words. You should realize by your true experience what I mean. You are blind to this point, so you feel I am talking about something in a sophisticated way which looks like the so-called "Buddhist Way." The Buddhist Way is not those words but the meaning behind the words.

*Question:* In killing the earwig there are no words or memories or anything. There is just the experience of killing the earwig. Is that the teacher which leads you to the source? Is the experience of killing the earwig, not the talk about it, the teacher?

*Suzuki-roshi:* At that time you needn't feel like a good Buddhist or a simple monk or think about violating your precepts. When you are working in the garden for some purpose you should be involved in that activity completely. Sometimes you may be mad at the earwigs. But no one can criticize you. If you are expelled from Tassajara because you killed a lot of earwigs, you should go. "OK, I will go." You should have that much confidence — not confidence, it is more than confidence. You shouldn't have to fight with anyone. If you have that much understanding in what you are doing, that is good — the Way is there.

*Question:* When we say that we shouldn't harm sentient beings, earwigs, or anything else, do we say that because it is possible to harm them, or because it is wrong to harm them, or both?



*Suzuki-roshi:* Both; and we should know that it is not possible. Why it is not possible is because these are just words. Words cannot reach that place. Only when you get caught by words do you say "possible" or "impossible." Killing something, sacrificing something, that is how you actually live every day. You just apply Buddha's teaching to give you some good excuse and you feel good. This is a very superficial understanding of Buddhism. You cannot help feeling bad when you kill something, even though this is a superficial understanding. But that does not mean that you are doing something wrong, because you are not killing actually. So both are true. But if you say, "Because I am not killing anything it is OK to kill," that is wrong because you stick to words or a precept which itself is just words. It is not the true heart, the true feeling of Buddha.

*Question:* Roshi, every animal has a way of living, of eating, of raising its young, of relating to that world, which is in keeping with its particular dharma or Tao. Does not mankind have a particular, specific way of living and eating and raising its young, which is in keeping with its dharma or Tao?

*Suzuki-roshi:* Not absolutely, but we have to make our best effort to keep the dharma — that's what these words are about. Words are necessary, but even though they are necessary you should not think they are complete. We should make constant effort to continuously produce new dharma, new precepts. We say, "this is human life," but that human life is for today, not for tomorrow. Tomorrow we must have improved, better ways to live. This kind of effort should be continued. If we have bad feelings it means something. So we should improve our way. But you should not expect any perfect dharma in terms of "you should" or "you shouldn't." No one can insist on their own way, but we should appreciate their effort to improve the Dharma. That is the Buddhist way. Does it make sense?

*Question:* Can the true dharma be passed on if the disciple does not surpass the teacher? You say that we must always, every day improve our way, make our best effort. I have heard you say, "For the true teaching to be passed on, the disciple must surpass the teacher." Can we carry on the dharma even if we don't surpass the teacher?

*Suzuki-roshi:* Yes. Surpass is also a dualistic world, so we should not stick to it. There is no reason why I should feel good or bad if you surpass me. To talk about which is better is just words.

*Question:* If we had the same understanding as the teacher, the understanding would be static, would be fixed. It would not be changing. If we were to have your understanding right now, what would that be?

*Suzuki-roshi:* It is not so easy. Even to create one page of the new Dharma is very difficult. Even though you feel that you have invented something new, the Buddha is always waiting there for you. "Oh, come here. Good boy! I have some more things for you. Come nearer to me," Buddha will say. So it is very hard to surpass his teaching.

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*"The Song of the Grass-Roof Hermitage" is another work by Sekito. This is the first time, so far as we know, the poem appears in English translation.*

*Traditional Chinese woodcut portrait of Sekito*



SONG OF  
THE GRASS-ROOF HERMITAGE  
by Sekito Kisen (*Shitou Xiqian*)  
translated by Daniel Leighton  
and Kazuaki Tanahashi

*I've built a grass hut where there's nothing of value.  
After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap.*

*When it was completed, fresh weeds appeared.  
Now it's been lived in — covered by weeds.*

*The person in the hut lives here calmly,  
not stuck to inside, outside, or in-between.*

*Places worldly people live, he doesn't live.  
Realms worldly people love, he doesn't love.*

*Though the hut is small, it includes the entire world.  
In ten square feet, an old man illumines forms and their nature.*

*A Great Vehicle bodhisattva trusts without doubt.  
The middling or lowly can't help wondering:  
Will this hut perish or not?*

*Perishable or not, the original master is present,  
not dwelling south or north, east or west.*

*Firmly based on steadiness, it can't be surpassed.  
A shining window below the green pines —  
jade palaces or vermilion towers can't compare with it.*

*Just sitting with head covered all things are at rest.  
Thus, this mountain monk doesn't understand at all.  
Living here he no longer works to get free.  
Who would proudly arrange seats, trying to entice guests?  
Turn around the light to shine within, then just return.  
The vast inconceivable source can't be faced or turned away from.  
Meet the ancestral teachers, be familiar with their instruction,  
bind grasses to build a hut and don't give up.  
Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely.  
Open your hands and walk, innocent.  
Thousands of words, myriad interpretations  
are only to free you from obstructions.  
If you want to know the undying person in the hut,  
don't separate from this skin bag here and now.*

The translators are grateful to Mel Weitsman and Linda Hess for valuable suggestions.





## MOUNTAIN SEAT CEREMONY

of Hakuryu Sojun Mel Weitsman

Berkeley Zen Center, May 19, 1985

*The following is a succinct outline of the ceremony with some interpolated statements by Mel Weitsman and other members of the community, which are offered here to show the tone and spirit of the occasion:*

I. The procession left from the abbot's residence. Traditionally the abbot is invited from some distant place and rests in a nearby home before coming to the temple. This is called *angesho*.

II. Offer of incense and statement at front gate (*sanmon*):

*Although this gate seems small, its true dimensions are limitless.*

*Countless people are naturally free to come and go.*

*Abundant, clear water flows from here.*

*This water reaches everywhere and soaks the ground.*

*In spring flowers blossom all around.*

III. The procession entered the Buddha Hall (in this case, the *zendo*). After bowing, the new abbot put on the Dharma Robe, made offerings to the various Buddhas and ancestors, and accepted the position of abbot. This part is called *shin san shiki*.

Suzuki-roshi and I started the Berkeley Zen Center in 1967 in February on Dwight Way. He helped me very much, and, when he died, I was pretty much alone. A

koan he gave me: One day he walked up to me, and, for no apparent reason, he said, "It's enough just to be alive." Then he walked away. This koan has been with me ever since, and I will continue to chew on it in the future.

