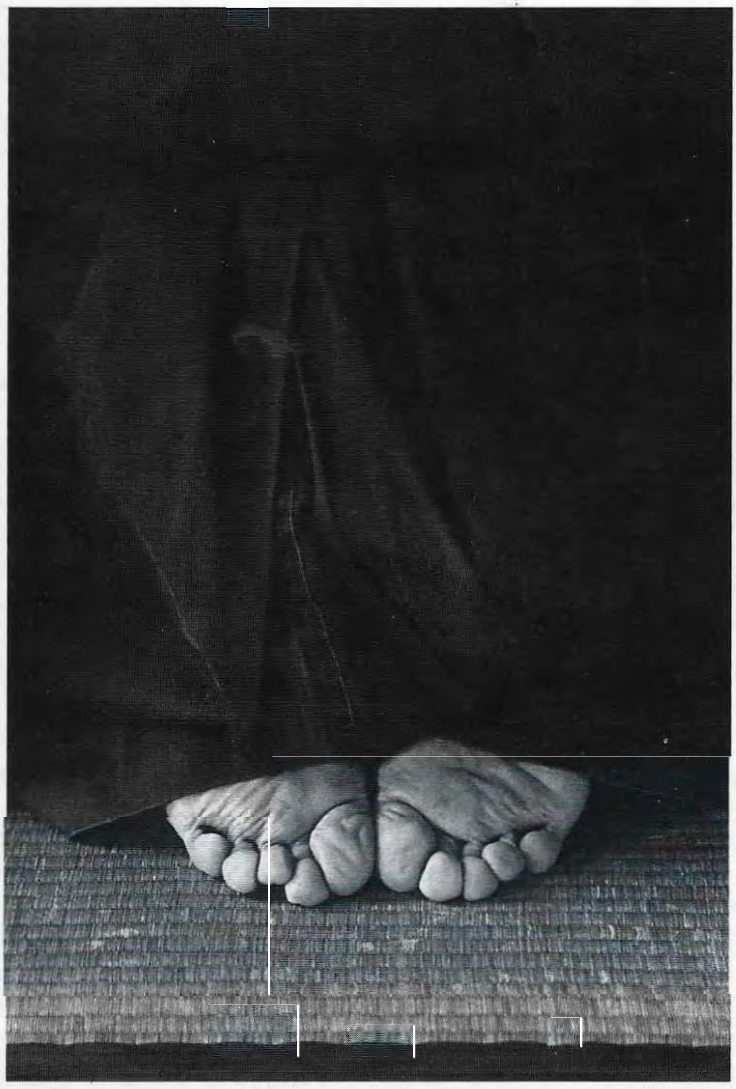
Wind Bell



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ERRATUM: The last issue of *Wind Bell* was erroneously designated "Vol. XXXIV No. 2." It should have been Vol. XXXIV No. 1. Therefore we are calling this issue Vol. XXXIV No. 2A.

What is it to be a Buddhist?

BY Lew Lancaster
FINAL LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—BUDDHISM IN AMERICA
MAY 2, 2000

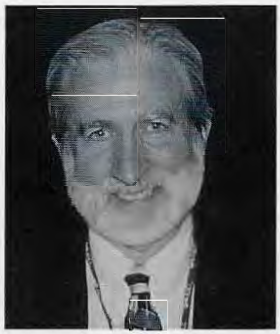
Professor Lewis R. Lancaster started his teaching career at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1967. After his first lecture, in which he gave a summary of the plan for the course on the "History and Development of Buddhism," it dawned on him that he had told the class everything he knew about the topic. In a panic, he had to try to think of what to say for the next ten weeks. He is still trying to think about it in this, his last lecture, thirty-three years later.

MANY PEOPLE HERE IN AMERICA have become involved with Buddhism as, I suppose we could say, converts. Those converts include both Rick Fields' so-called "white Buddhists" as well as what I can call "new Budhists" among the Chinese and Korean communities who did not grow up as Buddhists, but who have in more recent years become part of it. All of these people have the same issues: What is it to be a Buddhist? How do you act? How can you answer the challenge of Sylvia Boorstein's book *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist*—that is, what does a Buddhist look like? This question is not new to Buddhism.

One of the best ways to make yourself visible is to be different. For monastic Buddhists there has been the shaved head and the robes—these things set them apart, so they were quite visible. Monastics function almost like images or icons of Buddhists. People bow to them and revere them in much the same way that they would an image of a Buddha.

What, then, about a layperson? A layperson looks like everybody else. Therefore, the question for a lot of the "new Buddhists" (non-monastics) is about what it means to be a Buddhist and the behavior of someone who calls himself or herself a Buddhist.

Jack Kerouak's answer was to be a dharma bum. Being a dharma bum meant that you did not enter into a society that engaged in mass purchasing and consumerism. All you asked of a dharma bum was that he or she not settle for playing the establishment game. To be a Buddhist was to step aside from the mainstream of society. But that was not the definition for



Professor Lewis Lancaster

all Buddhists. The long-standing community of Japanese Jodo-Shin-shu (Pure Land School) Buddhists did not step aside from the mainstream of American life. They were firmly placed within it. Most of them became middle class and adopted middle-class values. And they did not in any sense feel that that made them any less Buddhist. The interpretation of what it is to be a Buddhist was quite varied in this country, always has been and perhaps will be in the future.

A great Tibetan lama once said, "Renunciation is the foot of meditation." Renunciation is the basis of meditation. As a society, we are not really very involved with renunciation. Must we renounce the body? Must we renounce sexuality? Must we be somehow otherworldly? If you ask the lamas about renunciation, they will immediately assure you that most Buddhists in the world have not rejected their bodies, have not rejected sexuality and are definitely not otherworldly. You can ask them what we are to renounce and they will answer that we have to renounce our hopes and our dreams for permanence.

We all hope for permanence. About ten years ago, I built a house directly on top of the San Andreas fault. I listened to authorities advise, "You will have to do this and that to make sure it will last when the big shake comes." Eventually one of the builders said, "You know, they don't know anything. This whole thing could fall to the ground. I'm happy to build it for you, but I can't guarantee that it's going to stand here forever. In fact, I very much doubt that it will." Ever since then I have thought, "I had better enjoy this place, because there is not much security." Whenever it starts to shake, I think, "This is it!"

Renunciation is something that has not always been practiced by all Buddhists everywhere and in every place. What I was talking about was an example of a particular kind of teaching from a Tibetan lama who was describing renunciation as the basis for meditation. If you want to practice the form of meditation that he teaches, you must give up the fond notion that you live in a secure, permanent and potentially easeful environment. That is one teaching.

People say, "I am looking for a fantastic community that I will find to be a matrix for enlightenment." And basically what they find is a group of people.

How does one "belong" to this tradition? Some people have never joined it because they were born to it. If you ask somebody in Thailand, "When did you become a Buddhist?" they look at you in a very peculiar way because the question has never even arisen in their mind. From their earliest memories, they have been a Buddhist. But what is it to join? Converts have taken a very deliberate step some time in their life to join a Buddhist practice or group. No one has the authority to say that to be a Buddhist you must agree to a list of beliefs and practices they have drawn up. You may be asked if you would like to take a voluntary vow or to take refuge. But what does it mean to take refuge—in the Buddha, the dharma, the sangha? Buddhists have some vague ideas, but what is it to join a religion if there is no club, no uniform, no distinctive color to wear?

People try to mark themselves as religious by wearing crosses, yin-yang symbols, the star of David or the crescent of Islam. In Buddhism, traditionally, you could wear prayer beads. To be a religious person is somehow to make a statement, "I am thus, and you can see that I am by this mark."

