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Correction

In our last issue we mentioned the hospice work that Zen Center has been involved with in conjunction with San Francisco General Hospital. We did not in any way mean to minimize the vital services of the underfunded Visiting and Nurses Hospice of San Francisco. We are grateful for their work and hope that both their support and recognition will grow.



Dr. Abe, upper right

The Concept of Self as Reflected in Zen Buddhist Literature by Masao Abe

In Christianity, "Who is God?" is the most important question. In contrast to this, in Buddhism, "What is the Self?" is the crucial question. A well known anecdote concerning the teaching of the Buddha which appears in the Nikayas runs as follows: One day sons and daughters of rich families went to picnic in a forest and took a nap after lunch. When they woke up they found that their clothes and jewels were stolen. Being upset they looked around in the forest and happened to meet Gautama Buddha who was meditating under a big tree. They told the Buddha that they were searching for their stolen clothes and jewels and asked if he saw a thief. The Buddha responded by saying that what they should search for is not such objects but the self. This anecdote impressively shows that what is essential in the Buddha's teaching is to seek for and awaken to the true Self.

Christians emphasize faith in God who is the creator, judge and redeemer. To believe in Jesus Christ means to believe in God's redemptive work which forgives even the sinful man through the self-sacrificial love. In Christianity the human self is always understood in relation to God and whether the self is obedient or disobedient to the will of God is crucial. On the other hand, Buddhists talk about self-awakening, i.e., the self's awakening to itself. Buddha is not an object of faith but one who awakened to his own true self. However, what is the true Self in the Buddhist sense?

In ancient India, Brahmanical tradition propounds atman which is the eternal, unchanging self and which is fundamentally identical with Brahman, the ultimate Reality of the universe. The Buddha did not explicitly accept or reject the notion of atman and kept silence. His understanding of the self implied in his silence was later formulated in the doctrine of anatman, that is, "no-self." Buddhism is quite unique in the history of human thought in denying the existence of an enduring

and unchanging soul or self. "According to the teaching of the Buddha, the idea of self (in the ordinary sense) is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of 'me' and 'mine,' selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism, and other defilements, impurities and problems. It is the source of all the troubles in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short, to this false view can be traced all the evil in the world." However, the notion of no-self that is the notion of no substantial, fixed selfhood does not indicate the mere lack or absence of self, as an annihilationist may suggest, but rather constitutes a standpoint which is beyond both the eternalist view of self and the nihilistic view of no-self. This is significantly illustrated by the Buddha himself when he answered with silence to both the questions "Is there a self?" and "Is there no-self?" Keeping silence to both the affirmative and negative forms of the question concerning the 'self', the Buddha profoundly expresses the ultimate Reality of humanity. His silence itself is a great manifestation of the true Self of a person which cannot be conceptualized either in an affirmative or negative manner.

In the Buddhist tradition, Zen most clearly and vividly demonstrates that the Buddhist notion of no-self is nothing but true Self. Lin-chi I-hsuan's (d.866) "true person of no rank" is an example. "No rank" implies freedom from any conceptualized definition of person. Thus the "true person of no rank" signifies the "true person" who cannot be defined either by 'self' or 'no-self.' It is identical with the true Self of the human manifested in the silence of the Buddha. However, unlike the Buddha who is primarily meditative, Lin-chi is active and dynamic, directly showing his own true Self while demanding that his disciple demonstrate this true self. The following event illustrates this active character:

One day Lin-chi gave this sermon: "There is the true person of no rank in the mass of naked flesh, who goes in and out from your facial gates (i.e., sense organs). Those who have not yet testified (to the fact), look! look!"

A monk came forward and asked, "Who is this true person of no rank?"

Lin-chi came down from his chair and, taking hold of the monk by the throat, said "Speak! Speak!"

The monk hesitated.

Lin-chi let go his hold and said, "What a worthless dirt-stick this is!"

The "true person of no rank" is Lin-chi's term for the true self. In this event the "true person of no rank" is taken as a living reality functioning through our physical body. Further, Lin chi is asking his audience to notice that living reality functioning in himself by saying "look! look!" and demanding the monk who asked "Who is this true person of no rank?" to demonstrate his own true nature, taking hold of the monk by the throat and saying "Speak! Speak!" Zen does not intend an explanation or interpretation of the notion of true Self, but rather elicits a direct and immediate testimony or demonstration of it by grappling or negotiating between master and disciple.

II

Zen clearly realizes that the human self cannot be grasped objectively: It is unattainable, and that the "unattainable" is precisely the true Self. In the Song of Enlightenment, Yung-chia Ta-shin describes the inner light that is the self as follows: "You cannot take hold of it, nor can you get rid of it; while you can do

neither, it goes on its own way." Lin-chi says of the "true person," "You may try to catch him, but he refuses to be gathered up; you may try to brush him away, but he will not be dispersed. The harder you strive after him the further away he is from you. When you no longer strive after him, lo, he is right in front of you. His supersensuous voice fills your ear."

Unlike animals and plants human existence has self-consciousness. Through self-consciousness human self thinks of itself, reflects upon itself, and even analyzes itself. In this way the self objectifies itself. As soon as the self objectifies itself it is divided into two: Self as an object and self as a subject. And the objectified self is no longer true Self. Nor is the merely subjective self the true one. The true Self is beyond the subject-object dichotomy.

As the ever subjective, the true self is unobjectifiable and yet is the root-source of all objectification, positive and negative. This is the reason, Yung-chia says: "You cannot take hold of it, nor can you get rid of it: While you can do neither, it goes on its own way."

Although the true Self is always present it is elusive to our self-consciousness. In order to grasp or awaken the true Self the conscious-self or the ego-self must be broken through. In other words it must be clearly realized that the ego-self is not an unchangeable and enduring entity and is without substance. This is the realization of no-self. Only through the realization of no-self is the true Self awakened.

Unlike other forms of Buddhism in which doctrinal teaching is important, Zen straightforwardly goes to the core of living reality. Nan-ch'uan pu-yuan (748-835) said "ordinary mind is Tao" and emphasized "If you try to direct yourself toward it, you go away from it." His disciple Chao-chou (778-897) was used to point out the true Self in daily activities.

Chao-chou was once asked by a monk, "What is myself?"

Chao-chou said, "Have you finished the morning gruel?"

"Yes, I have finished," answered the monk.

Chao-chou then told him, "If so, wash your bowl."

Chao-chou's instruction here is not simply to wash a bowl after a meal, but to awaken to the Self in eating and washing. Commenting on this *mondo* D.T. Suzuki says, "The eating is an act, the washing is an act, but what is wanted in Zen is the actor himself; the eater and the washer that does the acts of eating and washing; and unless this person is existentially or experientially taken hold of, one cannot speak of the acting. Who is the one who is conscious of acting and who is the one who communicates this fact of consciousness to you and who are you to tell all this not only to yourself but to all others? 'I', 'you', 'she', or 'it'—all this is a pronoun standing for a somewhat behind it. Who is this somewhat (behind it)?"

Again, Chao-chou's following *mondo* indicates another example along this line:

Chao-cho once asked a new monk: "Have you ever been here before?"

The monk answered, "Yes, sir. I have!"

Thereupon the master said, "Have a cup of tea."

Later on another monk came and he asked him the same question, "Have you ever been here?"

This time the answer was quite opposite. "I have never been here, sir."

The old master, however, answered just as before, "Have a cup of tea."
Afterwards the Inju (the managing monk of the monastery) asked the master, "How is it that you make the same offering of a cup of tea no matter what one monk's reply is?"

The old master called out, "O Inju!" who at once replied, "Yes, master."
Whereupon Chao-chou said, "Have a cup of tea."

It may not be wrong to say that Chao-chou's "have a cup of tea" is the same as Lin-chi's "Look, Look!" or "Speak, Speak!" in that both are trying to help another to awaken to his true "Self."

III

In the beginning of this paper I said that, while in Christianity the human self is always understood in relation to God, in Buddhism, the self awakening to itself is emphasized. In fact *satori* in Zen is nothing but self-awakening of true Self. To make Zen's understanding of the Self clearer, however, we must ask ourselves how Buddha is grasped in Zen and what is the relation between Buddha and Self in Zen.

In the early history of Zen the term "Mind" is used for "Self" and it is emphasized "Mind" is used for "Self" and it is emphasized "Mind is Buddha." For instance, Fu-Ta-shih (497-569), an eminent Buddhist layman of those days, says "If you realize the origin, you will attain mind. If you attain mind, you will see Buddha. Mind is Buddha: Buddha is Mind." In the *Lankavatara Sutra* it is said "The Buddha mind is the basis, and gateless is the Dharma gate—. He who seeks after Dharma will certainly attain nothing. Outside mind there is no Buddha: Outside Buddha there is no mind." It was however Ma-tsu Tao-i (709-788) who especially emphasized "Mind is Buddha." In *Wu-men-kuan* the following exchange is taken up as a koan.

Taibai once asked Baso (Ma-tsu), "What is Buddha?"
Baso answered, "Mind is Buddha."

Referring to this koan Daito, Japanese Zen Master of the Kamakura period, comments as follows:

To see into one's nature (to attain *satori*) is to be awakened to the Buddha mind. Cast all thoughts and consciousness away and see that 'Mind is Buddha'— The one who realizes that his true mind is Buddha is the man who has attained Buddhahood. He neither practices good nor commits evil: He has no attachment to his mind. His eyes see things but he does not become attached to them. This mind that does not become attached to each and every thing is the Buddha mind. This is why Master Baso said, 'Mind is Buddha.'

At a different time, however, Baso gave the same question "What is Buddha?" a quite opposite answer, that is "No mind, no Buddha." This constitutes another koan of *Wu-men-kuan*, case 33. In his book *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* Zenkei Shibayama said "Earlier, Taibai had come to Master Baso seeking Buddha outside himself, and in order to break through his illusion Baso told him, "Mind is Buddha." Now that Baso sees that many disciples have become attached to 'Mind is Buddha' he says 'No mind, no Buddha' in order to smash and wipe away their attachment to 'Mind is Buddha.'



Tassajara

In his commentary on the koan "Mind is Buddha" Wu-men Hui-k'ai (1183-1260) says "Don't you know that one has to rinse out his mouth for three days if he has uttered the word 'Buddha?' If he is a real Zen man, he will stop his ears and rush away when he hears 'Mind is Buddha.'" Reading this commentary we come to know how severely Zen rejects the attachment to Buddha and emphasizes the importance of freedom even from the notion of Buddha. Through these two koans referring to Baso's (Ma-tsu) words "Mind is Buddha" and "No mind: No Buddha" we come to know the following points:

- 1) In Zen, Buddha is not transcendent but immanent: Buddha is not an object of faith and worship, but Mind itself. "Outside mind there is no Buddha."
- 2) Yet, any attachment to Mind must be done away with. Mind which is identical with Buddha is not a psychological mind or a metaphysical mind. It is no mind, because the true mind is no mind. Likewise, true Buddha must be no Buddha. Hence "No mind: No Buddha."

As I said a little while ago, in the early history of Zen the term mind is an equivalent to the term Self. In Lin-chi's case, "true person of no rank" is his term for true self. Although various terms have been used for the "Self" in the history of Zen the problem of self has been constantly a central problem for Zen. And the same basic ideas concerning the self have appeared repeatedly with slightly different modes throughout Zen literature.

IV

For instance, in the *Lin-chi-lu*, there is a story about Yajnadatta. Being a very handsome young man, Yajnadatta would look in a mirror early morning and smile at his image. One morning, for some reason, his face was not reflected by the mirror. In surprise, he thought his head was lost. Thrown into consternation, he searched about everywhere for it, but with no success. Finally, he came to realize that the head for which he was searching was precisely the head that was doing the searching. Being a careless fellow, he had looked at the backside of the mirror.

Since his head had never been lost, the more he searched for it outside of himself, the more frustrated he was. The point of the story is that, the sought after is really the seeker. Yajnadatta had searched for his head with his head. Our real head, however, is by no means something to be sought for in front of us, but is something which always exists for me here and now. Being at the center of one's searching, it can never be objectified.