Another thing he said to me was, "If my disciples quarrel with each other, I'll leave." So I would like to see harmony among Suzuki-roshi's disciples. I have always felt that each one of his disciples embodied some characteristic of Suzuki-roshi and that, all together, we're his whole body. My hope is that we can all practice together in a harmonious way and keep the spirit of Suzuki-roshi in our midst for a long, long time.

IV. The procession with abbot left and retired to the abbot's room to verify the temple seal.



V. The procession entered the Dharma Hall (*zendo*). The abbot announced that he would take his seat on this mountain, make offerings to his teachers, and ask for questions. This part is called *mondo* or Dharma Combat; members of the sangha came forward one at a time and questioned their new abbot. Then the abbot expressed his understanding, called *teiko* or "backbone," followed by *nanseko* or "responding to the words of the ancestors." After congratulations, the procession left.

#### TEIKO

Twenty-one years ago I started to study with Suzuki-roshi and many of our members at Zen Center. When I met him, I said to myself "This is someone I

want to be with and study with. If I don't do it now, I'll never do it." So I really did something wholeheartedly. I was ordained on this day in 1969, the same day which is, more or less, Suzuki-roshi's birthday.

NANSEKO

A monk asked Hyakujo Zenji, "What is the most wonderful thing?" Hyakujo answered, "To sit alone on this great sublime peak." I have kept this koan in my heart for a long time, and now if someone should ask me the same question, I would answer, "To be able to stand upright on this mountain not knowing where I am or who I am."

VI. After the ceremony there is an official opening ceremony for the zendo, called *kaitan*, which in this instance was officiated by Taizan Maezumi Roshi from the Los Angeles Zen Center.

SELECTIONS FROM THE MONDO

Mountain Seat Ceremony 5/19/85

*Sojun*: If there are any true dragons in this assembly, please come forward and give me your questions.

*Ron*: *Sojun*: For a long time I've practiced with you and many people have come through this gate, and many people have put Zen on their plates. But only a few seem to swallow it. As abbot, what is your function?

*Sojun*: Let's you and I together swallow it. It's not hard. It's not easy.

*Ron*: Thank you. I'm happy that you're here.

*Sojun*: Thank you. I'm happy that you're happy. (*laughter*)

*Meghan*: *Sojun*, the ego drive has been put into us almost as a matter of survival; and yet, we're asked to transcend it. Can you say something?

*Sojun*: Isn't the ego wonderful!

*Meghan*: This has been a wonderful day, and it's the beginning of wonderful days to come.

*Ed Brown*: *Sojun*: What power will you use to direct others?

*Sojun*: One time, in dokusan, I asked Suzuki-roshi, "What is power?" He said, "Don't use it."

*Ed*: What will you use to direct others?

*Sojun*: You turn me, and I'll turn you.

*Fran*: *Sojun*-san, you've been our friend and teacher for so long. Now you're the abbot. What does it mean?

*Sojun*: We'll see.

*Fran*: We'll see all right! (*laughter*)

*Sojun*: Come closer. (*more laughter*)

*Fran*: I've heard that one before! (*laughter*)

I'm very grateful to have you here as abbot.

*Sojun*: I don't know what to do with it.

*Yvonne:* Sojun: We've walked on a path that Suzuki-roshi showed us. Where do we go now?

*Sojun:* Usually when someone asks that question, I say, one step, next step; but this time I think, one step, one thought. Let's think together, please. Let's step together, please.

*Yvonne:* Thank you very much.

*Student:* How will you handle the power that has crushed so many?

*Sojun:* Oh! I'm not so big. I don't have so much power. Buddha has power. If we think about Buddha, there's no problem. If we think about ourselves, there are problems. Stick with Buddha.

*Blanche:* Who can help other people?

*Sojun:* Who is other people? It's hard to help other people. Help yourself.

*Blanche:* How do I do that?

*Sojun:* By taking care of other people.

*Blanche:* What is the self?

*Sojun:* If you take care of yourself and other people, it will reveal itself to you.

*Student:* Sojun: I have no question; can you give me an answer?

*Sojun:* No question, no answer! What are you doing?

*Student:* Growing hair.

*Sojun:* Anyway, you answered my question.

*Ananda:* Sojun: Apart from all this fancy Zen mondo stuff, what is your true heart?

*Sojun:* I love you, Claude.





FROM A TALK BY HOITSU SUZUKI-ROSHI

*given at the Berkeley Zen Center on the day before Sojun Weitsman's Mountain Seat Ceremony, May 18, 1985. (Reprinted from BZC Newsletter, August, 1985)*

Sojun-roshi, as you know, has become my Dharma heir. Although he practiced with my teacher, Shunryu Suzuki-roshi, for a long time, he couldn't finish *Shiho* with him because Suzuki-roshi passed away. So I gave *Shiho*, Dharma transmission, to him. In that way he became my disciple, which also means he is from the same source, Suzuki-roshi. The stream is coming from Suzuki-roshi to myself, and then to Sojun-roshi. Farther upstream it started with Shakyamuni Buddha. I am very happy for this occasion of *Shinzan shiki*, Mountain Seat Ceremony, which follows the Dharma Transmission ceremony we did last year.

Please, I ask everyone to help Sojun complete this ceremony. I called Sojun "Roshi" when I began this talk. That is because, for you, direct students, he is Roshi and Abbot of this temple. So I called him Roshi from the point of view of the direct student to the teacher. So please understand. I know everyone addresses him differently: some "Mel," some "Sojun" — many ways. This is all right. But if you are disciples, students of his, and you want to ask him something about your practice, Dharma questions, on that occasion it is a very nice way to call him "Roshi." I recommend this Dharma relationship.

There are two ways to understand this relationship. One is a horizontal way of equality. You and Sojun, Mel, are equal. That relationship is one that everyone



knows. And there is also in the Dharma a vertical understanding. It means this relationship started from Shakyamuni Buddha through successive ancestors to Roshi. So please keep two levels of understanding. When Shakyamuni Buddha said all beings have Buddha nature, human beings, everything, myself, Bodhidharma and past ancestors, that is the level of equality. After all, we know we are equal — Bodhidharma and myself and Shakyamuni Buddha. But there is also a difference between each one because of the depth of understanding and experience. That difference comes from the practice and is very important.

In the *Shiho*, transmission ceremony, there is a bow, prostration, between the Dharma heir and master. At that time we put the zagu, bowing mats, face to face, and the edge of the Dharma heir's zagu is underneath the teachers' zagu. Then they bow. The student bows nine times and the teacher receives those bows. But the last, the ninth one, they do together. That shows the expression of the difference. When this bowing face to face is finished, there are bows facing toward the Buddha and the altar. And Sojun-san and I faced the altar side by side, and this time Sojun's zagu was on top of my zagu. Then both prostrate nine times to express absolute equality in front of the Buddha's teachings.