How do you define the sangha? It is a community. But what kind of community is it? If I go to the San Francisco Zen Center I will find one kind of community. If I go to the Thai temple in Berkeley I will find another. If I go to the Buddhist Churches of America on Channing Way, I am going to find another. If I go to the Nyingma Institute I will find yet another type of community.

All of these communities look quite different. In some cases they are almost like a club. That is, you join and pay membership dues. In Buddhist Churches of America you make a payment in an amount that the church specifies. At San Francisco Zen Center, you know you are part of it if you become a voting member. When can you make decisions on the community? When can you vote? These are crucial issues.

If we ask the Tibetan lamas, "What is the Buddhist sangha? What is the Buddhist community?" their answer is that a community is a matrix of enlightenment. If it does not have a matrix that produces enlightenment, then it is not a Buddhist community.

"How do you make a matrix for enlightenment?" you may well ask. Is it practice? Meditation? Retreats? Lectures? Reading and study? People say, "I am looking for a fantastic community that I will find to be a matrix for enlightenment." And basically what they find is a group of people. All the issues that we have in society in general are always going to play themselves out. You can never totally escape from that.

Buddhists have always had trouble answering the question, "If I am going to live as a Buddhist, what do I do about my family?" If you are a Buddhist monastic (except in Japan), you 'leave home'. That means you go to a totally different community, you change your name, and you have no further social obligations to your nuclear family. East Asian culture has always resented and looked down on Buddhism because of this. For many people in East Asia, the family is the primary unit, particularly from the Confucian point of view; therefore to turn one's back on the family is to deny the essential element holding together the fabric of society. From their perspective, this is an extremely destructive thing to do.

The world in which we live today is a global environment. We have never before had to live this way. I am amazed at the places from which I receive e-mail. I received an e-mail message from Pokhra in Nepal. I remember trying to reach that very remote place by road. The road completely washes away every year in about eighteen places and has to be rebuilt. Now I can contact Pokhra over the Internet and not have to worry about the washed-out road.

Globalism says something on which Buddhists can agree: The nuclear family is not the basis for Buddhism. Buddhists say that the issue for us in life is to figure out how to live as human beings in a global environment, how to transfer merit to all sentient beings. That is really the challenge of our present time: how much to focus on a family as opposed to those outside. I grew up in an environment in Virginia where things were very localized. My wife is from Los Angeles. When I first took her back to Virginia, she went to buy gasoline at the little store near where I used to go camping in the mountains. She sat, and she waited and waited, and nobody came. Finally, she went in the store, and they were all sitting there chatting away. She asked, "Can I have some gas?" They thought about it and looked her over, and then one of them asked, "Are you Lew's wife?" She said yes. "Oh well! We didn't know who you were! Sure you can have gas."

Localism says, "I have no real obligations to people who are outside. If I don't know them, what obligation should I have to them?" That is true around the world, to a certain degree. It is certainly true in Japan. You must be introduced to somebody before they really have an obligation to you. If you go to Japan and try to get by without an introduction, you will have a great deal of trouble, because people will not quite know what to do with you.

Even though Japan has been very Buddhist, when you begin to talk about an obligation to the entire world, it is a very different matter. I run into this all the time, because I have been trying to make the Buddhist canon freely available to people online. I have gone to several people in Japan to ask them to let me use their data: "There's no reason for somebody else to go to all that effort. Will you allow us to put the data online?" The answer on many occasions has been, "I don't mind having friends read it, but strangers . . ." Where the obligation starts and stops is important to every culture.

So ask yourself: "To whom do I have a real obligation?" To your family? To friends? When Buddhists talk about an obligation to all beings, it is a big issue. It is not just in Virginia, not just in Japan. It is an enormous concept to think that to be a Buddhist is to have an obligation that extends to all beings. It is difficult for all of us. We may think, "I can't take on the whole world. It's too big. I can't take on all the creatures of the world. There are too many."

These considerations arise when people ask "What is it to be a Buddhist?" Sometimes people have felt that to be a Buddhist means that you own the tradition. You are the one who can say what it is. This is one of the most difficult problems in the Buddhist tradition, or with any religious tradition. The Buddhist tradition has never really had an idea of ownership of the tradition itself. At the end of his long life of teaching, Buddha said,

"The bathtub" is a very familiar landmark for those who frequently travel the dirt road from Jamesburg to Tassajara.

CHRIS HONEYSETT

Shosan Victoria Austin, who most recently served as head of practice at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, is the new president of Zen Center.

in essence, that you will have to figure out what your path is going to be. "You will have to work at it, and it's not going to be something that I can just tell you. The dharma, the teaching, is not owned by anybody."

Buddhism has been able to spread because there was no idea that it could be owned even by a language. Certain religious languages depend on a sacred language. Only that language can express that religious tradition. Buddha said, "If it's true, it ought to be able to be expressed in any language, in any place, at any time."

If you start looking at Buddhism from a social or cultural point of view, I can tell you that any statement made to the effect that "This is Buddhism" should cause you to worry a little bit. As a teacher of a class that purports to teach a definition of religion, I have this worry. The very moment that you make a definitive statement about normative Buddhism, you will discover a group or a tradition that teaches something quite different from your assertion. Because there is no ownership it is very difficult for me to imagine a Buddhist group or community that would attack another one for their beliefs. It is not something the doctrine or practices would support. Of course, people are people.

The tradition itself says that anything that we say, even as we say it, is not permanent. I have to say that working with computers has been very good for me in this respect. Before I started working on the database for the Korean canon, I had an idea that there were permanent solutions to the technological problems involved. I thought I could find a way to do something that would always work. And then I came up against the computer, where every answer is absolutely temporary.

When I started out in my graduate studies in Buddhism, the university faculty gave me a list of a hundred books that provided the basic knowledge needed for higher education in the field. This was based on the model of the University of Chicago which trained students by defining a canon of one hundred classics of Western civilization. If you read the hundred great books, you would know everything. I read those hundred books and I thought, "Now I'm educated. I'm ready to take my orals and go on to teach." Today, my poor grad students come to me and say, "What should I read?" I have to ask, "What are you interested in?" If I gave them a list of all the Buddhist books that are good, it would be so long that they probably would not have enough time in their whole life to read them all. I asked one grad student, "How about giving everybody a copy of your dissertation bibliography?" There was this great pause. He said, "Well, it's two hundred and seventy-three pages."

That is the world in which we live! Information is increasing far beyond our ability to memorize or control it. Technology that allows this growth of knowledge shifts and changes every year, so that what one learned last year is no longer valid. Who knows what the future holds with such developments in progress as the quantum computer?

I believe that the ancient Buddhist system can still function well in this contemporary world. In other words, that old message that was posited in India is still functioning, which was, "If you have a fond hope in permanence, forget it." World wars and holocausts and all the things that have happened over the centuries indicate how insecure it is for us as humans. We have a lot of trouble being able to find spiritual ease.

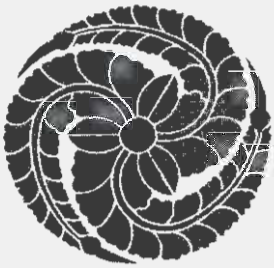
I started out today asking, "What does a Buddhist look like?" Actually, nobody looks Buddhist. That is probably the best answer. Or better yet, "like all beings and all humans," since there is no way you can say that this one looks like a Buddhist and this one does not.