Seen from where you are my head has a particular form and a particular color. It is something objective. Can I, however, see my own head? Yes, I can objectify and see my head in a mirror. But, my head reflected in a mirror is reversed in right and left. It does not exactly represent my head as it stands in its living actuality. Again, if I cut my head down and hold it in my hands then I may see-it-as-an-object. Can I really see it, however? As soon as I cut my head I must die although unless I cut my head I cannot see it. All this means that I cannot see or objectify my head so far as it is a living and acting head, not a dead one. *To me* my head is not an object with a particular color and a particular form. It is not anything whatsoever and is without form and color. Zen calls such a thing *mu*, no-thingness. It is called "no-thingness" not because, in the present case, the head is missing or dead, but rather because it is living and acting as my head here and now. As such my head is entirely unobjectifiable to me and absolutely subjective. Head is realized as living head in the unobjectifiable way only through the realization of no-thingness or formlessness.

But enough of head and mirror. The same is true of our "self." We often ask ourselves, "Who am I?" And we are used to searching for an answer somewhere outside of ourselves. If so, just like Yajnadatta, the more we search for an answer externally the more thwarted we are. However, the answer to the question "Who am I?" is in the question itself. The answer to the question can only be found in this here and now where I am -and which I am fundamentally.

In the Zen tradition this question has been formulated in a way peculiar to Zen. "What is your original face before your parents were born? 'Before' in this question does not refer to 'before' in the temporal sense but in the ontological sense. However far we may push back the temporal and horizontal dimension we can never reach our "original face," because this approach is nothing but an objectification. To see our "original face" before our parents were born we must go beyond the *horizontal* dimension and turn to the *vertical* dimension, i.e. the eternal and ontological dimension which is transtemporal and transspacial. In other words, the original face 'before' the parents were born can be properly realized *directly below the here and the now*, i.e., at the bottomless depth of the absolute present.

In this bottomless depth of the absolute present "one's original face before one's parents were born," i.e., one's true self, is realized. It is the root-source of one's existence. At the same time it is also the root-source of the Universe which includes other people and other things. For in this vertical bottomless depth of absolute present, one is freed from all kinds of duality including dualities of self and other, self and the world, one and many, time and space, being and nonbeing. Accordingly in this bottomless depth of absolute present realized "before your parents were born" you not only see your original face and awaken to your true self, but also see the other's original face and awaken to his true self. Here the original face of the Universe is disclosed together with your original face. This is the reason

Dogen (1200-1253), Japanese Zen master of the Kamakura period, talks about *dōjijōdo*, i.e., "simultaneous attainment" of self and others (and the world). If one says "I have attained enlightenment, but others have not as yet" his enlightenment may not be authentic. When you are in delusion everything is in delusion. When you are in enlightenment everything is in enlightenment. Mahayana sutras say "Grasses, trees, and land without exception attain Buddhahood: Mountains, rivers and the great earth all disclose the Dharmabody." If one takes these words merely as objective statements referring to mountains, trees and so forth objectively apart from one's own enlightenment these words may sound quite ridiculous. However, the Mahayana Buddhist phrases mentioned above express the Buddhist truth that simultaneous awakening of self and others is essential.

V

To understand "simultaneous attainment" more precisely, we will now examine Lin-chi's words. "do not seek for Buddha outwardly." Upon hearing this admonition one may think that one should seek for Buddha inwardly rather than outwardly. Thus one denies the outward approach and engages with the inward approach. As I said before in *Zen*, Buddha is not transcendent but immanent. This thought, however, does not hit the mark as yet. For even if one seeks for a Buddha inwardly, in so far as one *seeks* for a Buddha somewhere, the Buddha is understood to be *outside of* oneself. Accordingly the real meaning of the above admonition "Do not seek for a Buddha outwardly" lies in "do not seek for Buddha *at all*." Not only the outward approach but also the inward approach must be done away with. This is because, prior to the very act of seeking for Buddha, whether outwardly or inwardly, one is *originally* a Buddha: he is *originally awakened*. Since one is originally a Buddha one should not and need not seek for Buddha outwardly.

It is in this "original awakening" that the "simultaneous attainment" takes place. The original awakening has a twofold aspect: On the one hand (1) it is entirely individual and personal and on the other (2) it is thoroughly supra-individual and universal.

(1) The original awakening is individual and personal because it is opened up and realized as such only through the awakening of a particular individual person to his original face (true Self). Each and every person may realize the original awakening individually and respectively through the realization of no-self. The original awakening apart from individual realization is an abstraction.

(2) The original awakening is supra-individual and universal. Although the original awakening can be realized as such only through an individual person it itself is beyond the individual. As the *original* awakening it is universal and common to everything and everyone. In the light of this original awakening we can say "grasses, trees, and land without exception attain Buddhahood" and "mountains disclose the Buddha body: the valley stream is preaching the Dharma." However, these statements should not be taken as an expression of animism or nature mysticism. While animism or nature mysticism lack the realization of no-thingness these Zen statements are supported by that realization. The realization of no-thingness and no-self is essential to the realization of the true Self and the true World.

News



Sojun Mel Weitsman and Tenshin Reb Anderson at Tassajara

Two Abbots

We are very pleased to announce that Sojun Mel Weitsman has joined Tenshin Reb Anderson to serve as Abbot of Zen Center. A formal installation ceremony for Mel was held at the City Center on January 7th.

Sojun was a student of Suzuki-roshi for many years and is the founder and Abbot of the Berkeley Zen Center. He is a widely respected Zen teacher who has led practice periods at Tassajara and Green Gulch Farm, as well as at his home temple in Berkeley.

Tenshin's leave of absence from the position of Abbot ended on December 16th. At the Board meeting on December 18th, he formally asked that Mel join him as co-Abbot for one year. The Board joined Reb in this request and Mel was unanimously approved.

In accord with the Board's recommendation, both Sojun and Tenshin will share overall responsibility for all of Zen Center. They will care for our three practice centers and the many people who practice at them. Reb and Mel are working very well together and are an encouragement to us all. We are very confident of the guidance and leadership that these two long-time practitioners of the Way will provide for Zen Center.

Dharma Transmission

Five senior members of Zen Center received Dharma Transmission from Abbots Tenshin Anderson and Sojun Weitsman in February and March. The ceremonies took place at Tassajara with the assistance of Hoitsu Suzuki-roshi who came from Japan, and Kobun Chino-roshi, who came from New Mexico. The five who received Dharma Transmission are all long-time students of Shunryu Suzuki-roshi who have been practicing at Zen Center since the 1960's or earlier. They are: Paul Discoe, Jerome Petersen and Katherine Thanas, who received transmission from Tenshin Anderson, and Blanche Hartman, who received transmission from Sojun Weitsman. Ananda Dalenberg, who has been practicing Zen for thirty-six years, became a successor of Tenshin Anderson.

The week-long ceremonies were the culmination of more than one year of studying together specific materials related to the transmission process: i.e., the transmission fascicles of Dogen Zenji and the documents of transmission which each candidate traditionally copies. Each student also received a brown robe and bowing cloth, and a set of bowls.

The actual process of Dharma Transmission occurs over many years of study between teacher and disciple. The final ceremony expresses the mutual recognition of their relationship and the student's readiness to become a holder and transmitter of the lineage.

The concluding week begins with *Menju*, a re-enactment of Dogen Zenji's first meeting with his teacher in China, Nyōjō Tendo, at which time Nyōjō said: "The Dharma gate of face-to-face transmission from Buddha to Buddha, Ancestor to Ancestor, has now been realized." Underlying the study and the whole transmission ceremony was the fundamental principle that "All Buddhas in the three worlds appear in this world only because of the One Great Matter of Causes and Conditions. This One Great Matter is the wish (vow) to cause sentient beings to be exposed to and awakened with Buddha's wisdom."

The final events take place late at night: the transmission of the precepts on the fifth night, and actual culmination of Dharma Transmission on the sixth night.

The question of the meaning of Dharma Transmission is one the community has been asking for many years. Until these recent ceremonies, the only persons at Zen Center who had gone through the Dharma Transmission ceremony were Zentatsu Baker-roshi, and Tenshin Anderson. Three disciples of Shunryu Suzuki went to Japan after his death to receive transmission from his son, Hoitsu Suzuki: Jakusho Kwong, Abbot of Sonoma Zen Center; Sojun Weitsman, Abbot of Berkeley and Co-Abbot of San Francisco Zen center; and Keido Les Kaye, teacher at Mountain View Zen Center.

The question of Dharma Transmission may be answered personally, institutionally, formally, etc. Each person's experience of this deep meeting between successor and successor remains his/her own, to be understood in the living of it. In institutional

terms, Dharma heirs are qualified to head their own temples, assume the position of Abbot; to perform weddings, funerals and ordinations.

Our relationship with Hoitsu Suzuki-roshi has been steadily developing over the years and has been deepened through this relationship. Kobun Chino has been our friend and teacher since his arrival at Tassajara in 1967 as a young teacher. We look forward to our continuing practice and study with both of them.



Sojun Mel Weitsman, Ananda Dalenberg, Blanche Hartman, Paul Discoe, Tenshin Anderson, Hoitsu Suzuki, Kobun Chino, Katherine Thanas, Jerome Petersen

1988 Zen Center Board of Directors

Laurie Schley, Furyu Schroeder and Mel Weitsman were reelected to three-year terms. Marc Lesser was elected to his first three-year term.

Joining the Board as appointed members are Dr. Carl Bielefeldt, Bruce Fortin, Dr. Lewis Lancaster (second one-year term) and Michael Phillips.

Linda Cutts Weintraub asked to be relieved of Board Chair duties, but will continue on the Board. We appreciate Linda's contribution during the past two years, and are happy to announce Tom Cabarga as the new Chair.

The members of the Board of Directors for 1988 are as follows: Tenshin Reb Anderson, *Abbot*, Sojun Mel Weitsman, *Abbot*, Tom Cabarga, *Chair*, Margaret Porter Alexander, Carl Bielefeldt, Edward Espe Brown, Bruce Fortin, Marc Lesser, Robert Lytle, Keith Meyerhoff, Michael Phillips, Laurie Schley, Furyu Nancy Schroeder, Linda Cutts Weintraub, Michael Wenger.

What the Children at Green Gulch Farm Did this Fall

The ten- and eleven-year-old children who live at Green Gulch Farm got together and made wreaths during the fall of 1987. We wanted to make beautiful wreaths with the garden flowers and sell them here at Green Gulch so we could make money to give to children who are in need. The reason that we wanted to make wreaths instead of something else is that making wreaths is fun.

Every Thursday we met in a group and made one wreath each. It took us one and a half to two hours to make a wreath. The first wreaths we made weren't too great, but as we kept going they got better. When we put them on the wall they sold quickly. A couple of times people wanted to buy them while we were making them. That was exciting!

Our dream was to take the money that we earned and visit and meet some of the kids that aren't so lucky as we are. We worked for about five weeks and made more than seven hundred dollars.

On the first week we made \$123.15, which we gave to the Koret Family House, a nice house in San Francisco. What they do is take care of families whose children are sick at the U.C. Medical Hospital. Meg Porter, our good friend who took care of us when we were little, is now running the Family House. Meg's daughter, Jennine, is four and a half and sometimes we take care of her.

On the second week we made \$150.00, which we donated to the Children's Garden, a shelter for kids who are homeless. We visited the school where these kids learn and met a teacher and got to see their kindergarten room. On the desk were ornaments they had started. It was normal—we didn't get to see the kids until their Christmas party which we were invited to.

Next week we made \$100.00 for the Shelter Hill Study Hall Project. Here kids who would be home all alone get help with their homework from Mrs. Ibanez, a very good teacher some of us had in the Third Grade. Not only Mrs. Ibanez helps—mostly older kids from the Shelter Hill Project get paid a bit to help younger kids learn.

For two weeks we worked and made \$200, enough money to sponsor a family in Vietnam. We learned about the family's situation in Vietnam from Thich Nhat Hanh when we did a retreat with him at Green Gulch last spring. We listened to his talks and sat a little bit during this retreat.