So on formal occasions you could call Sojun "Sojun-roshi." But on usual, informal occasions, you can call him something more equal before the teaching or Dharma. Yesterday Sojun-san and I were talking with some students. Some people were wondering whether he would be called "Roshi." But he said, "It's too early; I'm not that yet." That was his response. To hear it makes me so happy . . .

The meaning of the *Shinzan shiki*, Mountain Seat Ceremony, is not to be seated in the mountain seat without moving — not like that. The true meaning is climbing up the mountain, always up, up, up together with everybody, up to the heights of the Dharma, Shakyamuni Buddha's Dharma.

When I had my *Shinzan shiki* in Japan, at the same time my father did *Taizan shiki*, stepping down, descending the mountain seat ceremony. I am going up, be is descending. Two ceremonies on that occasion. In that ceremony, the descending ceremony, my father first had Dharma question and answer period (*mondo*). Somebody asked: "How are you feeling about yourself now descending the mountain?" He replied, "The way of descending the mountain is the way of ascending the mountain." I understand his feelings about why he said that descending is ascending, because he was descending and coming to this country to introduce this practice . . .

I now have three Dharma heirs. One is Bill Kwong-san, one is Sojun-san, and the newest one is Keido-san from Kannon-do in Mountain View. There will not be any more transmissions from me. These three transmissions I did are enough. I did *Shiho* for three people; those three people have sat zazen a lot longer than I have (laughter), and I kind of hesitate, almost, to be called their teacher or master. For me, because of the Dharma connection, relationship with their teacher Shunryu Suzuki, I did this *Shiho* process. My personal feeling is that they are like my elder brothers. That's how I see it. That's how I see Sojun-san, but I don't know how you see me (laughs) . . . Are there any questions?

*Question:* How do you see the practice growing in the United States, and what do we need to pay the most attention to, to nurture, fertilize, make it grow?

*Roshi:* I first came to this country fourteen years ago. At that time Zen practice was becoming very popular. Many people practicing, coming to the San Francisco Zen Center. Zen was booming. When I came this time, practice is more subtle, doesn't have a feeling of booming. Stable and harmonious. That is very good. I don't think the number of people is a measure of how Zen practice is going. It is going well, becoming more rooted. The number is smaller, but there is a quiet, even, subtle practice. Practice in a daily situation. Working on that level you practice yourself. When you have a friend and think the practice is good for people, ask them to come in. In a very steady way this practice needs to continue. Perhaps it might take three hundred years. It might take three hundred years, but the important thing is quality. Please keep your practice looking far to the future, with long, long ideals, and take care of what you have now.





LAMA GOVINDA (1898 - 1985)

THE EDITORS HAD HOPED to have an article on Lama Govinda's life for this issue of the *Wind Bell*, but it was not completed by press time. It will appear in a future issue.

AUTHOR IS SEEKING INFORMATION from persons who knew the late Lama Anagarika Govinda. Specifically he would like to interview anyone who had a sustained contact with the late Lama and his wife, Li Gotami. He would appreciate having access to any correspondence, photographs or journals. Please drop a card with your name and address to: Ken Winkler 2506 Collier Ave., San Diego, CA 92116.



## MEMBERSHIP

We invite friends of Zen Center to express their support by becoming members.

**ANNUAL MEMBER** Those who wish to maintain a long distance affiliation with us may become Annual Members. The suggested pledge is \$50 per year and includes a subscription to the *Wind Bell* and notification of special events, workshops, lectures and classes.

**GENERAL OR SUSTAINING MEMBER** Those who wish to support the development of Buddhist teaching and practice as well as the work and activities of Zen Center may become a General or Sustaining Member. The suggested minimum pledge for a General Member is \$10 a month or \$100 a year. Those who pledge more than \$10 a month are Sustaining Members.

General and Sustaining Members can meet privately with practice leaders, and, when appropriate, arrange for Buddhist ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals. Members are eligible for discounts on sesshins, on Zen Center Bookstore purchases, and on all Mountain Gate Study Center classes after three months membership. Members in this category acquire voting privileges in Zen Center's Board of Directors election after five years of membership.

**PRACTICING AND SANZEN STUDENTS** People practicing regularly at Zen Center can make application to the Membership Committee at either the City Center or Green Gulch Farm to become Sanzen Students. Practicing Members are eligible to vote after two years membership; all Sanzen students are voting members of Zen Center.

*Members' Brunch at the City Center on 21 September, 1985*



## NARAZAKI ROSHI'S VISIT

This fall Zen Center was pleased to be able to help sponsor the visit to the United States of one of the most highly respected Japanese Soto Zen teachers, Ikko Narazaki-roshi, the abbot of Zuiō-ji monastery on Shikoku. Narazaki-roshi came to the United States at the invitation of Dainin Katagiri-roshi to do a special retreat in Minnesota. A number of Zen Center students joined Katagiri-roshi's students in the practice intensive at Hokyo-ji, the Minneapolis Zen Meditation Center's monastic retreat near New Albin, Iowa.

Following the retreat, Narazaki-roshi's party, which included his disciples Hokan Saito-sensei and Shoten Minegishi-sensei, stopped in San Francisco on their way back to Japan and visited Green Gulch, Tassajara, and the City Center. Narazaki-roshi's personal dignity, sincerity, and simplicity served as a reminder of the strength of the Japanese Soto tradition and were an encouragement to us to try to carry on the practice of Dogen Zenji here in America.



SEATED: *Ikko Narazaki-roshi, Dainin Katagiri-roshi*; STANDING: *Sojun Mel Weitsman-sensei, Ekai Korematsu-sensei, Hokan Saito-sensei, Shoten Minegishi-sensei, Michael Wenger, Tenshin Reb Anderson-sensei.*



*300 Page Street*

## GUEST RETREAT PROGRAMS

THIS YEAR at the City Center, Tassajara, and Green Gulch, we have continued to experiment with ways to give people the taste of zen practice and to do this without asking that they leave their jobs or families for extended training in a traditional monastic form.

At the City Center we added to our regular schedule of sittings and sesshins a twelve-week-long Practice Period in the Spring and the Fall. Unlike most Practice Periods, these are flexible enough that a person can join while still continuing to work outside during the day. The Practice Period participants have the opportunity to live at Zen Center, but they can elect to live in their own homes and still experience the effect of a quasi-monastic schedule on the rhythm of their daily work and meditation practice.

In addition, people can now arrange for retreat stays at 300 Page Street. Retreatants can participate in the scheduled meditation and services and share meals with residents, but there are no specific requirements. This program has been much appreciated by a number of people who have wanted the refuge of temple space.

This fall the City Center is planning to offer weekend introductions to zen practice. They will have a lighter meditation schedule than our one-day sittings.