For many people who come to Buddhism, the question is more particularly, "How does a Buddhist act?" Do I live like a dharma bum, believing in some form of renunciation and not using up the things of this world? I would have to give up shopping. Do I have to be a vegetarian and give up meat? Do I have to become a monk or a nun and go into a life of renunciation in that sense?

A frustrating thing, to some people, about the Buddhist tradition is that, at every level, whenever we define it, we have already lost it. It is like the permanent solution in the computer world—it is never there. The minute we have something, all we have is that thing, not the ultimate expression.

I ask myself how people can know that they are Buddhists. The one thing that all forms of Buddhism hold as the highest ideal, in every tradition, is compassion. That seems to be as close to a universal answer as I

This is the crest of Rinso-in, Suzuki-roshi's temple in Japan, where his son Hoitsu Suzuki is now the abbot.



can find. Buddhists, when they talk about compassion, say that if you are enlightened, you will have a deeper response to the suffering of others. If insights do not lead to compassion then it is not what the Buddha experienced at his enlightenment.

This view makes an enormous difference. Most of the Buddhist teachers I have heard have always focused on this level. I told you the story about Suzuki-roshi making the vegetarian eat a Big Mac. Why did he do it? Compassion. What was the compassion? This student had become so fixated on his vegetarianism that he was no longer able to understand that vegetarianism is just a decision. If one becomes fixed on an idea and a concept, then the teachings indicate that there is a serious problem.

The first time I ever went to a Buddhist meditation sesshin, a monk came in and kicked one of the people who was meditating. I was really shocked by this. But the monk acted with compassion. The student really needed that kick. He was not doing it right. He thought he had it. He needed to be jarred out of his old patterns. Get over it! Move on.

How do you know whether what you are doing is compassion? It is a difficult thing. As a parent, I can say that it is extremely difficult to know how to be compassionate to your children. If you think it is exclusively to be kind and sweet to them, that will prove not to be the case. There comes that moment when you have to be honest. It is very hard for parents to be honest. At least it was for me. But compassion means saying, "Here's what I think. I don't blame you, but I believe thus."

If I must judge a Buddhist group poorly, it is when I see a lack of compassion within it. Any time a group starts arming itself, organizing a defense, building a fort, and getting ready to kill in order to defend itself, that is not a Buddhist group. It utterly lacks compassion. It is acting in self-preservation, maybe, but compassion is something else.

Buddhism is a complex tradition; it is a religion that allows for an enormous variety of practices. At the same time, it says, "Don't think that it's permanent. Don't think that it's the only thing that you can do. Don't think that it makes you any more a Buddhist than anybody else. Don't

I doubt that accomplished teachers ever feel that what happens to the student is something they caused. They recognize that it is what the student has done.

think that it always creates ease and a happy experience for you. Don't think that it will give you the security of knowing."

The Three Refuges are in the Buddha, the community, and the teaching. In the world, which is suffering and troubled and is on fire and filled with hindrance, refuge is taken in the Buddha as a teacher and a founder. But you also have to take refuge in the community of people who are involved with Buddhism. You cannot really do it without other people. A lot of people think that in Buddhism you can become a hermit. Buddhist texts say that if you become a hermit, you will get something that is very good, but you will not get it all. The community is crucial. And the other refuge is the teaching. This refuge means that the teaching ought to be about the nature of reality and of our experience.

At this university there has been your experience as a student and mine as a professor. I hope that you have learned that I do not have all the answers. People who have an idea that teaching means simply to impart content are mistaken. I know you can learn, but I have not the slightest idea of what any of you learned from me. I will never know, after thirty-three years of teaching. All those classes! All those hundreds of students! I am shocked sometimes when someone tells me what they have learned in my class. I look at them and I say, "Wow! I didn't know that I had taught that!" It amazes me. But most traditions recognize that without a teacher the potential for going wrong is very high. Therefore, if you see somebody who has what you want, then you should get him or her to teach you how they did it! Buddha himself failed to find a teacher! He said, "I looked and looked, but nobody could teach me. So I finally had to teach myself." But he only did that after a long period of being trained by a number of teachers. Finally he sat under the tree of enlightenment and said, "Okay, I'm going to sit here until I get it." Not having a teacher is what a buddha ultimately says.

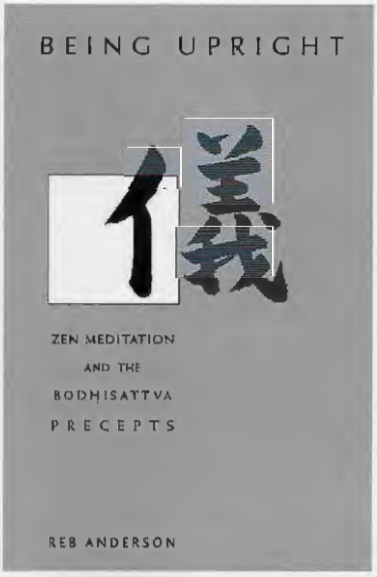
In Buddhism, even though teachers may endorse certain practices and help students along, I doubt that accomplished teachers ever feel that what happens to the student is something they caused. They recognize that it is

what the student has done. Maybe they helped them take a certain path. It is very hard to know what happens to another person.

Yet I come to the end of my teaching career with the firm belief that a teacher is important. Suppose you had never seen a computer before and you decide to teach yourself how to use it. How would you teach yourself even what the control key is? That key changes the way every other key functions. Even that would be an incredible discovery if nobody told you how it works. And how would you find out what each of the other keys do? You could eventually do it, but think how long it would take compared to even a half-hour lesson on the ABCs of using a computer. That is what a teacher ought to do—move you so you can do something faster and more efficiently.

I do not have the knowledge that any of you has. When you enter the university, you know things that no professor knows. Each of you in a way is better trained than I am, because you are being taught things that nobody ever taught me. With education, each generation surpasses the one before it. I can research something for two years, yet in two minutes I could tell grad students the gist of what I have found. If they want to work with me, I can tell them, "You might as well accept that this is so. Based on my work, this is what you are going to find. So now, go on from there." I hope I saved them some time, maybe two years. They know what I know, and will eventually know much more than I do. I think that is what teachers do in religious practice as well.

Thank you for being here today to share with me my final official lecture.



Senior Dharma Teacher Reb Anderson's long-awaited book about the precepts is now available in Zen Center bookstores.

Lecture to Professor Lewis Lancaster's visiting class

BY Shunryu Suzuki-roshi
TASSAJARA
MARCH 1, 1970

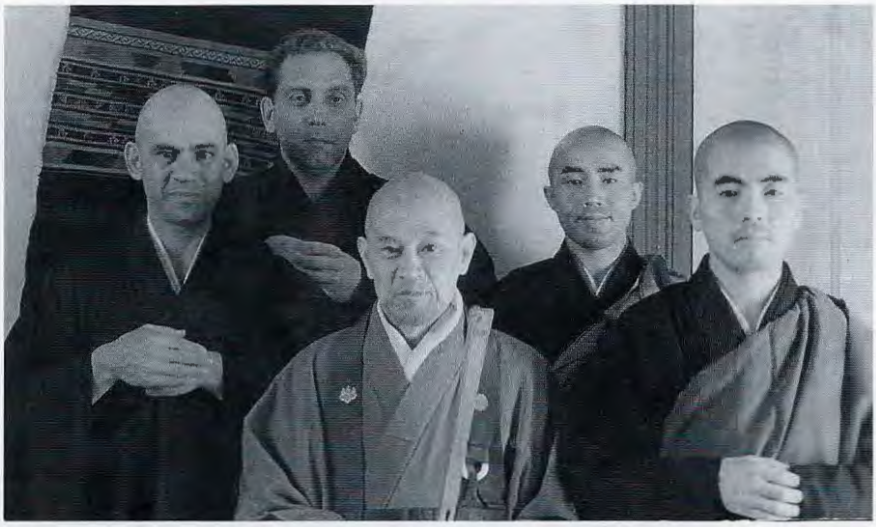
I CAME THIS MORNING without preparing anything to say. But I wanted to share the feeling we have right here, right now. Sharing the feeling right here, right now is the fundamental or basic thing for Zen practice. Zen is, in one word, to share our feeling with people, with trees and with mountains wherever we are. That is Zen practice.