On our last week we raised \$117.50 to give to the Cancer Support Community, a group in San Francisco that helps people change their minds about what they think and feel about cancer and they usually get better. Our money will help start a program for kids.

It was wonderful to do something to help other kids. We were lucky because all the supplies were given to us by Green Gulch Farm. We plan to do this next year and are really looking forward to it.

Caron Fletcher *Ikea Anderson* *Sarah Boebhorst*
Jesse R *North Jones* *Robin Clymer*



Green Gulch kids

A Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice

From August 11-14 there will be 'A Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice' in San Francisco. The conference offers an opportunity for women to participate in shaping western Buddhist traditions inclusive of women's wisdom and experience. This is a follow-up on the highly successful March '87 conference in Berkeley. For information contact:

CWBP/Conference '88, Star Route Box 302, Sausalito, CA 94966-0302

Zen Center Hospice Benefit

"The Sure Hearts Release"—Death of the Body... Birth of the Spirit, A Buddhist-Christian dialogue with Jack Kornfield and Brother David Steindl-Rast, will be held on June 30, 1988 at 7:00 p.m.

This evening program will explore the nature of healing in the dying process from both a Buddhist and a Christian perspective. Practices for working with pain and suffering and cultivating loving kindness will be presented.

The program will be held at the Unitarian Church (1187 Franklin Street, at Geary) in San Francisco. A donation of \$10 is asked. Previous events have been sold out, so register early. Tickets are available by mailing a check made out to: *Zen Center Hospice* and a self-addressed stamped return envelope to: Kornfield/Brother David, c/o Zen Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. For more information phone (415) 863-3136. All proceeds benefit Zen Center Hospice and our work in caring for the terminally ill.

Zen Center For the Fiscal Year, Beginning May 1, 1988

Zen Center is a group of people practicing meditation, finding out how to live together and how to be of service to others. The Zen Center community includes many of the functions of a church, a monastery and a small college.

Most of Zen Center's resources are allocated to the on-going programs which present the teaching and practice of Buddhism. Our principle programs include residential practice programs, guest and retreat programs, and temple and teaching activities. We also have special programs which include hospice work, support for other Buddhist and non-Buddhist groups, as well as farming and gardening.

We have public meditation halls in San Francisco and at Green Gulch Farm near Muir Beach. Our monastery Tassajara Springs is open in the summer for visitors and guests. Each center has a variety of programs. Some are designed for people who have careers and families and who can only visit briefly. Other programs are longer and include the possibility of residential participation, lay and priest training, and extended retreats.

The largest source of Zen Center's income is from self-support activities, primarily guest and retreat programs. The Tassajara Guest Season is the major component in this category. Guest programs not only contribute to the overall support of Zen Center but they are also a source of support for the individual students who work in them. This is particularly important at Tassajara where a student's work during the summer Guest Season pays living expenses, practice period fees and a small stipend during the Winter Training Periods.

The second major source of income for Zen Center is the businesses we have founded: Greens Restaurant, the Tassajara Bread Bakery and the Green Gulch Greengrocer. Zen Center no longer manages these businesses. Instead, we have set up a separate for-profit corporation, Everyday, Inc. This corporation manages the businesses in the same spirit of service to the community with which they were founded. Everyday, Inc., pays royalties and interest to Zen Center.

The farm and gardens at Green Gulch both produce a small net amount of income relative to their costs. However, they are immensely important to Zen Center because they are beautiful and highly successful examples of organic gardening in harmony with nature and Buddhist principles.

Our residential programs operate at a net loss. This is in part intentional. Living expenses in the Bay Area are so high that we make every effort to keep the basic cost of living at Zen Center within the range of everyone who wants to practice here. Therefore we charge less than the cost of maintaining our residences.

Zen Center is nearly self-sustaining on the basis of our day-to-day operations. Contributions and membership donations make up the remaining difference between our income and expenses. The category of contributions is especially important because our other sources of income, particularly self-support activities, are at their maximum capacity.

As we undertake the restoration and replacement of major facilities, particularly at Tassajara and Green Gulch Farm, this category assumes even more importance.

Zen Center must depend upon contributions to help with the repair of old buildings and the construction of new buildings.

Our friends and donors have been extraordinarily generous in the past. We are mindful of that support and we are very grateful for it. All of Zen Center is a result of that generosity. We ask that you continue to give us your support in the coming months and years. We will make every effort to be worthy of it.



Income and Expense Projections for the Year Beginning May 1, 1988

INCOME PROJECTIONS:

Self-Support Activities	
Guest and Retreat Programs	\$ 932,446
Resident Programs and Class Fees	440,342
Business Royalties and Interest (Greens,	
Green Gulch Greengrocer, Tassajara Bread Bakery)	370,513
Contributions and Membership donations	171,800
Farm and Garden	124,300
Other Income	69,488
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,108,889

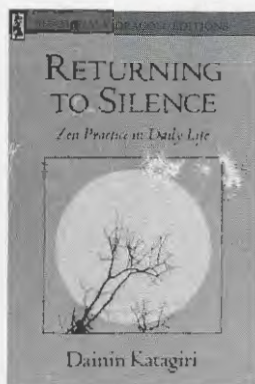
EXPENSE PROJECTIONS:

Programs:	
Residential Programs (City Center, Green Gulch Farm, Tassajara)	\$ 657,948
Guest and Retreat Programs	507,862
Temple and Teaching Programs (Abbots, Teachers,	
Study Center, Publishing, Other Temple Costs	363,986
Farm and Garden	119,905
Special Programs (Hospice, Support for Other	
Groups, starting New Meditation Centers)	66,398
Supporting Services for Programs (Administration,	
Board, Fundraising, Planning)	230,218
Property and Equipment (Capital Replacement and	
Mortgage cost)	162,572
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,108,889

Books

We are very happy to reprint here a selection from Dainin Katagiri-roshi's new book Returning to Silence. He helped Suzuki-roshi lead Zen Center in its early days. He founded and is Abbot of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center. He is a former Abbot of San Francisco Zen Center and continues to visit and teach here. Through the years his teachings have been very important to us. This book is a great opportunity for us to meet with him again.

—M. W.



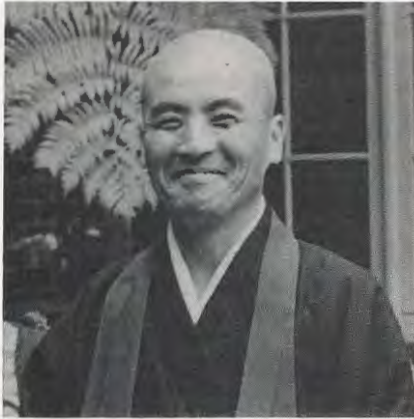
Peace

There is a beautiful story about Shākyamuni Buddha that I cannot forget. I think of this story whenever I look at the human world and see the necessity for finding a way to live in peace and harmony with all sentient beings.

There was once a time in India, long ago, when diplomatic relations were going well between the neighboring countries of Magadha and Kapilavasthu, where Shākyamuni Buddha and his people, the Shākya clan, lived. In those days it was the custom for nobility to marry only nobility, so the king of Magadha asked the king of Kapilavasthu to send a woman to Magadha as he had promised, but rather than a woman of noble birth, he sent a housemaid. Not knowing this, the king of Magadha went ahead and celebrated the wedding. Later, when the prince took over his father's position and became king, someone told him of this scandal and he became very angry. He wanted to attack Kapilavasthu at any cost.

When the Shākya people realized that the king of Magadha was planning to attack them, they asked Shākyamuni Buddha to stop him and he accepted the task. Even though the Buddha was an expert in using weapons and was well trained in the martial arts, he didn't fight. Instead he tried to negotiate with the king in many ways. However, there was one person near the king who persistently encouraged him to fight and to destroy the Shākya clan. So the king couldn't hear the Buddha; the inside of his mind wouldn't stop burning and finally he decided to attack.

Shākyamuni Buddha knew the king and his army were coming, so he sat in zazen under a dead tree on the side of the road leading to Kapilavasthu. As the king traveled along this road with his army he saw Shākyamuni Buddha sitting under a dead tree. Since it was very hot, he couldn't understand why the Buddha was sitting under a dead tree; usually people sit under beautiful green trees. So the king asked, "Why do you sit under the dead tree?" The Buddha calmly said to the king, "I feel cool, even under this dead tree, because it is growing near my native country." This really pierced the king's heart and he was so greatly impressed by the



*Dainiin
Katagiri-roshi*

message of the Buddha's action that he could go no further. Instead of attacking, he returned to his country. But the king's attendant still continued to encourage him to attack and finally he did so. This time, unfortunately, Shākyamuni Buddha didn't have time to do anything. Without saying a word, he just stood and watched his country and his people being destroyed.

There are two important points to this story. The first point is that real peace is not a matter of discussion. This is why Shākyamuni Buddha sat under the dead tree, realizing real peace, moving toward real peace, merging with real peace beyond the idea of peace or no-peace. If we look at the human world, we cannot believe there is peace. If we debate peace, the world appears as "no-peace." But *originally* the world *is* real peace; trees, birds, spring, winter, autumn, and we, sitting here, are already peace. We *are* peace before we discuss whether there is peace or not. However, if someone says, "There is no peace," and then we argue this point with him, finally we will be fighting about the idea of peace itself. This is not real peace.

Working toward world peace is not just dealing with nuclear weapons. Who created nuclear weapons? We created them. We already have the embryo of nuclear weapons in each individual mind. Remember this. It is very important. When the time is ripe and conditions are appropriate, nuclear weapons are created. They are not produced by politicians or scientists. They are produced by individual human life. We should look at this. The embryo of nuclear weapons and everything else that human beings create is always rooted in human life.

How then can we achieve real peace? According to Shākyamuni Buddha, real peace is completely beyond whether there is a way to stop the king from attacking or not. Buddha knew how to use the weapons of those days, but he didn't use them. He just sat. Just sitting is peace—Buddha's peace. He didn't say anything, but his sitting was perfect peace, real peace that he could create from moment to moment. Even though Buddha didn't say anything, the king was very impressed because Shākyamuni Buddha manifested himself as real peace beyond any discussion of peace.

The second point of the story is, no matter how long we emphasize the need for real peace to all beings, there are still many individuals who don't accept our

peace. If people don't accept our peace, where can it be found? Peace has to be found in us. We have to digest, we have to chew real peace in our hearts by ourselves. It is pretty hard. This is why Shākyamuni Buddha just stood and watched his native country being destroyed. No one accepted his peace, so finally, real peace came back to Buddha himself. There is no other way. This is why he just tasted, chewed and digested real peace within his own life.

The more Buddha chewed real peace in his heart, the more he realized how stubborn and ignorant human beings are. Human beings are very ignorant. The nature of ignorance is to lack deep communication with nature or with the universe. It is to separate, to isolate, to create discrimination, and differences, so that finally we cannot communicate as a harmonious whole. These differences we create appear as fighting, anger, hatred and war.

We are always trying to fix the surface or object-discriminated aspect of the human world. In this aspect of the world there are countless holes through which ideas are leaking—the idea of nuclear weapons, the idea of peace or no-peace, the idea of armament or disarmament. But if we want to fix some aspect of the world, if we want to have a peace movement, it is necessary to remember that armament and disarmament are the same thing in a sense; they are a principle or doctrine created by human ignorance. If we attach to the idea of disarmament we create a problem. On the other hand, if we attach to the idea of armament we create still more problems. Look at both sides. Which is better? Temporarily we use disarmament as an idea through which we can approach real peace. But this disarmament is just an idea. We cannot hold onto it as opposed to armament, because if we do, finally under the beautiful flag of disarmament we fight—about the idea of peace, we fight. What kind of peace is this? It is nothing but an idea. So why don't we see the idea of peace as just an idea that can be used temporarily in order to approach real peace. There is no other way to approach peace.