At Tassajara this past summer, in response to the many guests who have requested some way of more fully experiencing Buddhist practice, we offered a Retreat Week. The schedule for the retreat: a half hour period of zazen before breakfast; a communal work period in the morning; a class with Tenshin Reb Anderson in the afternoon; a silent bath time; and meetings of small groups in the evening with practice leaders Blanche Hartman, Lew Hartman, Katherine Thanas, and Tom Girardot. Meals were simpler; breakfast and dinner were taken with students. Regularly scheduled periods of zazen in the early morning and evening were, of course, open to retreatants. We plan to offer this program again next guest season.

The Selver-Brooks workshops at Tassajara have been perennial favorites over the years, so this year we added a Zen/Yoga Retreat in June which combined zazen meditation and Iyengar Hatha Yoga. It was led by Tenshin Reb Anderson, Assistant Abbot of Zen Center, and his wife, Rusa Chiu, who has been studying Iyengar Yoga for more than ten years both in this country and in India. The Tassajara zendo was transformed into a Yoga Room during the day, and special yoga classes were arranged for students at Tassajara interested in participating. The schedule included periods of zazen during the day and lectures in the evening.

In addition, about two hundred people participated in the new Guest Practice Opportunity Program this summer at Tassajara. This program enabled visitors to enjoy the benefits of being guests at Tassajara and, at the same time, to participate extensively in the student program. Participants sat two periods of zazen a day, worked in the mornings, and ate breakfast and lunch with students. Afternoons were unscheduled, dinner was in the guest dining room, and accommodations were in guest cabins. Many people who have been coming to Tassajara for years chose to join the Guest Practice Opportunity Program.

#### *Rebuilding the Tassajara Bath House*







*Interior of Lindisfarne Hall at Green Gulch Farm*

The Wheelwright Center at Green Gulch Farm has been quietly busy this year. More and more people are finding ways of "retreating" to Green Gulch for work, for conferences, for quiet walks in the surrounding hills, and for spiritual retreat - by joining the meditation and work of the Green Gulch community.

Offerings at Green Gulch include a guest program, a Buddhist retreat program and regular workshops on meditation practices for "every day life". These may be attended both by people staying over at Green Gulch and by people who come for the day. Unlike our other centers, it is possible for groups as well as individuals to use the Green Gulch facilities and we are taking care of many small conferences with up to thirty participants.

We have conducted and will continue to offer events such as: meditation workshops on everyday life with Yvonne Rand or Ed Brown, various aspects of gardening with Wendy Johnson, Vipassana retreats with Jack Kornfield, and workshops on Living/Dying with Stephen Levine. We are also planning new workshops such as on yoga and zen practice, on death and dying, workshops for specific helping professions, and on the natural history of Green Gulch valley.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION on our guest programs, please write to the City Center Office and ask to be put on our mailing list. Please indicate if you are specifically interested in any one of the practice centers. Individual and group reservations for the Green Gulch Farm Guest Program can be made directly by calling (415) 383-3086.

ZEN CENTER  
COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET

| ASSETS   | as of<br>April 30, 1985 | as of<br>April 30, 1984 | Increase<br>(Decrease) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Current Assets:                                      |                         |                         |                        |
| Cash/Marketable Securities                           | \$ 165,599              | \$ 112,322              | \$ 53,277              |
| Accounts Receivable                                  | 92,410                  | 112,041                 | (19,631)               |
| Allowance for losses                                 | (1,050)                 | (19,412)                | 18,362                 |
| Inventories  | 102,723                 | 104,277                 | (1,554)                |
| Prepaid Expenses                                     | <u>(1,859)</u>          | <u>(238)</u>            | <u>(1,621)</u>         |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>                          | <u>357,823</u>          | <u>308,990</u>          | <u>48,833</u>          |
| Properties, at cost:                                 |                         |                         |                        |
| Buildings and<br>Operations Equipment                | 4,220,703               | 3,608,530               | 612,173                |
| Capital in Progress                                  | 90,688                  | 589,615                 | (498,927)              |
| Less accumulated depreciation                        | <u>(807,957)</u>        | <u>(678,441)</u>        | <u>(129,516)</u>       |
| <b>TOTAL PROPERTIES</b>                              | <u>3,503,434</u>        | <u>3,519,704</u>        | <u>(16,270)</u>        |
| Notes and Accounts Receivable,<br>less current above | 152,585                 | 148,910                 | 3,675                  |
| Other Assets   | <u>2,100</u>            | <u>2,200</u>            | <u>(100)</u>           |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                                  | <u>4,015,942</u>        | <u>3,979,804</u>        | <u>36,138</u>          |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                                   |                         |                         |                        |
| Current Liabilities:                                 |                         |                         |                        |
| Accounts Payable                                     | 75,218                  | 78,502                  | (3,284)                |
| Accrued Expenses                                     | 15,527                  | 13,106                  | 2,421                  |
| Deferred Income                                      | 168,210                 | 171,897                 | (3,687)                |
| Long term debt, due within a year                    | <u>62,012</u>           | <u>97,800</u>           | <u>(35,788)</u>        |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>                     | <u>320,967</u>          | <u>361,305</u>          | <u>(40,338)</u>        |
| Long Term Debt (Less current<br>portion above)       |                         |                         |                        |
| Notes Payable  | 10,940                  | 58,907                  | (47,967)               |
| Mortgages  | 576,147                 | 668,173                 | (92,026)               |
| No-interest Loans                                    | <u>46,188</u>           | <u>56,853</u>           | <u>(10,665)</u>        |
| <b>TOTAL LONG TERM DEBT</b>                          | <u>633,275</u>          | <u>783,933</u>          | <u>(150,658)</u>       |
| Fund Balance (Beginning)                             | 2,834,782               | 2,562,166               | 272,616                |
| Income over Expenses                                 | <u>226,918</u>          | <u>272,400</u>          | <u>(45,482)</u>        |
| Fund Balance (Ending)                                | <u>3,061,700</u>        | <u>2,834,566</u>        | <u>227,134</u>         |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND<br/>FUND BALANCE</b>        | <u>4,015,942</u>        | <u>3,979,804</u>        | <u>36,138</u>          |

COMPARATIVE INCOME STATEMENT

INCOME

|                       |                         |                         |                       |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Revenue from Students | \$ 243,077              | \$ 230,900              | \$ 12,177             |
| Self Support Revenue  | 3,601,836               | 3,249,300               | 352,536               |
| Other Income          | <u>251,719</u>          | <u>348,500</u>          | <u>(96,781)</u>       |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>   | <b><u>4,096,632</u></b> | <b><u>3,828,700</u></b> | <b><u>267,932</u></b> |