But usually our mind is filled with something like ice cream or lemonade or bananas or how much the soap costs in one store compared to how much will it cost in another store. And looking at the newspaper and seeing an ad where there is some sale. So it is almost impossible to share the actual feeling we have, where we are right now.

That is how our life is going on—on and on and on endlessly, with some rubbish. It is not rubbish when you are using it. At that time it is an important thing for you. But after you use it, it is not necessary to keep it. It is the same thing with our everyday life. Because we have too much useless rubbish in our mind, we cannot share our feeling with people, with things, with trees, or with mountains. Even though we are right in the middle of the woods, still we cannot appreciate the feeling of the woods. That is, I think, why we practice zazen.

Originally Buddha attained enlightenment after he gave up everything and studied under many teachers. He was tired of human suffering, studying many things, and being occupied with some certain philosophy or religion, and making a great effort to study just to be caught by it. That is what most people, including religious people, are doing. He was tired of that kind of effort. So he gave up everything. He lost his interest in such things.

So finally he went to the bodhi tree where he attained enlightenment. We say "He attained enlightenment," but it may be better to say "He forgot completely everything!" He had nothing in his mind at that moment. And then he saw a morning star rising up from the east. That is, I believe, his enlightenment. When he saw the morning star, that was the first thing he saw coming out of his empty mind. That is why he had such joy at the sight of the morning star. In other words, he shared his feeling—the morning star's feeling. We don't know. It is



Suzuki-roshi (front center) is shown here with early Zen Center practitioners and teachers, from left: Sojun Mel Weitsman, Ananda Dalenberg, Kobun Chino and Dainin Katagiri.

difficult to analyze whether that is Buddha's feeling or the morning star's feeling. Anyway he shared his feeling with the morning star.

I think that he was the first person to have this kind of experience. That is why he is called Buddha. To be a buddha means to be he himself, to be completely with everyone and with everything. But to be Buddha it is necessary to give up various bits of rubbish in our mind.

Buddha's teaching or Buddhist teaching is the teaching which arises or which should come out from emptiness, from emptiness of mind. In other words, from pure mind. Or, you may say a "holy mind." If your words come from pure emptiness, whatever they are, I think they are Buddha's words. And if you do things with purity of mind, that is Buddha's activity. It is possible for us to do that. Why we meditate, or why we recite Buddha's name, or why we read scriptures is on the one hand to empty our mind, and on the other hand to appreciate Buddha's words arising from empty mind.

So when you read scriptures, you can empty your mind by reading. And when your mind becomes clearer and clearer, then your reading will become deeper. While you are reciting a sutra, you will extend your life in its true sense. So it is necessary for you to read scriptures and sit zazen, back and forth. Or if a scripture is too long or too difficult, you can simply repeat the name of Buddha. That may be the way for most people.

We can sit in zazen posture with empty mind. But there is some technique or some explanation needed

to do this. I hope I have more time to explain this point. The purpose of our practice is to open up our mind. You must open it like you open a tin can. You must cut hard, and open the tin so that you can eat what is in it.

But just to open is not enough. The spirit of repetition is also necessary. If you do not have this kind of spirit, or if your everyday life is not based on this kind of spirit, to repeat it forever, you cannot cope with the problems you will have day after day. As long as you live, you must eat something. After you eat, you may have a big rubbish pile of cans and papers.

So constantly, we should work on it. We should clear our table every day. Even though you clear up—or have a feeling of clearing everything from your table—if that activity is not based on the spirit of continuing to do it forever, then that is just like the feeling you may have after taking LSD, or after you take some alcohol.

The big difference between a psychedelic experience and an enlightenment experience—we should not compare them, but the difference is that one is based on a so-called bodhisattva's vow and the other is just a casual experience which happened to you at some time with the aid of some substance. One is the experience which you can have always, over and over, continuously. The other is the experience which you will have with the help of some aid. I'm only comparing our experience with some other experience, to make clear our practice. I easily become critical. I don't feel so good after criticizing things. So I shouldn't go too far.

But anyway, we should clear our table every day. And even though it is clear we should continue to make the effort to clear it. That is another important point. Because if you are clearing your table because it is dirty, that mind is dirty because that mind acknowledged something dirty. That you think something is dirty means your mind is dirty. So we should let go of this kind of discriminating mind: "dirty" or "clean," "right" or "wrong." To let go of discrimination is the point. To clean things, not because they are dirty, but because this is something we should do as long as we are alive is the point. That's all.

There is no reason why we should practice zazen. When I came to America, I was very much interested in why so many people want to practice zazen—crossing their legs, sitting upright and keeping their backs straight. I couldn't understand why. And I used to ask them, "Why did you come?" And they said, "Oh! I don't know." Most people say, "I don't know." Some people feel they should give me some reason, so they give me some reason. But it didn't make much sense so I just wondered why. But "I don't know" is right, I think. And even though you don't know what it is or why you do it, if you understand this point and if you start to practice religious activity, not only zazen but also various activities,

then that is Buddhist practice. This is the fundamental attitude of our practice.

I want to compare the practice of the past to the practice which is going on now—and which will continue to go on in the future. Then you will understand more clearly what is our practice. This is another effort to keep our practice clear and ongoing. On this point, I think we must make our effort not to get lost in—how should I say—worldly practice.

It is not a difficult thing to keep this practice pure if you understand actually what it is. So, in this sense, it is necessary for you to have some understanding of what Buddhist practice is.

I think we should be very grateful for Buddha and for the many people who transmitted this practice for many thousands of years. I also think we should be very grateful for those who are making the effort to satisfy their mind even though they do not know what real pure practice is, because eventually they will find out what is real practice—like Buddha, who after making a great effort to establish himself on himself, wanted to be independent from everything, and wanted to save all beings, having some feeling of responsibility as a future king of his own country. Sooner or later this is a feeling which everyone will have. So we must be grateful for those who are striving for the final goal.

If you have a question, please ask me. Whatever question it may be, it's quite all right.

Student: I understand from some students that they meditate a long time and nothing happens.

Suzuki-roshi (hereafter S-r): Nothing happens. That is okay.

Student: Is it better to meditate outside?

S-r: Inside is better.

Student: Inside is better? Why?

S-r: For a beginner it is especially so, because outside it may become windy. Here in California it may be good to sit outside, but still you may have some disturbance. The light may be too strong. The light we have here inside is just right. But if it is too strong, it is difficult to keep your eyes open, so you have to shut your eyes.

It is necessary to have the right temperature too. If it is too hot, it is difficult. Cold weather is better, but hot is very difficult when you to sit. When you go outside you may feel you want to sit there. But if you start to sit, you will find various things which will disturb you. So I think it is better to sit inside. If you try, you will find out.

Student: Do you always count to keep track of the mind? Or do you stop at some point?

S-r: Just to sit is best, but that is not so easy. So we count our breaths. But it is not just to count our breaths like you count sheep jumping over a fence. One, two, three. This is rather busy. When you want to sleep, that may work, but for zazen it doesn't work so well.