To approach real peace requires a very strong, stable, spiritual commitment, a vow. Just take a vow. Make a commitment toward real peace, just like Buddha sitting under the dead tree. But remember, even though we do make a commitment toward real peace, there will be many individuals who don't accept our way. So finally, where can real peace be found? With us. We ourselves must remain with peace. This is pretty hard, but we cannot stop. Buddha has to continue to sit under the dead tree. This is our sitting.

The more we sit like this, the more we realize the strength of human ignorance. There is no reason why we create this terrible situation, but we do, constantly. When we make a spiritual commitment toward real peace, day by day, we have to go beyond whether people accept peace or not. This is not a political matter. It is a spiritual commitment toward peace. We have to taste it and digest it, constantly. Next we have to live it. This is pretty hard, because the more we taste and chew real peace, the more we realize human ignorance. But the more we realize human ignorance, the more we cannot stop teaching real peace, living real peace.

From Returning to Silence by Dainin Katagiri Roshi, © 1988. Reprinted by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc., 300 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02115.

The Ink Dark Moon

The two women whose work is collected in *The Ink Dark Moon* were part of the first great flowering of Japanese culture which coincided with the relocation of the Imperial court to the new capital of Heian-kyo (present-day Kyoto) in 800 A.D. Ono no Komachi is a legendary figure in Japan; her poetry helped initiate the only Golden Age in world literature in which women writers were the predominant geniuses. Izumi Shikibu wrote at the height of that period (1000 A.D.) and is considered the greatest woman poet of Japanese literature. The work of each of these poets is distinguished by both a complex examination of intense passion and a deep understanding of Buddhism; when combined, these yield a true detachment: the ability, as Komachi wrote, to "watch the long rains falling on this world."

While watching
the long rains falling on this world
my heart, too, fades
with the color
of the spring flowers

How invisibly
it changes color
in this world,
the flower
of the human heart.

This abandoned house
shining
in the mountain village—
how many nights
has the autumn moon spent here?

—Ono no Komachi

*In the autumn, on retreat
at a mountain temple*

Although I try
to hold the single thought
of Buddha's teaching in my heart,
I cannot help but hear
the many crickets' voices calling as well

What is the use
of cherishing life in Spring?
Its flowers
only shackle us
to this world.

*(This is believed to have been Shikibu's
final poem, written on her deathbed.)*

The way I must enter
leads through darkness to darkness—
O moon above the mountains' rim,
please shine a little farther
on my path.

Izumi Shikibu

The Ink Dark Moon: Love poems by Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu, women of the Ancient Court of Japan, translated by Jane Hirshfield with Mariko Aratani, is published by Charles Scribner's Sons; 128 pp., \$14.95. Jane Hirshfield was a resident of all three Zen Center practice places between 1974 and 1981. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and other awards and has just published her second collection of poetry, *Of Gravity & Angels*, with Wesleyan University Press. Mariko Aratani, a musician, weaver, and free-lance translator, received her degree from Tokyo University of Music and Fine Arts; she currently lives in San Francisco.

Suchness

Lecture by Abbot Tenshin Anderson

February 1987 Green Gulch Farm

I've been at Tassajara for the last month, where we are continuing to focus our study and practice on the teaching of Suchness or teaching of Thusness.

As we chant during morning service from the *Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi*:

The teaching of Thusness has been intimately conveyed by buddhas and ancestors. Now you have it, so keep it well.

The first point I'd like to make about this teaching is: if you want to practice Suchness, you should do so without delay. That's the way that Suchness is always practiced—without delay. In other words, **RIGHT NOW**. Not later, when you're better prepared; that's not the practice of Suchness. There are practices like that,



On Sunday, January 10th, at the City Center, Kanshin Lin Zenki, Shunsen Barbara Kohn, Daigu Jim Jordan, Sekiun Gail Simpson, Kokai Lani Roberts, Kosho Richard Ng, and Jaku Judith Kinst took priest ordination with Abbot Tenshin Anderson

that you can get ready for and prepare for, but first of all I want to emphasize the practice which is done without delay.

Now I think, what is it that we can do without delay? Well, actually, there's nothing I can do without delay. But everything is being done without delay. *I* can't do anything without delay, because as soon as I try to do something without delay, I am delaying. "I" am in the way, causing a delay.

Constantly things are happening without delay. Everything is on time. That "everything being on time" is the practice of Suchness. Not that *I* make things on time, but that things being on time—that's me. I am just everything happening without delay. The practice of Suchness is not something that I *do* or you *do*. Right now it is happening; you have that practice right now. You already have it, so please take care of it.

This same thread runs through all Buddhist practices, this non-delay practice: it is a practice which is not done by anyone, and it is a practice which confirms everyone. It's not that people confirm the practice, but rather, that the practice confirms the people. In addition, everyone is completely confirmed, not just a little bit confirmed. Each one of us, on our own individual paths, with whatever unique characteristics or habits that we have, is confirmed by the non-delay of all things.

There is a story about two of our Chinese ancestors, men that I wish I could have met. They lived a long time ago, around 1500 years in the past. One was named Nanyue Huairang, the other was named Dajen Huineng. Huineng is sometimes called the sixth ancestor of Zen. Nearly all the living schools of Zen Buddhism trace their lineages to him, come from his heart. One of his most illustrious disciples was Nanyue Huairang.

When Huairang came to Huineng to study, Huineng said, "Where do you come from?"

Huairang replied, "I come from Sungshan."

Huineng then said, "What is this that thus comes?"

To which Huairang answered, "As soon as I say it's this, I already miss the point completely."

The great master Huineng said, "Well then, is there no practice and realization?"

Huairang calmly replied, "I don't say there's no practice and realization, just that it cannot be defiled."

The great master was very happy to hear this and he said, "All the Buddhas practice this non-defiling way. You are thus, I am thus too."

The practice cannot be defiled. In other words, it cannot be delayed: it's always marching ahead, unhindered, completely happy. There's nothing we can do about it; nothing we can do, whether we try or not, to interfere with the Great Way. For example, if I try to be a better person, I'm already defiling myself. I have no ability to "improve" myself, not by "me" trying to. "I" don't even know what "improvement" is. Yet, this doesn't mean that it is impossible to change, that there's no practice and realization. The point is that if *I* jump into the act and try to *cause* practice and realization, I defile them; I say, "This is such-and-so," and I miss it completely. Transformation is not something that I can do; transformation does me.

As I said before, this practice is very difficult to do properly. It's hard to get out of the way of it and let it happen. Because we have trouble doing this practice, Buddhas sometimes lend us a hand, provide a Way. Remember, there are no *ways* to do this. There's nothing you can use to help you practice Suchness. There's no way you can get a lever on it. All the same, Buddhas provide levers and methods because some people refuse to try unless they're given some way to try. As I said, "you already have it," but you may not believe it.

There is an expression which describes the dynamic process of the practice of Suchness: "grasping way and granting way." "You already have it," is the grasping way. Except through their own thinking, no one is outside the living universe. Honouring the doubt that, 'you already have it', is the granting way.

When Emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?"

Bodhidharma replied, "vast emptiness and no holiness."

Holiness is something in addition to things just as they are. For Buddha, there is no such thing as "holiness," nothing beyond or on top of things as they are. Then Bodhidharma went away and sat for nine years, facing a wall. That was just the way it was. Very few people of his time could appreciate him, so he didn't have many disciples. It was hard to practice that way—it was so simple, and on top of that, he was kind of unfriendly looking, just sitting there like a wall.



Green Gulch Farm from hillside

Now we may be able to see how this unfriendly looking guy was pure compassion. He was unfriendly to anything but Suchness. The greatest compliment he could offer to all sentient beings was simply Suchness. He didn't tell anybody anything that they could do to improve themselves. Instead he said, "you already have it." Uncompromising, unswerving steadfastness in Suchness. This is the grasping way.

Once upon a time a Zen teacher came to our mountain monastery at Tassajara and he used the example that in monastic life, it's as if something or someone has a giant hand around the monastery, and squeezes the monastery. Squeezes each person right down onto themselves. Squeezes each person into the schedule, into their seat, into their lunch. And squeezes tighter and tighter until somebody pops out. When somebody pops out, you scoop them up and put them right back in, and squeeze. Until the next person pops out (we don't know who it will be; it could be a new student, it could be the abbot) then scoop them up and pop them back in and squeeze. We squeeze ourselves into the practice of Suchness. If anyone can't stand it, well, scoop them up in terms of whatever they *can* do, and put them back inside.

Scooping people up and putting them back inside is the granting way. That is, if they refuse to believe that they already have received the teaching of Suchness, you say, "OK, you're right." Now "Since you are correct and you can't do Suchness, do this practice that I outline for you, which you *can* do." Secretly, they are scooped up and put back into the practice of Suchness.

Although you may not like it, the first principle of Buddhism is Buddha's mind. I say you may not like it because what is Buddha's mind? You already *have* it, and you may wish that Buddha's mind were something different from what you have. However, the first principle is that our mind and Buddha's mind are the same.

The second principle is that we *think* that our mind and Buddha's mind are different. This principle concerns inequality, differences. Because we live in the day to day world of differences, it's hard for us to appreciate the first principle: the equality of ourselves and the buddhas. We *make* differences, manufacture inequalities, so we perceive them everywhere. These two principles have to be lived with, and these two *together* are Suchness. Each difference is practicing without delay. Differences always practice without delay, even though they say, "Delay." Saying, "Delay" always happens on time.

For sentient beings, for living beings, to be awake, to be Buddha is simply not to move. We can *not move* without delay. Not moving means, be a living being, without moving from being a living being; that's awakening.

This is how Bodhisattvas help people. We help ourselves and we help others by learning how to witness and act from the way all things advance and confirm themselves. This is the practice of Suchness which has been intimately communicated by buddhas and ancestors. Now *you* have it, so please, keep it well.



Tassajara

Setting the Tone for Practice Period

by Abbot Sojun Weitsman Tassajara

The purpose of my talk this morning is to set a tone for the practice period. What I want to focus on is what we are doing together and how we relate to each other and our surroundings.

Every day we chant the *Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra*; "Form is emptiness and emptiness is form." All forms are empty and interdependent, and if we want to know emptiness we must realize the interdependence and selflessness of all forms.

During practice period our small world is like a microcosm of universal life where each thing is interdependent with every other thing. Each one of us plays a part in this drama called "practice period" or "us". When we come together with our decision to practice, then "practice period" springs into being. So, intrinsically practice period is empty, it has no own being. It only happens when the various parts work together interdependently.

Practice period seems to have an identity; there is zazen, work, meals, study, etc. So we feel that we can join that practice. But the other side is that when you join the practice period you create the practice period. Each one of us is an important

element in creating this thing that we call "practice period" and each one of us has a position. We each take a part in this play. We each have a role and without these roles there is no play—each role serves a specific function.

On one hand we have a vertical hierarchy of roles: abbot, director, head cooks, the various officers and work positions, including general labor. But on a horizontal level every role is equal because of our interconnectedness and interdependence. When you are working in the kitchen preparing food for your fellow Bodhisattvas, you are driving the practice. When I am completely functioning in the position of gardener, shop worker, or general laborer, the whole works because of me, and I am co-equal with everyone. So whatever position we are in, each one of us has a vehicle for expressing our realization.

There is no special form of Zen. But in order to make our practice visible and connect with the teaching, we follow the traditional forms and bring them to life, giving them vitality through our wholehearted effort. And there are two sides to our effort. One side is when we allow things to happen, and the other side is when we make things happen. Some people are very aggressive and like to make things happen, and some are more passive and like to let things happen. If you're a person who likes to make things happen, you may be pushy and impatient. In order to find your balance you will have to practice allowing and going with things. If you are a person who is just pulled along by circumstances, then you have to find your balance by learning to take initiative. A well-balanced zen student both drives the practice and follows the practice. It can become fairly easy just to follow the schedule and float through, being carried along in a passive way. That's one side. The other side is to actually drive the practice, taking responsibility for making it work. So we have to know how to ride and how to drive. We have to know how to discriminate in the middle of non-discrimination.