EXPENSES:

|                             |                         |                         |                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Student Scholarship Support | \$ 664,853              | \$ 756,600              | \$(91,747)            |
| Wages                       | 1,196,066               | 787,600                 | 408,466               |
| Purchases for Resale        | 894,853                 | 880,200                 | 14,653                |
| Other Operating Expenses    | <u>1,421,149</u>        | <u>1,241,200</u>        | <u>179,949</u>        |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>       | <b><u>4,176,921</u></b> | <b><u>3,665,600</u></b> | <b><u>511,321</u></b> |

|               |            |            |           |
|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| CONTRIBUTIONS | \$ 307,207 | \$ 109,300 | \$197,907 |
|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|

|  |                   |                   |                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| INCOME PLUS CONTRIBUTIONS<br>OVER EXPENSES | <u>\$ 226,918</u> | <u>\$ 272,400</u> | <u>\$(45,482)</u> |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|



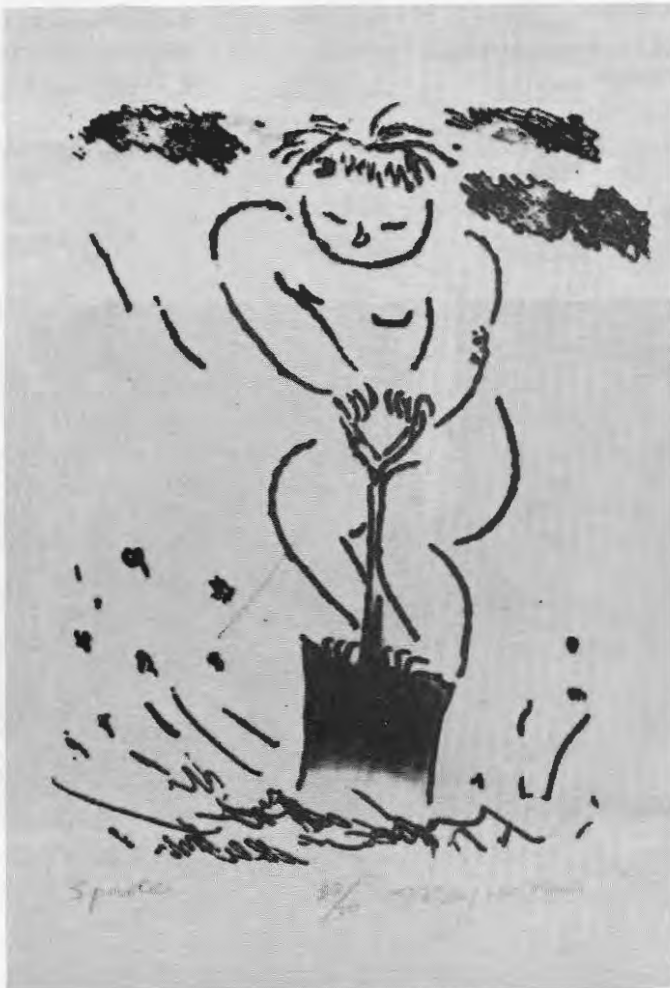
## GREEN GULCH FARM AND GARDEN CALENDAR

We are pleased to announce the publication of the GREEN GULCH FARM AND GARDEN CALENDAR for 1986.

This calendar is illustrated with paintings and drawings of Green Gulch created by many artist friends, with calligraphy by Jenny Groat. The calendar features notations of moon cycles and various Buddhist ceremonies as observed at Green Gulch, information on gardening and on the natural history of the region of San Francisco and the coast to the north.

The calendar will be available in late October for \$9.50, including tax. When ordering please include \$2.00 for postage and handling per shipment. Mail orders to:

CALENDAR, Green Gulch Farm, Star Route, Sausalito, CA 94965





*Hawk cutouts in 300 Page Street courtyard to warn birds of windows*

## BIRDS AT ZEN CENTER

Of Residents and Migrants, Native or Otherwise

by William W. Sterling

The more knowledgeable lay observers, even if not yet so keen of eye as initiates but nevertheless adequately familiar with current technical terms, will speak of residents, migrants, casuals, native and introduced species, and also, rarely, of accidentals. The last term refers to an appearance which is attested but is so unlikely that initially it commands disbelief. Rigorous skepticism is the watchword, at least until an acknowledged expert, or better, a team of experts, has sifted the data and verified the identification.

The exercise of such expertise turns, it would seem, on the ability to know an "accidental" for what it truly is. And in this endeavor much is to be gained from knowing what it is not, that is, from a thorough acquaintance with the usual and common occurrences of native species. Elimination is then possible and the field of choice can be narrowed. The trick, I suspect, is constant alertness; although in the expert, of course, what to me looks tricky, subtle or unattainable, is actually the reflex of long practice and training: a comfortable habit of always looking freshly and with an open mind at whatever presents itself.

One of my regular and most patient teachers is Charles Maury Wallace Sterling, whose constant freshness of mind on our outings together confers still sharper keenness on eyes and ears already preternaturally acute. Once on a jaunt along the levee which marks the boundary between Green Gulch Farm and Muir Beach, he and I met a flock of sparrows. A quick look confirmed they were white-crowned sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) foraging on the levee path. I continued to move along, hoping to find a less common, more anecdotal species in the willows or ponds ahead of us. My less hasty companion pulled me back, saying "there's another bird in there". Jerked into the present I thought: renew your humility, focus the glasses, look again. Reflect on ways to kick the assumption habit (a quick, assured scan will suffice for those mere sparrows!) and observe without forewitness or expectation what is actually there. Maury had picked out a lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) busily feeding and hopping about with the white-crowns. Lark sparrows are not uncommon although this one's presence was unusual and would have gone unnoticed had I been alone.

There are many fewer birds to be seen in and around the City Center than at Tassajara or Green Gulch. The conditions of the habitat at the intersection of Page and Laguna Streets are too limiting for an abundance of species. Nevertheless, birds are present, and like other beings observable in the vicinity, they include residents and migrants. And there as elsewhere one always hopes — at least I do — sometime, unexpectedly, by surprise, to see a rarity, an accidental.

Peter Bailey, himself a resident of the City Center and an attentive observer of circumambient warm-blooded life in the neighborhood, has recorded good field notes about the house-finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), the most common avian denizen of the City Center. This gregarious finch, a cousin of sparrows and towhees, nests in the ivy on the inner courtyard walls and follows its domestic practice at the City Center all year long.

The house-finch is classified as a native, for it has been observable in the Bay Area for as long as anyone recording observations has bothered to look. The house-finch is also a resident, for it lives here all year long. (It was introduced to the East Coast in the 1940's). The ring-billed gull (*Larus delawarensis*) which Maury and I saw overhead a few days before the autumn equinox — we were standing on Laguna near the side-entrance to the Zendo — is also a resident native.