"To count" means to do something with your body and mind. To devote yourself to practice with your

JUDY BUNCE

These early Zen Center students gathered at City Center on August 12, 2000 to share their recollections of their years of practice with Shunryu Suzkuki-roshi. The event was a benefit for the Suzuki-Roshi Tape Archive Project. Front row from left: Betty Warren, Jane Schneider, Paul Discoe, Katherine Thanas, Graham Petchey, Blanche Hartman; back row: Reb Anderson, Richard Baker, Peter Schneider, Mel Weitsman and Dan Welch.

mind and body. But it is easier to say, "count your breaths," rather than "to practice it with your whole body and mind." You may wonder what that means. So we just say, "count your breaths."

And how you count is not just counting. Even though you lose your count sometimes, it is all right. But how you count is with every part of your body: with your mudra, with your breath, with your mind. Concentration means to be like this [demonstrating]. But actually we do not try to concentrate on anything. We just try to sit like this and organize our body and mind.

Maybe it is better to have some feeling of counting or following breathing. At that time, your mind is everywhere: with every part of your body. That is how you count your breaths.

Student: How can you still thoughts that come up in meditation?

S-r: The best way may be if you haven't much on your mind or in your head. You start to think because your mind is resting or not participating in the practice. So your mind starts to wander about. "What shall I do?" you may say. So your mind should also join our practice. How to do it is to physically pull your chin in and stretch your neck. Our chin and neck should be always so. So your mind asks "What shall I

do?" and will start taking a walk. That is why you start to think.

Student: Is it better to leave the eyes half-open, or do you ever close the eyes?

S-r: Half open. Fujimoto-roshi said in *The Way of Zazen,* watch some point at your eye level, and turn the focus four or five feet ahead. Then you half-open your eyes. You shouldn't focus on some point on the wall or some point on the floor. Your eyes are not gazing at anything in particular. If you have this kind of seeing you can catch everything from this angle. I don't feel any particular focus. That is how to do it. But if it is difficult as you count your breath, you can focus on something in front of you.

Some older student, when she started practice, always prepared something to put it in front of her. She was gazing at it. I think that is not the proper way. No Zen master ever told us to do so. But for her it was very good. It worked very well, I think. But after a while she didn't need that kind of thing in front of her.

Student: For what reason do you keep the eyes open rather than closed?

S-r: If your eyes are open, naturally you will see many things. And if you close your eyes, you will think more, and you will have various images

Student: Do you get anywhere if you just keep sitting every day for twenty minutes—do your counting? Will there be progress? Or can you just get stuck sitting?

S-r: Yesterday I said many people changed into stones after sitting six days. I think that was good. But why we practice zazen is not to change into a stone. That is something which will happen in our practice. I don't say that is bad. That may be good. But that is not why we practice zazen.

You will have various experiences in zazen, and then more and more you will experience less the sense of duality, good or bad: good experience or bad experience. And you will feel always a sort of composure or the same consistent feeling wherever you go. With that foundation or same feeling of composure, you will see things as it is.

So that constant feeling will be like "emptiness" or "buddha-eye," or "buddha-mind." We call it by various names. A kind of fundamental openness of your mind. So you will not feel that you are here or you are there. "Here" or "there" is just a dualistic, mental understanding of things. Before we develop that dualistic understanding of things, we have a more pure experience of things. If you are able to maintain such a state of mind, or state of yourself, then you will not be bothered by the idea of "here" or "there." You don't seek for anything, because you have a contented feeling.

Student: And it happens by simply sitting there and doing that for a long time—over a period of time?

S-r: First of all you should get accustomed to right posture and

right breathing, natural breathing. Then you will have this kind of, should I say, "feeling?" For us it takes time—quite a long time to have this kind of feeling. So either at home or with a group, it is good to sit because it will help your posture and breathing. Breathing is an important thing. If your mind is disturbed, breathing will be disturbed too. Breathing is both mental and physical activity. So to take care of breathing is how you take care of yourself.

Student: If you can only sit for five minutes, is it better to sit or is it better not to sit at all?

S-r: Five minutes?

Student: Or ten minutes.

S-r: Even though you sit ten minutes usually your mind will not be calm enough. Kinhin is walking meditation—after standing up from sitting meditation, we walk slowly and practice walking zazen.

If you walk slowly, for six feet or so you will notice your breathing may not be deep enough. And after that, your breathing will be deeper, and you will have the feeling of zazen. It may take more than five minutes. So to stop after ten minutes is to quit zazen when you just entered meditation. It may be better to sit twenty minutes, I think.

Student: I was wondering at what point in meditation one reaches satori, and how can it be recognized?

S-r: Buddha said, "It's wonderful to see buddha-nature in all beings." He found buddha-nature in all beings. But when he said so, it was too late, I think [laughs]. When he said it, that was not enlightenment. That was the first step in the ordinary world.

People may say that when he saw the morning star he attained enlightenment. By seeing it, he attained enlightenment. As if a morning star helped him to attain enlightenment: if there was no morning star he wouldn't have attained enlightenment. But that is not so. So that is why we do not say so much about enlightenment. Because enlightenment is something which is there before something happens to us.

So what is enlightened mind, you may ask. When we say "enlightened mind," that is already making an object of enlightened mind. "Here there is enlightened mind. I will explain about it." "This is enlightened mind." But that is something which is outside of enlightened mind. You see?

It does not mean much to say something that makes an object of enlightened mind. It makes some sense, of course, but it is a projection of enlightened mind. It makes sense. But if you think, "This is enlightened mind. I attained enlightenment!" I feel very funny. [Laughs, laughter.] Do you understand?

So try not to say anything about enlightenment. Just practice zazen. Before you say something, real enlightenment is there within yourself—on the side of yourself, not out there.

Student: It seems from what

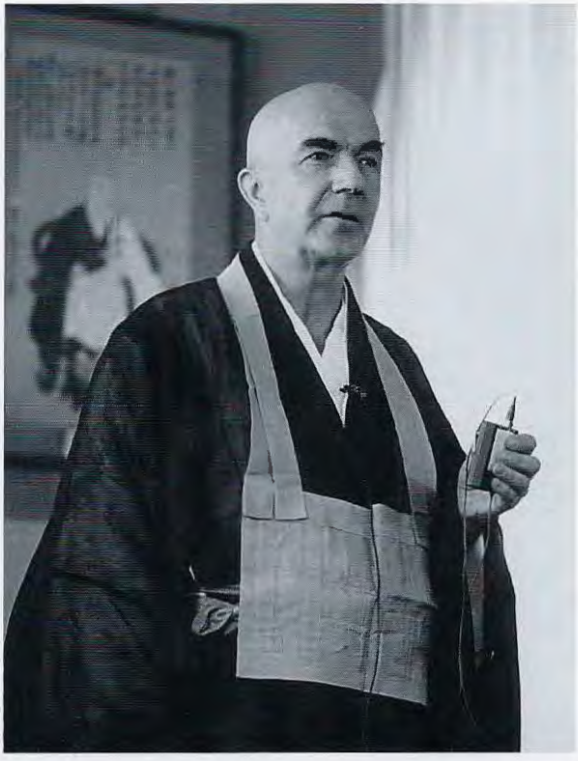
you were saying, that Buddhism—the dharmas and the sutras and all the temples don't have any necessary relationship to zazen . . . .

S-r: I haven't studied Indian philosophy so much. But scholars say that in India they would sit mostly outside, on a stone or under a tree. At that time they must have had a very good place to sit, and for Indian people that kind of place may have been best for sitting.