Movers are sometimes called engines and those who are moved, boxcars. Sometimes we are the engine and sometimes the boxcar—knowing when to lead and when to follow. In my role as head of practice I can do many things. People give me a lot of power and authority. But I want to share this practice with you, I don't want to throw my weight around or tell everyone what to do. Sometimes I step forward and become assertive, and sometimes I allow myself to be moved.

Being careful to know when to step forward and move things and allowing myself to be moved is no different than your practice. You may feel that in my position that I have more power than you. But if you know how to be centered in your present position, then you have your own power, which is beyond comparing and that can't be taken away. Even though each of us functions differently, our practice is not different. You are turning the wheel from your position and I am turning it from mine, and each of us turns the whole practice. In this way we are all co-equal. In this way we practice zazen and this spirit is extended into our daily lives, turning and being turned, finding our own ground continuously.

So let's practice in a harmonious way, taking each other into consideration when we do something. We should be aware of how our actions affect our surroundings; this is how we get to know ourselves. Whatever we do in this community affects everyone else in some way. We may not be able to see how our actions affect everyone, but there is an effect. It is like a piece of cloth. If you pull on one corner to straighten it out, the whole cloth moves. It's just like zazen: our body is like one

piece of cloth. If you straighten your back, it may pull on your thighs, "Oh, now my knees hurt." If you sit back you may relieve your thighs, but now your knees hurt, and if you move some other way, your back hurts. So how can you adjust the whole cloth so that all the parts are working together in harmony? In that sense, this body of people is just like the body in zazen and each of us has responsibility for keeping the whole body in harmony. Tatsugami-roshi used to say that together we are just one monk. Once we are here we are part of that one body.

I'm not saying that we should always be so good that we never disturb or bother each other. Our practice is always a little rough around the edges, but we can absorb that. The body is constantly adjusting to new circumstances. But our effort should be directed toward that kind of mindful awareness.

One of the obvious places we have difficulty is with talking. Talking is a wonderful basic way to communicate. But in monastic life talking is usually held to a minimum. In the zendo, of course, there is no talking, and when we leave the zendo, our effort is to continue that concentrated attention throughout the rest of the day. If we begin idly talking immediately after we leave the zendo, it's easy to get carried away and lose our concentration. When we limit verbal communication, other modes of communication become more apparent. When you can't see, then hearing usually becomes more acute, and vice-versa. When we control our tongues, we tend to be more perceptive to our surroundings and less disturbing to others. Of course, we may be talking to ourselves a lot, and that is harder to control. It is harder to wake up from the distraction of our own inner dialogue, but we should make that effort.

On the other hand, there is a place for talking. We are speaking animals. But here, there is a time for talking and a time when we observe silence. Yesterday I was walking through Tassajara; it was afternoon and it was work period and people



Tending the altar at Page Street

were talking and laughing and having a wonderful time, and I thought "This is great, it's sunny and clear and people are talking and laughing—how nice this is." But then I thought, "How wonderful to walk through here and not hear anything, to feel everyone's concentrated activity." So there are two sides, and sometimes it's hard to say what we should do. The rule has been that from the end of evening zazen until after breakfast the next morning we wouldn't talk. The way we have arranged our morning schedule now, it's really not necessary to have social talk until after lunch.

When I leave the zendo, my attendant and I always have the temptation to begin a dialogue. We always have something to say. So we always try to make a point of waiting until we get to my cabin. That is a mindful practice for me, to wait until we are out of earshot of people. I don't feel so good stopping on the path and talking while everyone is going by. And if that happens I feel very ashamed that I'm setting such a poor example. During our break we can be social, and then during work we just work, and when we have tea we can talk. So we don't neglect social time, and work can be a sort of social time, but it's not a social talking time. It's more a communion of activities.

Some people like to smoke. So when you smoke, please sit down and just enjoy your smoke. To walk around smoking and working doesn't feel like concentrated practice. I don't say you shouldn't smoke. But when you smoke, just smoke; when you work, just work; when you eat, just eat; when you sit zazen, just sit. that is the basic attitude toward our practice. Here at Tassajara we have the rare opportunity to practice in this concentrated single-minded way.

The main point is to know what we are doing. If you realize that you are getting carried away by idle chatter, that itself is waking up. When you don't realize that you are getting carried away, two words can turn into a hundred words, then a thousand words, and we completely forget what we are doing because it's so wonderful—it's like having a dream. But whatever is going on we should be aware; "this is dreaming", "this is talking", "this is being awake." So we are over and over coming back to awakening. Nobody will punish you if you fall into casual conversation during work, but somebody may say something if they feel disturbed by it. The one thing that we should be mindful of is disturbing others or intruding on someone.

If you start an inappropriate conversation with me at the wrong time, I will most likely politely listen to you. My mother brought me up to be polite, but my feeling will be to ask you to stop. The fact of the matter is that we can't help getting into conversation at inappropriate times. But we can and should be aware of what we are doing, of what's going on. Then we have some control in the situation.

So each one of us has our own unique position and our work may be different, but all of us together bring this practice-realization to life.



*Zen Center's
original home,
Sokoji Temple,
on Bush Street*

Early History of Zen Center

In 1969 while Suzuki-roshi was still alive and Zen Center was still at Sokoji, Peter Schneider compiled a number of interviews for the Wind Bell into an early history of Zen Center (1959-1969). This project is interesting now both for what it says about Zen Center's earliest years as well as the perspectives of 1969.

—M.W.

Suzuki-roshi: As soon as I finished my schooling I asked my Master if I could go abroad somewhere, but he became furious. I said, "America." He said "No." "Hokkaido?" "No." He wouldn't allow me to go and I gave up my notion for a long, long time until I forgot all about it. Then sixteen years ago I had a chance to come to America, but I hadn't finished fixing the main building at Rinso-in, which was the duty left me by master. In 1959, when I finished what he had told me to do, I decided to come.

At that time Sokoji Temple in San Francisco was in confusion, and the resident priest of Sokoji who was Bishop of America, Tobase-roshi, asked headquarters to send someone to help him. Headquarters appointed several people but they would not accept the position. The people who wanted to come, Headquarters could not accept. My friend, who was Director of Headquarters, didn't know what to do, and he said jokingly, "Why don't you go?" Since I would be new at Sokoji, I thought to myself that I would be free from the confusion there and that I would

have more freedom to do things. And in a month when my friend came again, I said to him, "I will go." He was amazed.

Wind Bell: Did he want you to go?

Suzuki-roshi: Not so much, because he felt responsible for my temple. I lived quite near him.

Wind Bell: When did you arrive?

Suzuki-roshi: May twenty-third, 1959.

Wind Bell: When did students begin sitting with you?

Suzuki-roshi: Maybe one month after my arrival.

Jean Ross: For some time he was really all alone by himself. As you know, the Japanese congregation wasn't too demanding of his time. And he was just waiting for the sangha to come and want to do meditation. Bill McNeill and his wife were the first ones to arrive. Della and Betty and I had taken a course in Zen Buddhism at the American Academy of Asian Studies (Fall 1958 to Spring 1959) from Dr. Kato and he had Reverend Suzuki come to lecture to us. When the semester was over we asked Dr. Kato how we could continue and he said, "Well, you met Reverend Suzuki and he's starting a meditation group at Sokoji Temple in San Francisco. Why don't you go and see what it's like?"

Bill Kwong: I used to deliver mail in Palo Alto and I read this story about Roshi in *Nichibei Times*. It said that he had this bird, and one of the students, maybe it was Bill McNeill, asked him why, if he believed in freedom, he kept the bird in a cage. So he let the bird out. This story really impressed me very much, so I decided to come and see what is happening.

Della Goertz: And the cat got the bird. Remember, Betty, we felt so badly about it, and *he* felt badly about it.

Paul Alexander: I came to California in 1960 and it took me about six months to find Zen Center. I didn't want to go to Alan Watts and ask is there a practicing group. I had read *The Spirit of Zen* and *The Way of Zen* at that point, and when I read *The Way of Zen*, I finished the last page and then went back to the first and read it all over again. I admired him very much as a writer, but I didn't want to attend what was called "seminar". That wasn't the kind of Zen I was looking for. I was looking for a practicing group and kind of suspected that it was here because I had read *The Dharma Bums* and it just seemed that this ought to be the place where it was at. I went to the Asian Academy and inquired if there were a practicing group, but unfortunately I got there at a time when there were no classes in session and Dr. Kato wasn't around. I looked in the phone directory and there was nothing under 'Zen'. I went down to Chinatown and found the Chan and Tao societies, but they looked very forbidding from the outside, and I didn't quite think this was it anyhow. I looked up the Buddhist Churches of America headquarters on Octavia Street, which now has a bookstore in connection with it, and they could not help me, or whoever was there could not help me. I went over to Berkeley and went to the Shin Center there, and there were Caucasians around. They could offer me lessons in Japanese and Sanskrit but no practicing Zen or anything like that. At that point I decided, well, I'll just bide my time, I guess.

nothing's going on. And then, I think it was about the middle of November, suddenly right in the middle of a page in *The Chronicle* was this picture of a zen abbot who was visiting San Francisco. This was Abbot Koho. And they gave the address and the time and I appeared an hour early so I would be sure to get a seat. I immediately knew that this was it. Several of the older students were sitting on the mats around the place, or appeared and didn't sit, and Bishop Yamada was here at this point, and Suzuki-roshi.

Phillip Wilson: I came to Zen Center with an old drunk the first time. It was Sunday and the sun was shining and we were walking up and down the streets and we went and listened to the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. I was very impressed. This was in Chinatown and after that we came up here and we went to a Sunday Zen lecture. There was a little man standing up at the altar who looked like a samurai. He kept talking to everyone and he kept smiling and I thought, well, this is going to be a nice fifteen-minute lecture. I looked around at all the Japanese people and they were all very quiet and the lecture went on and on. After the lecture there was a ritual and the ritual went on and on. It was all in Japanese, the whole thing. I thought, this guy is too important to talk to. I like him very much, but I couldn't say anything to him. But later I called on the telephone and said something about religious organization or something—I couldn't get my words straight—after I was through talking he said, "Please come."

Grahame Petchey: At a weekend lecture we attended at the Berkeley Shin Center, I think it must have been some time in June of 1961, about three weeks after we'd arrived in the United States, I met Dr. Kato and he introduced me to Suzuki-roshi and I went along to see him the following day. But I came in the middle of evening zazen and waited in the office outside. The only sound I could hear was people breathing, and they just seemed to go on breathing for a long time, and then the noise of the bells and eventually the sutra. And I remember sitting there on that couch watching the people coming out of the zendo. The first thing that struck me about the students was the fact that they were all dressed in bluejeans and tartan shirts and looked, to an Englishman's eyes, like workers rather than the kind of middle-class Buddhists that I'd been used to in the U.K. or in Europe. Anyway, Suzuki-roshi had asked me to come at the wrong time, at six o'clock for zazen instead of at five-thirty. So after an hour's talk he said, "Let's go down and do zazen." And I remember very, very clearly his sitting next to me at the back of the zendo talking about the way to sit and the way to breathe. He said, "Now just keep on counting your breath until your mind becomes calm." We sat for about half an hour. I was rather surprised that my mind didn't become calm. And half an hour seemed like an incredibly long time, I remember, since in London we had been told that anything longer than five or ten minutes was dangerous or something, and anyway, I'd only been used to sitting in a chair before that time. So I really felt I was getting with the Orient.

Dick Baker: I was in Fields' Book Store with a friend, David Walker, in the summer of 1961. I was telling him about a samurai movie, and had raised my imaginary sword and let out a samurai sort of yell, when George Fields looked up from his table and said, "You ought to go see Suzuki-roshi, the Zen master who is here in town." So I put away my imaginary sword and said, "Oh, yeah?" And he said, "He's Soto," and then he showed me *Dogen's Soto Approach to Zen*. And I asked, "Is there a Rinzai master in town?" And he said, "I don't know one but

there may be," and then he said, "There is a lecture," so I went. One of my first impressions was that he talked just like the Zen books. I couldn't believe that anyone could actually talk about emptiness as if it were an experience and a real thing. The way Suzuki-roshi stood, the hand gestures, the vibes, everything he communicated, was just extraordinary. I had been to lectures by many famous philosophers and theologians and this was the first time I couldn't find anything to disagree with. So I kept going back and I still couldn't find anything to disagree with.