But the next most common bird about the City Center, the rock dove (*Columba livia*), more familiar as "pigeon", while resident, is not indigenous. The same is true of the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), which is ubiquitous in residential San Francisco. Both species, pigeon and house-sparrow, are residents, being with us all year round. But neither is a native. They are introduced species, brought to this country from the Old World by human agency. Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) are also of this sort: an introduced species, now resident, and a species whose numbers and pesty habits, particularly its predation upon hole-nesting native species (e.g., flickers, other woodpeckers and bluebirds) can incite normally pacific birdwatchers to fantasies of avian genocide.

Brewer's blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) is widespread throughout the United States, the common blackbird of playgrounds and city parks: the park next to the Guest House and Daniel Koshland Park no less than Golden Gate Park. The beady yellow eye of the glossy blue-black male is distinctive.

Maury and I saw only one species of native migratory bird in the City Center neighborhood, a single western flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*) flitting after insects in the pine trees at the lower end of Koshland Park, presumably now on its way to Mexico for the winter.

Resident and migrant, native and exotic, are terms which locate and identify the speaker as much as they do the referent. Who am I, simply because my mailbox has a Bay Area address, to say that a western flycatcher is not also a resident? From the flycatcher's point of view, the entirety of North America is home ground, with particular residences that alternate with the seasons. My frame of reference is likely too confined; the close fit of my normal point of view is virtually unsheddable. Consider "native" and "introduced". We do not contend, for example, that the Dharma is indelibly oriental. Or do we? My own sense has been that we ascribe to it a universal nature, a planetary adaptability. The Dharma has the capacity to flourish anywhere — as starlings can — notwithstanding initial resistance by the local species who regard themselves as prior in time and therefore superior in right.

So where, finally, is the accidental to be found, the rare bird, the rare man or woman? Maury and I saw none on our recent walk-about in San Francisco. Or perhaps we did and failed to note the signs. In any event there are none to report at this writing. Nevertheless, we do have a working hypothesis for locating the rare bird: keep looking in all the usual places. Occasionally a trip away from home may be in order to see known examples: go to the mountains near Ventura in Southern California to see the nearly extinct California condor; go to Bodhgaya; go to Tibet. But most of the time just keeping fresh and alert in our ordinary daily encounters will do. Just often enough there is a lark sparrow in the flock, and who knows what else that we may have overlooked or misjudged: a phoenix or a bodhisattva.



*A resident at 300 Page Street*



#### LECTURE BY ED BROWN

From Green Gulch Farm sesshin lectures, August 1985

Here we are again, sitting together . . . breathing. How is it for you? How is your breath? Relaxed? Tight? Smooth? Jerky? Shallow? Deep? How is the body and mind of the present? The breath of the present? Welcome home. Here we are. Welcome to the indescribable present.

An old Zen teacher once said, "Just to take this posture is to have the right state of mind." Funny business, this "right" state of mind, because it is not right compared to something wrong. This "right mind" is not determined by comparing, judging, evaluating, or measuring, so you cannot say, "Ah ha, now I've got it!" Right mind is exactly here. How is it for you? And exactly here is not something special — it's just not "somewhere else."

So this week, during meditation, we practice being here, exactly here: walking, sitting, standing, lying, breathing, eating, or working. Don't go off somewhere else, and, if you do, come back. That's a joke, you know, because where else could you be but here! And yet we need to do it, to practice being here.

Now you may notice that we have a kind of addiction, a habit of wanting to always be right, of wanting to do the right thing. When we start practicing meditation, we say, "What am I supposed to do? What should I do? How do I do it right?" And the answer is to stop asking those questions. Do you understand? The point is to find out what is actually happening, exactly here. When you look closely you will find that the "supposed to" or "should" is not found in what is actually happening, but is something we add, something we think.

We think that if I do what I am supposed to do, everything will work out just the way IT is supposed to work out. Of course, this is ridiculous, but we still believe it.



I mean, really? Starting when? How could you decide, how would you ever know, that you were doing what you were supposed to be doing? When everything works out the way it is supposed to work out, right? And since that never happens, you know you must have done something wrong. "But I just did what I was supposed to do."

Fine, but does the universe actually work that way? What a bind to put yourself in. So instead of asking what you are supposed to do, try asking, "What do I really want?" "What do I really want," right now, exactly here? Asking this question may seem quite formidable, it may seem difficult. Just doing what you should was so simple and now you have to figure it out: "Oh me, oh my, it would be up to me! I'd have to decide. I could be blamed. What AM I to do?"

So what do I really want? Do I really think it is possible to make everything work out just the way it is supposed to work out, if only I behaved properly, correctly, or perfectly? No? Then what do I really want? This is something to work on, something that may require some digging. Do I want to control things better? Or, realizing that I cannot control things, do I want to find composure right on this spot? Do I want to be the slave of every whim that comes along? Or do I want to be free and unmoved? Do I want to be stonelike and unmoved, removed? Or in intimate contact, touching and touched by others? To find out what I want I have to dig and I have to sift, to sort through a lot of earth. Hard work, heavy work, a coming down to earth. But how else will I be able to take root moment after moment exactly where I am?

One of the ancients was asked, "Please liberate me, please free me." And the ancient replied, "Who is binding you?" At this the disciple had an insight. Do you have someone telling you what to do? How to think? Is there someone who feels trapped — tied down? Who does all this? No one tying down — no one to be freed. We do not need to learn how to meditate right. We just meditate. Who knows what will happen.

Let's sit quietly. Breathing a full, warm, open breath. In this quietness, what is your way? What would be worthy of respect? What would be worthy of devotion? What will you take time for? Will you take some time to breathe? Will you take some time to make yourself at home right where you are? An old expression says, "Take off the blinders, unload the saddlebags." Are you willing to settle here, exactly here, this body, this mind? What is it like?

I'll tell you a poem, by Gary Snyder — he was visiting Wendell and Tanya Berry in Kentucky:

Under dead leaves Tanya finds a tortoise  
matching the leaves — legs pulled in —

And we look at woodchuck holes that dive  
under limestone ledges  
scabottom strata,  
who lives there brushes furry back  
on shell and coral.

Most holes with leaves and twigs around the door,  
nobody in.

Wendell, crouched down,  
sticks his face in a woodchuck hole  
"Hey, smell that, it's a fox!"  
I go on my knees,  
put the opening to my face  
like a mask. No light;  
all smell: sour — warm —

Splintered bones, scats? feathers?  
Wreathing bodies — wild —

Some home.

This poem is about being right here, at home. It may not be beautiful and glamorous, pristine and perfect. But take some time, make yourself at home.