But in China, they started to sit inside. At that time, maybe most Buddhists were in some sense Zen students because they sat. And after more people became interested in Zen practice, they created their own monasteries where they sat. And they had a Buddha hall and a lecture hall as they had more people who sat this way. This is how the present Zen school was developed. There was some necessity so they had various buildings and a meditation room. But it does not mean that without a Buddha hall we cannot sit. We like having a big zendo, a Buddha Hall, and a beautiful gate. But that is not always necessary, we must think about this point more.

Student: Specifically I wonder about the philosophy and the sutras and the chanting—the religion of Buddhism—why that seemed to be necessary.

S-r: I explain it this way. Chanting will make your practice deeper. And the feeling of chanting or scripture makes your practice



BUTCH BALUYUT

Richard Baker, Zen Center's second abbot, returned to share recollections of Suzuki-roshi along with other early disciples.

more pure. In this way, over and over, we will have a deeper practice. In this sense, chanting is necessary. In China, some great Zen master would write a beautiful poem about their state of mind or understanding of the teaching and people would chant it while walking. In Japan, we still do it, in the Buddha hall with scriptures in our hands we chant the sutras while circumambulating. That is very helpful too.

Student: Are there any differences between the way you practice Zen in the United States and the way you practice in Japan?

S-r: Zazen practice is the same. I don't feel much difference. Wherever I go, I feel as if I am in Japan [laughs, laughter]. So it is rather difficult to answer your question. "American people" or "Japanese people," we say. But if we start to practice zazen, it's nearly the same. We have the same problems.

Student: Is satori the same thing as attaining nirvana?

S-r: Yeah. Some scholar wrote a pretty big essay about it. Satori is a more positive way of expressing nirvana. Nirvana is a more negative way of expressing satori. They are actually the same thing.

Student: Are there numerous satoris that you can have on the way to having what I guess would be the final one?

S-r: I have to say that nirvana or satori is not something which we strive for or attain. It is something which will come to you, or you may say which you have within yourself—I cannot say "within" or "without," but which is originally there. You feel as if you found something because before you were not able to see it or experience it because of the rubbish in your mind.

When we say "to clear," it means to let go of many things: anger or ignorance or greed. Ignorance is some obstacle for the mind which hinders seeing things as it is. Also anger. If you expect too much of something, you will end up in discouragement because your desire is too strong, so accordingly you find yourself in discouragement.

When you have it or when you feel you have it, "Oh," you may say, "this is not what I wanted." This kind of thing is greed. It is something more than your homemade desire. It is not pure desire: it is pure desire plus something. That something which is added on to pure desire, or instinct will be changed into constant desire to improve ourself. There is reality and there is also something added. There is a kind of impulse or drive. And if the driver is not good, he will drive in the wrong direction. And you will be lost. So the driver should be a good driver who knows where he is going. If the driver is good, our instinct will develop in the right direction. And if he is not good, he will be lost. That driver is the desire. When he is foolish, he is not such a good driver. If we understand nirvana in this way, that is more like enlightenment. When we have a good driver, that is enlightenment.

Buddhism and the Twelve Steps

Anonymous

" . . . NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO AND FILMS."—FROM THE 11TH TRADITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

FOR MANY OF US who follow and find refuge and liberation through the paths of Buddhist practice and Twelve Step programs of recovery, it seems that these two spiritual traditions offer mutual illumination and clarification. The theistic language of the Steps can seem an impediment to the Buddhist; but one of the things we are encouraged to do in recovery is to look beyond the differences to the similarities of experience and emotion. With this in mind, I would like to examine the Steps from the perspective of Buddhism and investigate the possibility of a mutual understanding.

Step One states: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Buddhism is actually pretty simple. It's about suffering and the cause of suffering and the end of suffering. In the first sermon the Buddha preached, he spoke about what he called the Four Noble Truths. The following is a quote from that sermon about the **First Noble Truth:**

> "What is the Noble Truth of suffering? Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain and grief and despair are suffering. Association with the loathed is suffering. Dissociation from the loved is suffering. Not to get what one wants is suffering. In short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering."

The word the Buddha used, here translated as suffering, was *dukkha,* which can also be translated as incompleteness, unsatisfactoriness, discomfort. What he is talking about is our sense of some radical flaw at the base of our lives, some lack, some missed beat in the rhythm of our experience. Over and over again. What our Christian friends might call the result of original sin. There is some deep longing that is perhaps never filled, or that we are afraid will never be filled.

And it is this gap that we fill with . . . what? It doesn't have to be alcohol. We can each substitute our favorite addiction. Is it a drug, a person, an idea, an emotion? Are you addicted to pleasure? Are you addicted to suffering? To being a victim? To depression? It seems that we are all addicted to

the idea of who we are, that we are bound up in creating and defending the boundaries of the self. This is suffering. This is unmanageability. And we compound the unmanageability of our lives when we try, as we will, to manage the lives of others, with greater or lesser skill and success. So we are ultimately powerless over people, places and things. When we try to manage the unmanageable, we compound that original discomfort and simply increase our suffering.

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

There are two ideas in this Step that we can examine in terms of Buddhist teaching. The first is that there is a basic sanity underlying all of our seemingly chaotic experience and the second is that we can be restored to that wholeness. Something like these concerns is addressed in the Second and Third Noble Truths.

The **Second Noble Truth:**

> "What is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering? It is craving [or, literally, thirst—just tailor-made for alcoholics!] which renews being and is accompanied by relish and lust . . . craving for sensual desires, craving for being, craving for non-being . . . "

And **the Third Noble Truth:**

> "What is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering? It is the remainderless fading of that same craving—the rejecting, relinquishing, leaving and renouncing of it."

These may at first sound rather harsh; but I think that it's just the Buddha telling us, without any frills, what's going on. And what's going on is that our suffering is caused by our clinging. And the primary object of our clinging is the self we construct with very definite boundaries and defend at the risk and cost of everything else, including our happiness and peace of mind. We defend it with money and with prestige; we defend it with control and substances. The boundary of the self cannot be breached. And it is this which leads us into insanity. But what would happen if we let it go? This is the restoration to sanity.

Some years ago I was living at Tassajara and one morning, during zazen, found myself thinking "I want . . . " But when I tried to think of what exactly it was I wanted, what would satisfy the craving, I came up blank. So I began to catalogue the various desires I could have: I wasn't

hungry, or thirsty, or hot, or cold, or horny, or tired, or in pain. There was no thing that I could think of that corresponded to my need; and, at the end of the exercise, I was left with a small voice in the back of my head whispering urgently "I want, I want, I want." This was an experience of the basic thirst which drives our existence and which we attempt to slake with whatever we can.

On the other hand, what we say in this Step and in our practice is that it is possible to realize wholeness, to put this craving to rest; and that we cannot do it by ourselves. There's a paradox here, because we must do it by ourselves, but only by not doing it by ourselves. (We like paradoxes in Zen—not because they're cute, but because they actually express the experience of our lives.) I will speak more about this further on.

So the healing and the sanity I'm speaking of cannot be grasped by the small self which is a construct of fear, the neurotic and troubled waters of our thoughts and emotions, the mixture of memory and fantasy (which, examined, are functionally the same). And we cannot reach this wholeness by manipulating either the world or the self that is sorrow and frustration and the product of causes and conditions which arise and cease. We are restored to our primordial sanity when we release ourselves into what Suzuki-roshi called Big Mind. This is the power that is greater than our self. And it comes about through abandoning the insanity (literally, the un-healthiness) of our habitual behaviors and attitudes.