Claude Dalenberg: I had heard about Zen Center and had met some people from Zen Center—Bob Hense and Bill McNeill in Japan, but I had not been in America since Roshi had come. By the time I returned he had been here nearly three years. I didn't start sitting at Zen Center immediately, but I came to hear some of Roshi's lectures and was very impressed. On coming back I had felt that one's chances of going off to Japan and finding oneself a teacher were not very great. And I was pretty amazed to find Suzuki-roshi here because he seemed to be potentially as good a teacher as anybody I had met, and he spoke English, and he was available. I felt, in many ways, that as far as finding a teacher was concerned, it was no longer necessary to leave and go way off now that Suzuki-roshi was here.

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Wind Bell: When did you sit?

Suzuki-roshi: At the same time, 5:45 in the morning. There were lots of old pews downstairs and we pushed them together and sat (crosslegged) inside. Five or six of us sat this way for a year.

Betty Warren: At first we would sit in Roshi's office before meditation and he would talk to us a little while and then we would go up to the meditation room.



Zazen at Sokoji

At the beginning when we first began to meditate, the pews were in the zendo and there were no tatamis. Two pews were set facing each other along the walls and we would climb up over the ends of the pews and walk along down to our place and then sit down.

Della Goertz: There were no zafus—and nothing round at all.

Betty Warren: Yes, all sorts of odd pillows and there were pews in the middle of the room also, and after zazen we would sit in the pews in the middle for the sutra. He introduced all the rituals very gradually. Later we did the sutra standing up in the front of the pews. I think he didn't know how far he could go with us in the ritual, how much of that we would take. He was afraid he would scare us all off, I think, if he began with the whole thing. Now there's such a group established that has accepted the ritual, why, a new person just has to accept it. When he put the tatamis down, I remember my first reaction was that the pillows were quite hard and the tatamis were hard and I thought, next thing Roshi's going to do is give us each a nice rock and tell us that's what they do in the monastery, but he didn't.

Bill Kwong: Just in the last couple of years has he told us why we don't meditate on four and nine days. In the past, questions like that would never be answered. He'd laugh, or say it was mysterious or secret. Now when we ask him questions he talks quite freely. But at that time he seemed more like the mist.

Betty Warren: We used to expect the unexpected from him and we would sort of take any whim. For instance, there was something about taking the pews downstairs and upstairs. He would decide that all the pews had to be taken out of the middle of the zendo and taken downstairs—and then they would have to be brought back upstairs. Maybe he wanted the room cleared or something, I don't know.

Phillip Wilson: Life always presents a lot of questions and different things, but going to the zendo has always been going to the zendo. And Reverend Suzuki was always willing to lecture to anyone who came. These feelings still remain and have not changed. But the changes that have taken place, have taken place little by little, but in a very persistent and real way. And that real way was like, how do we get the upstairs for a place to meditate from people who are not so interested in meditation? And the way to do it was to carry the benches in and to carry the benches out. And I thought at that time, how can a little old man lift a big bench like that?

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Wind Bell: How long did you plan to stay in America?

Suzuki-roshi: I had no idea, but I said to them, "I'll come back in three years." But actually, in my mind I thought, "I'll stay a pretty long time." I did not return to Japan during those three years and in 1962 I asked my friend to send my wife. She was managing and teaching at two kindergartens, and I wanted my friend to get her out.

Wind Bell: How long did Okusan think she was coming for?

Suzuki-roshi: She promised the kindergarten and my congregation to bring me back in three years. When I decided not to return to Japan even then, I had to resign. Fortunately they wanted my boy to be my successor.

Grahame Petchey: It always appeared to me that he didn't really know whether or not he would stay or go. I know he felt a very strong personal commitment to his students here. I remember his once having said that one of the reasons why he liked being in America was that he had some real students, whereas in Japan when he left he only had one old man sitting with him.

Jean Ross: We felt a little more secure when Okusan came and then when he turned over his Japanese temple to his son. All priests have temples of their own and they're responsible for them. When they're absent they get a neighboring priest or friend to substitute for them. And of course Suzuki-roshi did that for quite some time before his son took over.

Dick Baker: Suzuki-roshi's presence at that time felt like those special warm days in late winter or very early spring that are really nice, and while we have them it's really beautiful. There was the feeling that 'This is a beautiful man here now. Let's make the most of it.' And of course those days turn cold again; we knew that he would go to Japan probably, or there was good chance he might. And that was an important element in that early period, that feeling that Roshi might leave. Every time he came to lecture and talked about Japan, people would start getting nervous. He said in one of the lectures recently, "The older students remember when I first came from Japan I emphasized way-seeking mind." Maybe he didn't emphasize practice as much then because he didn't know if he could make that kind of commitment, so he emphasized our finding our own way-seeking mind to help us find our way even if he weren't there. Maybe, too, because he didn't expect himself to stay, or didn't know whether he'd stay, he just thoroughly enjoyed himself, and didn't have any expectations of us or really of himself, either. There really is a big difference between trying to find a practice where the teacher may only be there for awhile and where the teacher is committed to staying there, and committed to you. Once Roshi decided to stay, his presence obligated us to practice. And a sign of seriousness entered that wasn't there before.

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Wind Bell: How did you spend your time before Okusan came?

Suzuki-roshi: First of all I had plenty of time to be with students, because I was around and because there were not many students. Sometimes we'd go to museums or movies or restaurants. We had a pretty good time. But I didn't want Zen Center to be a kind of social club, so at the same time I tried to refrain from that sort of activity. I wanted us to devote ourselves to zen practice, not to eating or seeing movies.

Wind Bell: When you had only a few students, did you have any plans?

Suzuki-roshi: No, I didn't. But I had an idea to have some school-like system here and to set up some way of exchanging students. And so I asked Headquarters to send some good Zen Master as Bishop. That is why Yamada-roshi came. But he wanted the school in Los Angeles. He tried by himself but it was not successful. Anyway, I thought, if we just practice our way with students, that will be good enough.

Wind Bell: Did you decide to found a school because most of your first students were scholars? Did you think you had to give candy for their minds so they would practice Zen?

Suzuki-roshi: Not candy. Anyway, everything that we are doing is candy. Candy is the most important food actually.

Wind Bell: I don't understand.

Suzuki-roshi: Without any actual activity the first principle in Zen doesn't mean anything. We should help people, and that help is candy.

Jean Ross: The master-disciple relationship didn't come into the picture as strongly as it does now that people want closer contact with him. We had close contact in the early days. There were only eight to twelve of us and on Saturday mornings we'd each bring some kind of food. I used to bring milk and eggs or just the eggs. Bill Kwong was the cook. It was a closer and friendlier atmosphere then than there is now, but that's also because of the size. We didn't eat in the zendo, we ate in the kitchen, which I liked. When we sat at the table with him we could watch every move that he made. Now it's difficult in the zendo for a lot of people to see him, and besides, they're supposed to be looking down. Whereas at the table we could watch him fix tea, watch his facial expressions, gestures, etc. I still wish some of those more intimate relationships could be present.

Dick Baker: There were fewer students and Roshi had more time. He always attended parties and group things. And there was more individual attention and more time to chat or go out with him. There was a more relaxed, less 'zenny' atmosphere in the kitchen, and Roshi had a kind of leisurely attitude, like he just lived here and these people were joining him, rather than he was the head of a teaching thing. There was a nice relaxed feeling about being in someone's living room all the time.

Phillip Wilson: Reverend Suzuki never talked to me for months at first, never tried to fix a cushion underneath me. I sat next to Bill Kwong. He said, "Sometimes people stay." And I said, "I like that a whole lot." And Betty Warren said, "Oh, you've come back." They were more surprised by people staying than people going. They were just doing zazen and if people stayed it was sort of pleasant. It wasn't that people were going, it was just that it was a nice little surprise when they did stay.

Jean Ross: Before I went to Japan I didn't think in terms of the group as sangha and I don't think other people did, really. Bill Kwong might have, and Bill McNeill was thinking of becoming a priest. But there wasn't this group feeling of there being a sangha, not at all. And we all read the latest books on Zen Buddhism but not too much of the technical knowledge. Nowadays people are talking about the sutras, but most of these translations are new. Of course, even in those days Roshi was lecturing, just as he does today. And it was his lectures that we were following.

Dick Baker: To take notes in the beginning, I had to sit in the center of the front row and really concentrate to get the words, and still there were words I would miss every lecture. I can remember for a year I thought he was saying *Arhat*. And he was saying *alert*. "You should be more alert," he would say and I was thinking, "you should be more like an Arhat," more practicing on your own. And after each lecture I'd go in and tell him the words he'd mispronounced, and the English things he'd said wrong. I didn't know if he liked it. I used to say, "Do you mind my doing this? I'm just going to do it anyway."



ANCIENT CEREMONY—In a colorful Chinese ritual more than 1,200 years old, The Rev. Shinzen Suzuki knelt before the altar of the Zen Buddhist Sokaji Temple at 1367 Bush St. and was installed as Priest of the Temple. Bishop Reirin Yamada (right), of Los Angeles, conducted the ceremony, which is believed the first ever held in the United States.

Betty Warren: He went to school. He went to adult education, saying English every day, right after zazen.

Grahame Petchey: I remember his English improving. Some of the early lectures were impossibly difficult to follow, but anyway they were essentially repeating one point—which is the way it always is.

Dick Baker: Do zazen.

Phillip Wilson: I think at that point we were just trying to understand what Roshi was saying. Like I remember the first lecture was so involved and so complicated and so simple that I couldn't understand what he was talking about. I had his accent to deal with. I had the metaphors shifting back from one image to another. And he was smiling all the time and very confident. And then he would say, "Do you understand?" I was so amazed by the beauty and the confusion and perfection of that story that I was very pleased, but I couldn't understand anything about it. And so I thought, here is something to consider. So I went back and back and back and kept trying to understand. And I never understood. So I began to watch everything he did. I said, if I can't understand the story, maybe I can understand by the way he picks up the *kyosaku*. Or the way he picks up his tea cup. So I'm going to watch very very closely. And still I couldn't understand.

Dick Baker: People wanted to sit with Roshi. They kept sitting with Roshi. They liked seeing him once a week, and they liked him being around. We liked to sit, and we sat. And we tried hard with Roshi, but I couldn't perceive during my first year that there was a sense *we* practice Zen. You could practice Zen yourself. It was something people did because it was nice or important or helpful, and they did it with Roshi and liked him. And people did very well. I remember that first

sesshin. I had only been sitting a few weeks and I came and spent a few hours and then I had to go to work. I remember a strange feeling of having to go back to that sesshin which I couldn't sit in anyway. And I had to sit there with my knees up. And I had a compelling feeling of having to be there, so there must have been some practice because it compelled me to come back there. And I certainly found sesshin harder than hell.

Jean Ross: My first sesshin I thought I would never get through and I got awfully mad because I was so uncomfortable. There were several pillows under me and at one point I just got up and threw one across the room. In a few minutes Suzuki-roshi came by quietly and put another one under me.

Grahame Petchey: One of the things I remember about those early sesshins was how inconsistent Roshi was in the timing. Whether a period was forty minutes or one hour didn't make any difference to us but the fact that we didn't know, did. And it seems that some of our zazen periods were twenty minutes, some of the kinhin periods forty minutes. And then again we'd sit for an hour and a half.

Dick Baker: Do you remember the longest one, when he came in and rattled paper and went up and down stairs? Two and a half hours. The only time I've ever seen you move, Grahame, you actually leaned forward, and then leaned back. Your legs didn't move, but you moved your torso a bit.

Grahame Petchey: Well, Roshi had that apartment over the road, and he went across there and didn't come back. I was worried, you know, that he might have forgotten about us, whether I in my position as president should do something about it. And I remember finally, after an hour and a quarter, the relief to hear his footsteps on the stairs. He walked into the zendo and rustled some papers and walked out again.