I read an article recently in the *Wall Street Journal* which said, "Even Canned Corn Strains Abilities of Modern Cook." The article said that when the directions were left off the canned corn the company received so many calls from consumers wondering what to do that they put the directions back on. The directions were to "Put corn in saucepan on heated burner." This is our modern life! The accompanying article said, "How Much Will People Pay to Save Time Cooking? Plenty." You want to know what to do? Spend some time with the ingredients. Spend some time with yourself. Spend some time with your breath. Stop saving time. Will you do this? There is no answer beyond this. Your life isn't canned corn. There are no directions.

Spending time with yourself, making yourself at home: this is meditation. Naturally, we sometimes get concerned about whether we are doing "good" meditation or "bad" meditation, but that is missing the point. As Steven Levine puts it, "When people say, 'Oh, I'm really getting there, my sitting is getting so beautiful, it's so wonderful, I can just sit all day,' I think, 'oh, oh, they're not experiencing all of themselves.'" I mean, let's realize and actualize what it is to be alive, to be human. Let's keep it real.

There is tremendous power in unearthing, in recognizing distracted, scattered mind, the mind which would rather be anywhere but here, and spending some time there, with that mind: rather than an anonymous voice from the dark bossing you around, scattered mind is someone you can sit down and hang out with.

One of the basic practices of our meditation is following the breath. When we follow the breath continuously, evenly, we are developing another kind of mind, a mind that is not concerned with how the breath should be, but a mind which can just be with the breath, exactly, precisely. The mind that can stay with the breath is subtle, soft, tender, warm, caring. We say "the mind which can stay with the breath," but that is not quite right. It is not a mind different than the breath, it is the mind of the breath. The breath itself is this mind. So we practice letting go of the mind of accomplishing, attaining, and achieving. We practice entering the mind of the breath, settling into the mind of breathing. This is opening, unfolding, blossoming — but we can't rush it. It's the work of a lifetime. Our breath is not

just in the front of our body, but in the back, the stomach, the shoulders. We can touch the pain in our body with the breath softening around the pain; breath inside breath; breath welcoming home the breath.

I call the fourth day of sesshin "Limp Day." By the fourth day, we have discovered our limp. We realize we can't breeze through, untouched, unscathed. Since it is Limp Day, I want to bring up part of a poem by Robert Bly. It's called *My Father's Wedding Day, 1924*. Robert introduces the poem by saying that he had been looking at a log and it reminded him of his father's leg, his father's wooden leg, but, he continues, his father didn't have a wooden leg. Here's the beginning of the poem:

Today, lonely for my father, I saw  
a log or branch  
long, bent, ragged, bark gone.  
I felt lonely for my father when I saw it.  
It was the log that lay  
beside my uncle's milk wagon.

Some men walk with an invisible limp,  
stagger, or drag a leg: their sons are often angry.  
Only recently I thought:  
Doing what you want,

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#### COMPLETION OF TEA HOUSE CEREMONY

On February 1 and 2, 1986, we will celebrate the completion of the Tea House at Green Gulch Farm with a tea party. The event will fall on the New Year (according to the old "Lunar" calendar.) This will occur at a time of reaffirmation and turning from Winter's darkness to the new green of Spring. Traditional tea and cakes and appropriate food and drink will be served to honor this occasion. All those interested in joining this event may call the Green Gulch Farm office for more information.

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is that like limping?

Tracks of it show in the sand.

Have you seen those giant bird-men of Bhutan?

Men in bird's masks, with pig's noses, dancing,

teeth like a dog's, sometimes

dancing on one bad leg!

They do what they want,

the dog's teeth say that.

But I grew up without dog's teeth,

showed a whole body,

left only clear tracks in the sand.

I learned to walk swiftly, easily,

no trace of a limp. I even

leaped a little. Guess

where my defect is!

What then? If a man, cautious, hides

his limp, somebody has to limp it!

Things do it, the surroundings limp.

House walls get scars. The car breaks

down. Matter, in drudgery, takes it up.

So what about your limp? Are you hiding it? Hiding from it? Or do you dance on one bad leg? And have you found your dog's teeth, the strength and determination to do what you want, what you really want, and risk limping? Now that you can't walk swiftly or easily, can you guess where your defect is? Our suffering is to be not willing to limp. Our freedom is to dance on one bad leg!

Let's talk some more about that dog. Irmgard Schloegl, who teaches Zen in London, uses a metaphor about a dog to bring up what Zen practice is about. It goes something like this:

Once upon a time you were living with a dog in a big house. Sometimes the dog did not behave properly, especially when guests came over. So one day you locked the dog in the basement. The dog howled mournfully, barked loudly, so you moved up to the second floor. Occasionally, you could still hear the dog, so you moved up to the third floor, and finally the attic. What a nice view! And no need to be bothered by barking, misbehaving dogs. The house is neat and tidy — no problems here!

But one day it occurs to you, "Oh me, oh my, I locked the dog in the basement and just left him there. How awful, and he was such fun to have around. My life has been rather empty since then, rather dry and predictable. I wonder if I could ever be friends with him again?"

So you make your way down to the basement. You get down there and the dog snarls at you. "But I want to be your friend," you say. The dog just snarls. He only knows you have locked him up. If you want to make friends with the dog it takes some time. You'll need to be patient, you'll need to be inventive. You push the food over to him with a long pole. You arrange to let him out into the yard. Little by little, you make friends.

Do you understand? That dog in the basement is not just a dog in the basement. That dog is not inherently a dog, but is a dog because of the way we have treated ourselves. We snarl when we have locked ourselves up in the basement. But that



*Path at Tassajara*

dog is our great energy, our tremendous vitality, our pain and hurt that we have pushed away. Then we wonder why we feel so unalive!

What would it be like to welcome yourself home, to welcome home your whole body and mind. To make it all right to be here? No more worry about not being good enough, no more worry about not being perfect. Welcome home. What would it be like? Think about it carefully. What kind of mind would that dog open up to? What kind of mind would you be willing to feel vulnerable with? You can't just barge up to the dog, and say, "What the hell's the matter with you anyway?" Maybe you say to the dog, "I'm going to be sitting quietly, and if you have anything to tell me, drop by. I'd love to see you."

So we have to watch what we say to ourselves, what we call things. Suppose my neck hurts and I say, "you really are a pain — get lost." How am I going to feel? Terrible. My neck will hurt: "He hates me. He wants me to just go away. He doesn't want to have anything to do with me. I'm going to bark and howl, and when that gets no response, I'm going to lie down and dog it! To hell with him. He just bosses me around and expects me to do what he says. Well, forget it!"

But try calling the pain Buddha, try calling it Dharma. Your neck is hurting. That is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Gee, and we thought it was a pain in the neck!