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him.*

Let's examine this from the point of view of **the Fourth Noble Truth:**

> "What is the Noble Truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering? It is the Eightfold Noble Path. That is to say: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration."

So at the very beginning, with Right View and Intention, we make a decision, a decision to practice, to follow the Eightfold Path to the end of suffering. We decide to turn ourselves over to Big Mind, or to the bodhisattva vow to save all beings; and, oddly enough, this decision to practice puts us beyond the realm of choice and preference. For example, if I get up for zazen when the alarm rings or when I hear the wake-up bell, without asking myself whether I particularly feel like going to the zendo that morning, I am practicing beyond the realm of desire and personality. It is almost, not quite, a leap of faith. More like a single step of faith, or of willingness. That's enough. A Zen master once said that 5% sincerity is enough for

BARBARA WENGER

The Zen Center Coming of Age Program has grown over the past year-and-a-half. This photograph of the older boys' group was taken after an overnight at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in spring 2000. Two new groups have begun this September, one for boys and one for girls. All three groups attended a weekend at Tassajara with their families in September 2000. For more information please contact Barbara Wenger at 415-502-5217.

Kneeling from left: Davey Weintraub, Max Van der Sterre, Ko Tanahashi; standing: Ethan Patchell (leader), Matthew Frick, Nathan Wenger, Clay Vorheis, Noah Levine (leader)

practice, so it shouldn't be all that hard. We don't need to practice will power to sit zazen or to stay sober or to become enlightened. We need only to let go. And what we need to let go of is just the stuff that makes us miserable anyway: anger, resentment, greed, self-loathing, etc. etc. etc. A pretty good deal, isn't it? So why is it so hard?

This decision to make the decision to practice is "dropping away body and mind," in Dogen-zenji's words. This is turning ourselves over to the bodhisattva vow, to our basic sanity, to our own innate legacy of enlightenment. It is something which is beyond our personality. And isn't that a relief?

Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

On the full moon of each month we have a ceremony, some version of which dates back to the earliest days of Buddhism. It is a ceremony of

repentance and renewal of our vow—our intention to live in enlightenment. The beginning verse of this ceremony is:

> All my ancient, twisted karma,
> From beginningless greed, hate and delusion,
> Born through body, speech and mind,
> I now fully avow.

I remember the first time I participated in this ceremony. It almost sent me out the door, as I'd had enough in my childhood of being reminded that I was a miserable sinner. But this is actually somewhat different. It is, in the context of this ceremony and Buddhist teaching, an acknowledgement of our freedom and responsibility to create our own lives—the paradoxical freedom of karma.

The practice of Buddhism is often spoken of as comprising three basic elements: morality, meditation and wisdom. We speak of morality in terms of the precepts: not to kill, not to take what is not given, not to misuse sexuality, etc. All true spiritual practice is based in morality. It is possible to develop meditation and insight by themselves as yogic practices; but this is the breeding ground for monsters. It is necessary to see ourselves (both our flaws and our strengths and the beauty of our intention) through and through with as few illusions as possible.

Rebuilding the roof of the water reservoir at Tassajara

JUDITH KEENAN

Which brings us to **Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

In our practice it is important to have a good spiritual friend, someone with whom we can be completely honest, to whom we can be transparent. We cannot know ourselves by ourselves. We must be mirrors to each other. In Twelve Step programs this person is the sponsor. In Zen, it is the teacher or practice leader.

There is a very famous Zen saying which is "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." So we must be pretty careful not to set up our teachers and friends as Buddha, as some final and unimpeachable authority. That is too much of a burden for anyone and we will always eventually turn on anyone to whom we give away our own authority. Our teachers, our sponsors, our good spiritual friends are only other folks like ourselves who are willing to take on the work of being there for us. It's very hard work training a teacher, learning how to use a teacher. And being a teacher.

A monk asked the great Zen teacher Yunmen: "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Yunmen replied: "Body exposed in the golden wind."

When we have seen through and through all the games and masks and lies and secrets and they've all fallen away, we stand exposed. Body exposed. Body and mind exposed in the golden wind. Body and mind are the golden wind, free and at ease in the world. And we can't do it alone.

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

These two Steps are particularly interesting to examine in the light of Buddhist teaching. Often they are difficult for people to understand in a non-theistic context; but one approach is to consider them as an invitation to examine the nature of the self. In fact, both Buddhism and Twelve Step programs deal with the conscious deconstruction of the self we have created over a long, long period of time.

The Buddha taught that there are three characteristics of conditioned existence (which is the only sort of which we have direct experience). One of them is *dukkha,* which we've already examined. The second is transitoriness, that everything changes constantly. Pretty obvious if you think about it. The third, though it stems directly from the second, is a little harder to grasp. This is the teaching of no-self.

This teaching tells us that there is no nugget of unchanging me-ness, or you-ness; but rather that not only does the body constantly change, but

that there is nothing of that which comprises us that does not. Not our thoughts or memories (which are mostly made up anyway), our cravings, our character defects or our virtues. There is nothing of us which remains stable for long. We are like the weather, a constant movement against the sky.

And what this teaching and these steps are telling us is that change is not only possible, but inevitable. Because of this we do not need to be caught by some fixed idea of who we are. And because of this, we can live in the vow. We live in the bodhisattva vow when we live beyond our character defects, beyond greed, hate and delusion. We are not instantly freed from greed, hate and delusion; but we are not caught by them.

In Buddhist psychology we say that each person is to some extent defined by one of the three poisons—greed, hate or delusion; that he or she has a predominant character defect or predominant position vis-à-vis the world. The greed type is someone who always wants more, who uses acquisition as the primary means of shoring up the illusory self, who builds a wall of goodies to protect him- or herself: ice cream cones and new cars and lovers and status and money and houses and jobs.

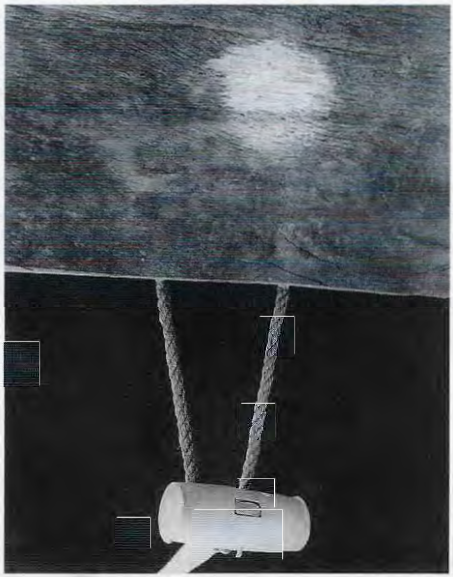
The hate (or aversion) type is the one who doesn't allow anything or anyone to get close enough to puncture the barrier of the self. She or he pushes everything away. It is all too dangerous to allow in. The basic motivation of this sort of behavior is fear—a fear which can externalize itself as anger, an emotion which provides the illusion of control and of a powerful stance in the world.

And the delusion type doesn't really know what he wants or what strategy might work best. Sometimes a little of this looks good and sometimes—but I don't want that—but maybe I want that—or what do you think, should I have some of that other thing? It's like being lost in a foggy woods, surrounded by the mocking voices of unseen adversaries.

But the good news is that through practice, the three poisons are transformed. The greed type becomes more and more attached to the Dharma and to those behaviors that are wholesome. Aversion transforms into penetrating wisdom, the ability to see through all the pretenses and constructions and false seemings—especially our own. The delusion type transformed by practice is no longer caught, not by intellectual or emotional artifices, and moves through life with great freedom because the realization has come that it's all a story.