Virginia Baker: Probably figured, well, they've got a little while to go yet.

Dick Baker: That's right, he's looked at the schedule and said, "Well, it's not time for the period to end yet."

Pauline Petchey: Having gone through three already.

Betty Warren: I think he was trying to have us not be used to a particular time of sitting. We would never know when a period would be over, whether it would be half an hour or an hour and a half.

Jean Ross: I can remember during one sesshin he left us and said he was going to be gone just about twenty minutes. It was Sunday and he was going to lecture to the Japanese group. Well, anyway, it wound up with our having to sit for about an hour and a half. We were all so furious at him because even after he'd gone he'd sent someone to tell us he'd be back in just a few minutes and we'd gotten our hopes up. But he left us there. And we sat. He was very very strict about our not moving. He really growled and caused a bit of trouble if we didn't sit absolutely still. I don't think he's quite as strict on us as he used to be. For instance, he was very very firm that we be in the zendo on time. Once, Bill Kwong was one of two or three persons who were late to the zendo after the work period during a sesshin and Suzuki-roshi told him to get out. If he couldn't be there on time, he shouldn't be there. It was very very hard on Bill. He sat in the office until Roshi would let him back in.

Wind Bell: During sesshins sometimes you would leave and there would be no bells for two hours. The student always wondered about that .

Suzuki-roshi: At that time I put the emphasis on getting rid of the idea of time and space, of where you are, of how long you should sit. That is not zazen. If you sit you should have the confidence to sit forever. Maybe sometimes I forgot, but I didn't feel so bad. I thought, one more hour doesn't matter.

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Wind Bell: How did Zen Center begin?

Suzuki-roshi: By 1961 we had many more students and when they gave me some money I asked them to take care of that money for our expenses—equipment and such. I thought, if I have the money I may spend it in various ways, so it might be better to find someone to take care of it. Then I thought it would be better to have some organization to take care of all the business. We discussed what name would be appropriate and at last decided on Zen Center. This was in 1961. It took one year to get permission from the state.

Jean Ross: In the fall (of 1959) Betty and Della began going regularly in the mornings but I could only come three times a week because I was living in Oakland. I can remember at that time that all of us were quite in awe of this early morning hour because it was something entirely new to us. Those that came that fall were Charles Siegfert and his wife, Bill Kwong, Betty, Della, myself, Bob Hense, and Bill McNeill and his wife and Roger Malek.

Bill McNeill was the spark plug and quite a drawing card. He had a vivid personality, the sort of person who had a kind of following, and was a good administrator. He also wanted to go Japan and subsequently did go, in 1960, and spent a year or more studying in buddhist temples, and also did some teaching English. I don't think there was any one person as leader when Bill left but Betty was as saving a figure as anybody. She was a tremendous help to Suzuki-roshi because he could rely absolutely on her being there every single morning. Bill must have come back the fall of '61, but he didn't have much to do with Zen Center from then on, because he wasn't too happy with his experiences in Japan. He had planned to become a priest and everyone counted on this. When he changed his mind he felt he should leave.

Betty Warren: Maybe we didn't even have an organization before Bill and Bob Hense went to Japan.

Della Goertz: What did we need it for? We sort of individually gave some money once a month, didn't we? Just voluntarily—for Roshi's personal use, we thought. And then later bills came up.

Betty Warren: I guess when we remodelled the zendo we had to have financial recording.

Paul Alexander: When I came, there was no president, there was nothing. What organization we had before we were formally organized was sort of a *kaffee klatch* around the kitchen table after Saturday morning zazen. This was the only chance we had to get together and it was very informal, very homey. And I used to live for these moments because this is where my personal instruction started at Zen

Center. It just happened. Nothing formal. Just sitting around the table in Roshi's presence, which is a great privilege, because you can't be around him for very long and not be awed of his great presence, personality, whatever you want to call it. We talked seriously about what are we, who are we, what are we doing, where are we going, quite frequently. Then Bob Hense returned (the summer of 1961) and sat every day, and he seemed to have the force to project us into some sort of organization. We had a special meeting at which the officers were elected. Bob became president, Betty Warren became vice president, and I became treasurer. The job of secretary got bounced around quite a bit.

Phillip Wilson: I had gotten through reading D.T. Suzuki's works and all the koans and everything like that. So I imagined Zen was supposed to be free. And involved with koans. But I couldn't figure out how it got so legalistic. And it kept running through my head, is this Zen? What have I gotten into? Isn't it another one of those boxes where you've got a business and you've got to wear your little suit? And then I looked up at Reverend Suzuki and he looked perfectly at ease. I thought, aha, at least there's one free man here. But as I look back on it I think it was actually a great act of Bodhisattva activity on Reverend Suzuki's part to let each person express his own nature, and have it fulfill Zen Center's nature at the same time, but my mind wasn't particularly interested in that aspect. I liked the meditation part. Those people who were leading led, and those people who didn't lead didn't say anything. And they were quite content not to say anything because it never occurred to them to feel embarrassed if they didn't, because the whole basis was zazen. So during the very long meetings we'd just sit there half asleep and half awake. And someone would ask him a question and he would give an intelligent comprehensive reply. Like he had heard everything. I like that. How he could hear that and still look like he's asleep.

Della Goertz: Bishop Yamada had a Japanese name for us. But Bob Hense felt that a Japanese name wouldn't attract American students. So Bob thought up Zen Center.

Phillip Wilson: Bill Kwong said that it's Zen and it's a center of activity. And no one could get around the idea.

Paul Alexander: Zen Center became clearly organized under Grahame. He had that ability to pull the loose strings together.

Grahame Petchey: Before I came they had the name of Zen Center and some sort of structure they were trying to get together. Bob Hense had brought in an ex-lawyer who was becoming a minister in Berkeley, and the whole thing seemed to be going on for quite a long time and nothing was really getting anywhere. Then Bob went away for a month or two and I think all the documents were lost for a while. Once they were stolen. I remember. Anyway, we were able to recover some of the papers and we started trying to get incorporated. First we sent off those papers which had already been drawn up to the State and they came right back. So then Paul Alexander, Betty, Jean and I organized ourselves with a lawyer from Sansome Street, drew up a constitution and bylaws, and filed again. And Zen Center was accepted as an incorporated non-profit organization by the State of California somewhere around August 1962.

Dick Baker: It took a year of meetings once a month and more often to decide on something as simple as the stationery. It was sometimes frustrating and rather

wonderful and fun too. Finally we picked a letterhead and then Bob Hense left and the whole thing was held up and wasn't getting through, and the organization still wasn't right for tax exemption. That was a disturbing time for Zen Center. But then Grahame became president and put things together, really, and a sense of order came in. Grahame believed in making an organization something that worked and lasted, and was protected from falling apart or being misused. And he got the legal work done and actually got us a non-profit exemption, which was important for Betty, Jean, and Della who were giving a lot each month. The standard was about three to five dollars a month and the three of them together gave more than half. I did the treasurer's job (from August 1962), though Ginny did most of the work. And at the end of the year we took a little adding machine and—fantastic, we balanced! To the penny. Around \$3700 it was. So putting the money thing in order, having meetings and being in meetings that had a sense of order, getting the letterhead—all of that had some meaning. It was a struggle about the kind of organization we had. The form of the sangha is a kind of moral statement about the Buddhists' own individual development and the basic ways Buddhism affects and is involved in society. So as a meditation group it was important for us to decide whether we should look serious or just square or maybe a little zippy. We sort of compromised with the stationery design—sort of zippy/serious.

Phillip Wilson: My feeling was of Zen Center as a place where students could come to sit. They didn't have to come wanting to belong to the organization and they didn't have to pay any kind of fee. But if they wanted to, they could, and that wanting would come from themselves, and from their situation. So in incorporating the laws I always took the viewpoint of having a free place to do meditation without loading new people down with what they should do before they got started. And then after they got started and did it from their own experience, they would know what to do.

Dick Baker: Also, Grahame introduced a sense of coherence in the practice, of bringing the practice together. He was sort of best student, I guess, as well as president, and gave the real sense of someone who was going to be at Buddhism all his life. He had seen the Buddhist scene in England and knew that some people were Buddhist and were Buddhists all their lives and were able to function in a western Caucasian Society as Buddhists. He didn't say I want to improve myself only; he said, I want to be a good Buddhist, or a good priest. He was able to set high standards for himself that other people perhaps hadn't yet conceived of.

Virginia Baker: He confirmed for others the possibility of taking it seriously.

Phillip Wilson: Grahame used to come every Sunday with a red flower in his buttonhole. He was very English.

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Dick Baker: Certain themes lost out or became covered up or displaced or something. And of the people involved in those themes, some stayed on and some left with the loss of their theme, and there is a kind of resentment there. I don't think this lost history has anything to do with the history being written, but I am sensitive to it and when I think about the history of Zen Center I think about this lost history. And I can't tell you it, obviously, because it is lost for me too. So I can't see how that lost history can be filled in, and for me it should be, it is as important as the history I remember.



Sandokai Lecture No. 10

Tassajara June 25, 1970

Note: This lecture concerns the following lines of the *Sandokai*:

Mei an ono-ono ai tai shite

Hi suru ni zengo no ayumi no gotoshi

(Darkness and brightness stand with each other
as when one footstep is forward and the other is behind)

We are still talking about reality from the viewpoint of independency. Even though we are discussing independency, we are always referring to dependency or interdependence, so you may feel as if we are always talking about the same thing, but it is not so. Dependency and independency are actually two sides of one coin.

People may say that the Japanese are very tough. But that is just one side of the Japanese personality. The other side is softness. Because of their Buddhist back-

ground they have been trained that way for a long time. The Japanese people are very kind.

We have a children's song that describes a hero called *Mo Mo Taro*, the "Peach Boy." There was an old couple who lived near the riverside. One day the old woman picked up a peach from the stream and came back to her home. And from the peach, out came *Mo Mo Taro*. He was very strong but very kind and gentle. The Japanese children sing a song about him. He is the ideal Japanese character. What do you call it? You must have some expression for it?

Student: Folk hero?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, folk hero. Without a soft mind you cannot be really strong. If *Mo Mo Taro* did not have this side of his character, if he was not very sympathetic sometimes, he could not be really strong. A person who is strong just for himself is not so strong, but a strong person who is very kind will support people and can really be a folk hero. When we have both a soft side and a strong side we can be strong in a real way.

It is easy to fight and to win, maybe, but it is not so easy to endure without crying when you are defeated. You should be able to allow your foe to beat you. O.K.? This is very difficult. But unless you can endure the bitterness of defeat, you cannot be really strong. Readiness to be weak can be a sign of strength. We say, "The willow tree cannot be broken by snow." The weight of the snow may break a strong tree, but even though the snow will bend or twist the branches, even a heavy snow like we had the year before last cannot break the willow branches. Bamboo also bends easily. It looks quite weak, but no snow can break it. This is always true.

"*Me an ono-ono ai tai shite*": *mei* and *an*, darkness and brightness, absolute and relative, are a pair of opposites. *Ai* means "with each other", *tai* means "stand". *Ai tai* means "to face each other" or "to stand with each other". *Ono-ono* also means "each other".

"*Hi suru ni zengo ayumi no gotoshi*"; this is "like the foot before and the foot behind". *Hi suru ni* means "like", "to compare"; *gotoshi* is also "like"; *zen* means "forward"; *go* means "behind". "Like the foot before and the foot behind in walking". This is a very good way of explaining oneness or the actual function of a pair of opposites. It explains our practice, how we apply pairs of opposites like delusion and enlightenment, reality and idea, good and bad, weak and strong, in our everyday life. People who feel they are strong may find it difficult to be weak. People who feel they are weak may try to be strong. That is quite usual. But sometimes we should be strong and sometimes we should be weak. If you remain always weak or if you always want to be strong, then you cannot be strong in its true sense.