Years ago, at one of my first sesshins, my knees were hurting fiercely, and I said to them, "Damn you, I'll teach you to hurt me like that." Then I pushed on them to

hurt them back! Then they hurt me, and I hurt them back. So who is hurting whom? No wonder the dog barks in the basement. First you lock him up and then when he complains, you kick him. Next you have to protect yourself, right? That dog is vicious. Anybody can see that, so you have to keep him locked up. It's obvious, but is it really?

This is meditation. To meet the dog, and even more importantly, to meet the dog keeper. To watch what you say, especially to yourself, and to watch what you call things, especially yourself. And to put an end to the samsaric dynamic that keeps the dog a dog and the master a master. The master is the dog, and the dog is the master. Figure that one out.

Buddhism gives us many tools, many practices to do this work. But we often get it wrong, thinking that our practice is to better tame the dog, when it is more to the point to get the keeper to lighten up. It is so difficult to be here because we are so hard on ourselves, so demanding, so judgmental. Who would want to hang around here with someone like that? Let me out of here. And our energy deserts us, or propels us along with underlying resentment, anger, and hatred. So it helps to lighten up. As I heard recently, "Angels can fly because they take themselves so lightly." Lightening up and also owning up to what we have been doing, what we do to ourselves, what we demand of our body and mind. As my friend Stephen puts it, "You can't let go of something you don't acknowledge— that's called suppression."

I have been talking about being exactly with things, as they arise, in the very heart of things, absolutely still, dancing on one bad leg. You might shatter into a million pieces. You might burn up completely. You cannot figure it out. Just do it. Stop bossing yourself around and telling yourself what to do and how to make it right. Enter the heart of the matter. Breathe, breathe a breath, a breath within a breath, a breath welcoming home the breath.

Zen teacher Rinzai was asked by another master where he came from, and he replied, "From Obaku's." "And what did Obaku have to say?" asked the master. Rinzai replied, "He had nothing to say." "Why didn't he have anything to say?" Rinzai answered, "Even if he had something to say, he had no place to say it." The master said, "Try me and let's see." Rinzai responded, "An arrow in the Western Sky." Tremendous space at the heart of the matter, exactly with things as they arise. Where is the Western Sky after all? Which way is the arrow pointing? Obaku had nothing to say.

We have been talking about many things: energy, determination, faith, compassion, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, emptiness, without saying that that is what we have been talking about. Now I want to tell you something which Dogen Zenji says about sitting, and I take this as a metaphor for any time you are exactly with things-as-they-are, "not wishing," as Dogen says in another place, "for more color and brightness":

At the very time of sitting, examine thoroughly whether the universe is horizontal or vertical. At this very time, what is this sitting itself? Is it wheeling about in perfect freedom? Is it like the spontaneous vigor of fish swimming? Is it sitting within sit-

ting? Is it sitting within body and mind? Or is it sitting which has cast off sitting within sitting, sitting within body and mind and the like?

In this way, while sitting, examine thoroughly thousands and tens of thousands of such details. It is a body sitting. It is a mind sitting. It is a body and mind which have cast off sitting, cast off sitting within sitting, sitting within body and mind.

Do you know this place? Suddenly the thread breaks, and you plunge into the darkness. Only it's not dark there! It's just not the way you thought it would be: breathing, physical sensations, feeling, emotions, an arrow in the Western Sky. Welcome home. Where have you been?



*"I know you are concerned with the dangers of nuclear war. I am enclosing a photo I took at the museum at Hiroshima. It is of a stone Buddha head damaged by the blast of the original bomb. Burn scars on stone!" (Sterling Doughty)*

## SCHEDULE

|  | SAN FRANCISCO   | GREEN GULCH   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>ZAZEN<br/>AND<br/>SERVICE</b>   | <b>MONDAY through FRIDAY:</b><br>5 - 7:10 a m (2 zazen<br>periods & service)<br>5:30 - 6:30 p m (1 zazen<br>period & service)   | <b>MONDAY through FRIDAY:</b><br>5 - 7 a m (2 zazen<br>periods & service)<br>5 - 6 p m (zazen & service)<br>8 p m (zazen only)  |
|  | <b>SATURDAY:</b><br>5 - 7:10 a m (2 zazen<br>periods & service)<br>9:10 - 9:50 a m (zazen only)   | <b>SATURDAY:</b><br>7 - 8 a m (zazen & service)   |
|  | <b>SUNDAY:</b><br>No schedule   | <b>SUNDAY:</b><br>6 - 7 a m (zazen & service)<br>9:30 a m (2 zazen<br>periods & service)  |
| <b>LECTURE</b>   | <b>SATURDAY:</b> 10 a m   | <b>SUNDAY:</b> 10:15 a m  |
| <b>SESSHINS</b>  | <b>ONE-DAY SITTINGS:</b> usually in<br>first weekend of each month<br>except during months in which<br>a 7-day sesshin is scheduled.<br><br><b>SEVEN-DAY SESSHINS:</b> usually in<br>June, September and October.<br><i>(Please phone to confirm)</i> | <b>ONE-DAY SITTINGS:</b> usually on<br>third Saturday of each month<br>except during months in which<br>a 7-day sesshin is scheduled.<br><br><b>SEVEN-DAY SESSHINS:</b> usually in<br>April and August.<br><i>(Please phone to confirm)</i> |
| <b>ZAZEN<br/>INSTRUCTION</b>   | <b>SATURDAY:</b> 8:30 a m   | <b>SUNDAY:</b> 8:45 a m   |
| <b>ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER</b>   |   |   |
| Fall Work Period: September 15 - November 1<br>November Retreat: November 2 - November 29<br>Spring Practice Period: January 10 - April 15<br>Guest & Summer Practice: May 1 - Labor Day |   |   |

ZEN CENTER OFFICE — 300 Page Street, San Francisco 94102 (415) 863-3136

GREEN GULCH FARM — Star Route, Sausalito, 94965 (415) 383-3134

ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER — Carmel Valley, California 93924

WIND BELL STAFF: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Michael Wenger / EDITORS: Tenshin Reb Anderson, Peter Bailey, Tom Cabarga, Yvonne Rand / DESIGN and LAYOUT: Peter Bailey / PHOTOGRAPHERS: Theresa Bacon, p. 37; Robert S. Boni, p. 26-27; Gene deSchmidt, p. 25; Sterling Doughty, p. 39; Li Gotami, p. 19; Skip Kimura, p. 35; Mathew Lee, p. 32; Rob Lee p. 8; Barbara Lubanski, pp. 6, 12, 15, 21, 22, 23, 29, 31; Gilbert Robinson, p. 24; Pam Smith, p. 18; Al Tribe, pp. 13, 16; ILLUSTRATIONS: *Front Cover* — JIZO by Morikazu Kumagai; Dan Leighton, p. 11; Mayumi Oda, p. 28