When you learn something you should be able to teach people. You should put the same effort into teaching. And if you want to teach you should be humble enough to learn something. Then you can teach. If you try to teach just because you know something, you cannot teach anything. When you are ready to be taught by someone, if necessary, then you can teach people in the true sense of the word. So, to learn is to teach and to teach is to learn. If you think you are always a student you

cannot learn anything. The reason you learn something is because you have to teach others after you have learned it.

There is no fixed moral code or standard, but you find it when you try to teach others. Then you will find a moral code for yourself. Before Japan was defeated in the war and completely surrendered, the Japanese people thought they had some teaching or moral code which was absolutely right and straight and that if they only observed that kind of moral code they would not make any mistakes. But that moral code, unfortunately, was something which was set up in the first part of the Meiji period. So after losing the war they lost confidence in their morality, and they didn't know what kind of morals they should observe. They didn't know what to do. But actually it shouldn't be so difficult to find the moral code. I said to them, "You have children. If you think of how to raise them you will naturally know the moral code for yourself." When you think the moral code is just for yourself, that is one-sided understanding. A moral code is, rather, to help others, and naturally the moral code you find to help others, or to be kind to others, will also be for yourself.

So we say, "To go heading to the east one hundred miles is to go to the west one hundred miles." When the moon is high in the sky, the moon in the water will be deep. But usually people will observe the moon above the water and will not see the moon in the water. So when you see the moon deep in the water, you should know that this moon is very high. That the moon is deep means that the moon is high. So, the moon in the water is independent and the moon over the water is independent; but the moon over the water is the moon in the water too. We should understand in this way. When you are strong, you should be strong, you should be very tough. But that toughness comes from your gentle kindness. And when you are kind you should just be kind, but that does not mean you are not strong.

Women are not physically as strong as men. Because they are physically weaker they are often stronger than men. Actually we don't know who is strong. When we are completely independent, when we have a completely independent nature which is our own, we have absolutely equal strength with everyone. When you are comparing which is stronger, you or I, then you don't have real strength. When you are completely independent, one with your own nature, then it means you are an absolute power in a relative situation. When women and men are too much involved in competition with each other, they are not so strong. When women become completely women (and men become completely men) they have absolute power. Do you understand this point?

So brightness and darkness, although they are a pair of opposites, have equality at the same time, "as when one footstep is forward the other is behind." This is a very good metaphor to explain the relationship of absolute and relative.

When you walk, the step forward immediately becomes the step behind. Then, is a step with your right foot the step before or the step behind? Which is it? Which is brightness and which is darkness? It is difficult to tell. "Like the foot before and the foot behind in walking."*

But when you are actually walking, there is no foot behind or no foot before. If you stop walking and think about it, the right foot may sometimes be the foot

* R.H. Blyth translation.

before and the left foot may be the foot behind; there is brightness and darkness. But when your feet are actually walking, when you are actually practicing our way, there is no brightness or darkness, no foot before or foot behind. If I say that you should just sit zazen without thinking, you may think that we should not have any thoughts and you will be caught by the idea that the right foot is the foot before and the left foot is the foot behind. Then you cannot walk any more. If you forget all about the left foot or the right foot you can walk. Actually when you are walking, you have no idea of left foot or right foot. But if you are (self-consciously) aware of right foot or left foot, you cannot walk, you cannot run.

As I said, when you chew your food there is no rice, or no pickle, or no soup. And after you mix the food in your mouth, it will be digested in your tummy, and it will serve its purpose. Even so, we should serve one thing after another, and dessert should come last. There is some order. But even though there is some order you should chew your food and mix it, or else the food will not serve its purpose. It is necessary to think about it, to have some recipe, but it is also necessary to mix everything up.

This is a very good interpretation of reality, and a good suggestion of how we practice our way, and of what kind of activity is going on in our everyday life. With this line the interpretation of reality from the light of independency is finished.



Tassajara garden, 1988

QUESTIONS

Student: Roshi, when you say "independency", I'm a little confused as to whether you mean "independent" or "interdependency."

Suzuki-roshi: I mean the idea of independency and dependency. "Interdependence" is more like "dependency".

Student: Roshi, in English we have "independent" and "independence", but no word "independency".

Suzuki-roshi: Oh! "Independence". Excuse me. "Independence" may be the noun, but to me it does not fit so well.

Student: We have a noun "dependency" so we can have "independency".

Suzuki-roshi: But you have "independency"?

Student: Now we have "independency"!

Suzuki-roshi: "Independent" is too strong. If you are "independent", Bam! (striking the table with his stick). That's all! You don't care about anything. That is not what we mean. When you are independent you are in a very vulnerable and weak or dangerous situation.

Student: Isn't this idea that people get of their independence a delusion?

Suzuki-roshi: Yes. When they think, "I am independent," it is not true. You are dependent on everything.

Student: I can't figure out how you can tell the difference between what a woman is supposed to be and what a man is supposed to be. Like if a woman competes with a man then she's weak, but how do you know what a man or a woman is supposed to be like in the first place?

Suzuki-roshi: I don't mean weak. If men and women compete and are compared with each other by setting up some standard or categories, sometimes the man will be stronger and sometimes the woman will be stronger. Anyway, you cannot always be strong. But when you become a woman (or a man) absolutely, you have absolute value always, and no one can replace you.

Student: Roshi, I have some trouble with the relevancy of your lecture. I'd like to say one more thing about it, but I don't know what. I can't quite see what it's all about. I know what it's all about when you are talking about opposites and things like that.

Suzuki-roshi: The purpose of what I am saying is to open some different approach to your understanding of reality. You are observing things from just one side or the other; and you stick to some understanding from just one side. That is why I am talking in this way. It is necessary. Strictly speaking Buddhists have no teaching. We have no god or deities. We don't have anything. What we have is nothingness, that's all. So how is it possible for Buddhists to be religious? What kind of composure do we have? That will be the question. The answer is not some special idea of God or deity, but rather, this kind of understanding of the reality we are always facing. Where are we? What are we doing? Who is he? Who is she? When we understand "he" and "she" in this way, when we observe things in this way, we don't need any special teaching of God because everything is God for us. Moment after moment we are facing God. And each one of us is also God or Buddha. So we don't need any special idea of God. That may be the point.

Student: Roshi, that sounds very good to me, but then how come we take vows? Like when Ed and Meg got married, you said that they should take refuge in the triple treasure (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) and observe the ten cardinal precepts.



Tassajara

Suzuki-roshi: No! You are just trying to argue with me. You need precepts but actually it isn't possible to violate precepts. You cannot. But you feel as if you are. If you feel in that way, you should accept your feelings and if you accept your feelings then you have to say, "Excuse me," or "I'm sorry" or something. That is also quite natural. "Don't kill" is a dead precept. "Excuse me" is an actual working precept, which is not one foot behind or one foot forward. Do you understand? If you read the precepts and say, "O.K., I will do it", that is precepts. And when you have violated a precept you may say, "Oh, excuse me." That is quite natural.

Student: I do feel natural about some of the precepts, for instance, that I shouldn't say nasty things about people. But to take harmful drugs or intoxicants seems natural. But if all the precepts were natural, and if I just wanted to do things that way, then that's different.

Suzuki-roshi: We take vows and observe precepts and we read sutras. But even though you read scriptures and observe precepts, without right understanding they will be the precepts of either brightness or darkness, and when you are caught in this way or rely too much on precepts or scriptures, they are not Buddhist precepts or scriptures.

Student: Suppose I take a precept that says I won't speak ill of others. If I don't follow the precept, it seems like there is no reason for it at all, and if I do follow it, it seems like I'm being caught by it. I just don't understand. If precepts are not rigid they don't seem to be of any use at all, and if they are rigid they don't seem to be consistent with the Sandokai. I have always wondered about that part in the Meal Sutra where we say, "to stop all evil and practice good," and I asked you about it, and you said that we should just pay attention to what we are doing. If that is so, why don't we just say that? Why don't we say, "I practice zazen in my everyday life," and not be caught by words? Why go through this "good and evil" stuff?

Suzuki-roshi: If you feel in that way, you might also say, "It is quite natural for me to be born and live in this world." But is it natural? You have already pre-

sumed something which you shouldn't presume. That may already be a big mistake. Why did you come here?

Student: When I came here they didn't ask me about precepts. They just wanted to know if I had \$2.50 a day.

Suzuki-roshi: Good bargain! It cannot be so simple. So anyway, you should say, "Oh! I'm sorry." When you are born you cannot say so. Now you can. So you should say, "I am sorry to be your daughter or your son. Excuse me. I have caused you a lot of trouble." That is actually precepts.

Student: Roshi, sometimes I feel this way about listening to lectures. At one time I was just walking along and someone came and said, "Did you realize that when you are walking, one foot is ahead and the other is behind?" No! For a long time that amazed me. I wondered why he ever asked me a question like that, and I thought about it a lot. It was a very strange thing and it occupied my attention. Then, after a long time, I found that I was just walking again and didn't think so much about it. But one day as I was walking, another man came up and said, "Did you realize that when you are walking, one foot is ahead and the other is behind?" And I feel right at that point now. I still don't understand it at all, but I still have to deal with it somehow. Half of me says "What's the relevance of it?" because it doesn't bother me any more, and the other half says, "Yes, but it's still happening like that every time I take a step."

Suzuki-roshi: Just to think of your life, only as a personal practice, doesn't make much sense. But if you see what we human beings are doing, you will see that this is exactly how we cause trouble for ourselves. Right foot or left foot, Rinzai or Soto, America or the Soviet Union, peace or war; if you understand in this way it is a big problem and the way to solve it is to walk on and on and on.

Student: Do I understand you to say that the problem is, how to be aware of all these polarities and precepts without being conscious of being aware? Consciousness fixes things and that is not real either. It fixes the chain.

Suzuki-roshi: Yes, when the chain is fixed it cannot move. But still you should move. Time does not wait for you, so you should go on and on following the reality. If you think about this point you will already have started to walk. But if you just remain thinking about it, it doesn't work and you are not walking forward. If you think, "The world is going on and on, we are becoming older and older, today will not come again, and tomorrow I have to go somewhere," you have already started to walk. You cannot think the same thing always, you cannot always stop and think, so anyway you should go on and on, making your best effort. And when you make your best effort, actually you are walking. Sometimes your foot may be behind and sometimes it may be ahead. Sometimes you feel as if you are doing something good and sometimes you feel as if you are doing something bad. But in that way you are going on and on and on. You have to accept it. If you have to accept it, and if you have to live in each moment, then you are actually living in each moment. Then you should do something, say something. "Say something!" the Rinzai master shouts. "Say something now!" (hitting the table). What do you say? That is the point.

SCHEDULE		
	SAN FRANCISCO	GREEN GULCH
ZAZEN AND SERVICE	<p>MONDAY through FRIDAY: 5 - 7:10 am (2 zazen periods & service) 5:40 - 6:40 pm (1 zazen period & service)</p> <p>SATURDAY: 5 - 7:10 am (2 zazen periods & service) 9:10 - 9:50 am (zazen only)</p> <p>SUNDAY: No schedule</p>	<p>MONDAY through FRIDAY: 5 - 7 am (2 zazen periods & service) 5:15 - 6:05 pm (1 zazen & service) 8 pm (zazen only)</p> <p>SATURDAY: 6:30 - 7:15 am (optional)</p> <p>SUNDAY: 5:45 - 6:40 am (zazen & service) 9:25 am zazen 5:15 - 6:45 am (zazen & service)</p>
LECTURE	SATURDAY: 10 am	SUNDAY: 10:15 am
SESSHINS	<p>ONE-DAY SITTINGS: usually in first weekend of each month except during months in which a 7-day sesshin is scheduled.</p> <p>FIVE-DAY SESSHIN: June 4 - 8</p> <p>SEVEN-DAY SESSHIN: Dec. 3 - 9</p>	<p>ONE-DAY SITTINGS: usually in third Saturday of each month except during months in which a 7-day sesshin is scheduled.</p>
ZAZEN INSTRUCTION	SATURDAY: 8:30 am	SUNDAY: 8:30 am
<p>Each year we hold residential practice periods of two-to-three months' duration at Green Gulch, City Center and Zen Mountain Center. For more information, please write to the City Center.</p>		

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