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.



CHRIS HONDSETT

This is a han, an instrument used to call practitioners to meditation.

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

These three steps can be understood in terms of Sangha which is one of the Three Treasures, along with Buddha and Dharma (the teaching). Sangha is the community of those who practice together and we put it right up there with the Buddha. So our life in community is just as important as the Buddha or the Dharma. You and your relationship to your fellows are just as important as the Buddha. In Twelve Step programs we frequently hear and say that we don't have to do it alone, indeed that we can't do it alone, this return to sanity. It is why we come together, as a Sangha of people in recovery, to share our experience, strength and hope.

So these Steps are about restoring and maintaining the harmony of the Sangha, about letting go of that which prevents us from seeing each other, and ourselves, as Buddha. When you can see your friend as Buddha, your friend will mirror that Buddha back to you. Sometimes we say (quoting or misquoting the *Lotus Sutra* rather freely) that it takes a Buddha and a Buddha to make a Buddha. This restoration of balance and harmony is the work of the bodhisattva, so that she may truly be a bodhisattva, unhindered.

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

The word "Zen" means meditation and meditation has been a hallmark of Buddhist practice from the beginning, so it is fairly obvious how the meditation part of this Step applies. So let's look at prayer, which is a little more problematic within the context of a non-theistic tradition.

What we can call prayer in our practice is an outgrowth of our vow, which is of the same root as the word "devotion." And the devotional practices we do here: bowing, chanting, working mindfully, the chants we say before meals and such—these are prayers. But this is not prayer that presumes one person as supplicant before a deity who grants or withholds blessing. It is prayer which just expresses our intention, our gratitude and our respect with no need for anything beyond itself. To pray in this way is a complete action. And from this sort of prayer is born compassion. For example, when we say "May So-and-so be happy; may I be happy; may all beings be happy" we use prayer to link our own happiness to that of another and to the happiness of all beings. This is a training method, a cultivation of the mind for the practice of compassion, which involves identification of ourselves with the other.

And compassion is primary in our practice for it gives birth to wisdom. Because unless we have compassion for a person or thing, unless we are willing to drop our barriers, we can never know it thoroughly. Prayer helps to prepare the mind for the insight that the barrier between self and other is illusory, one of definition only. So it is actually a very important practice for us.

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practice these principles in all our affairs.

Actually, practicing these steps *is* a spiritual awakening. Dogen-zenji talks about practice-enlightenment. This means that we don't practice to become enlightened, but rather that we practice because of our innate enlightenment, as an expression of that enlightenment.

The word "Buddha" means the Awakened One, the one who had a spiritual awakening. And that awakening is to the bodhisattva vow to save all beings.

One morning a while ago, I was sitting in the zendo and the thought occurred to me: "Oh! The bodhisattva vow is the Twelfth Step." Of course it is. Because in our Buddhist practice and in the work of recovery we are actually speaking of the same things, only in somewhat different languages. And it must be this way, because for us humans the path is always the same, describe it as we will. That path is to practice and carry this message of hope and redemption and recovery. And what we recover is, of course, our original self, which was never lost to begin with.

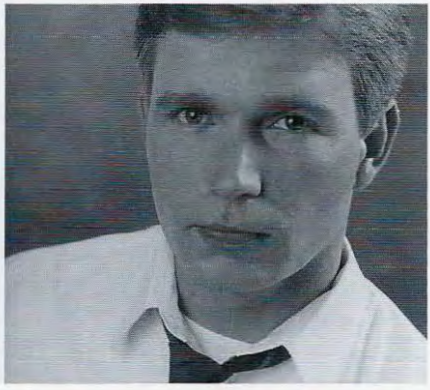
The earth is crumbling

BY *George Gayuski*

SOME OF THE SENIOR PRACTITIONERS at Zen Center recently have had signals of their own mortality and some in our community are feeling the immediate experience of old age, sickness and death—in many cases for the very first time. I empathize. I myself was diagnosed as HIV+ in 1986. In this article, I really don't want to whine, groan or grind an ax, but I would like to describe how awareness of our own mortality can "corner" us in ways we didn't expect.

Even before my own HIV diagnosis in 1986, as early as 1980, friends were getting sick and dropping like flies. I remember feeling disbelief and shock. We put one friend with a very high fever in the hospital on a Friday night and he was dead by Sunday. My own positive HIV test instantly neutralized and made mundane many concerns, such as planning for retirement, and it was oddly refreshing to feel that I really no longer had anything to lose. Simultaneously, all my usual sources of meaning, comfort and context suddenly were like water escaping through my fingers. I understand those in the Zen Center community who are feeling derailed by the reality of themselves or their dharma friends becoming older, ill and more vulnerable. This is a realm where clichés and pat perspectives really lose their power.

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche often pointed out that nothing is eternal; but in the last 20 years, I have often felt that grief is eternal. I'm sure that it just seems so, but that illusion and $1.75 could maybe get me a cafe latte. At the same time I feel that somewhere in "nothing is eternal" is a dharma

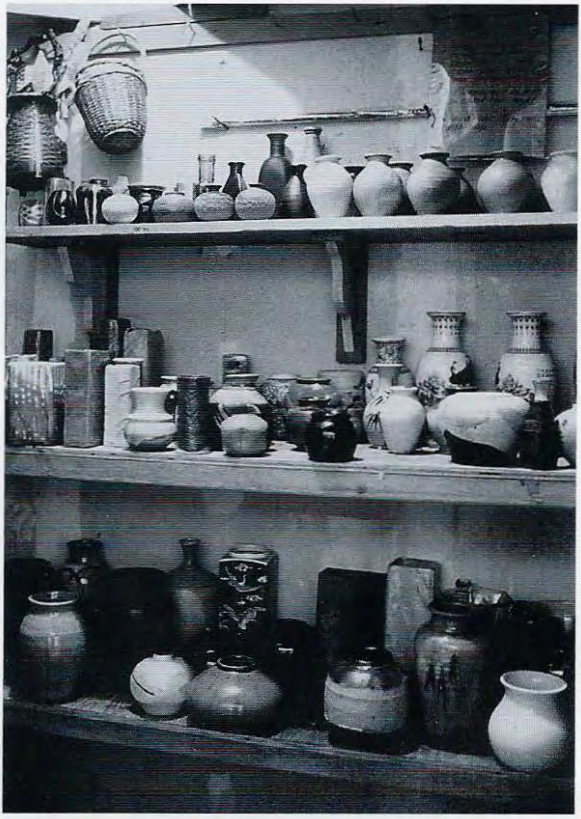


George Gayuski had this picture of himself taken in 1986, when he was first diagnosed with HIV, so it would be available for his memorial service.

gate to the fruition of the whole point of Buddhist teaching and practice. As I was reading Sheng-yen's (a contemporary Cha'n master) commentary on "Faith in Mind," I was struck vividly by Sheng-yen's point, "in the reality of totality, there is no gain or loss."

A teacher casually commented recently, "Well, I'm sure you've heard the teachings that ultimately there is no birth or death." Terrific!

In a retreat several years ago led by Norman Fischer (then abbot of Zen Center) and Brother David Steindl-Rast, a long-time Zen Center friend, I was initially astonished when Brother David correlated "grace" with belongingness and "sin" with alienation. He suggested that realization requires a sense of belongingness, that it is the ground on which realization takes place. I suddenly recognized that my situation had me feeling enormously alienated—and had for quite some time. Since then, I see clearly how aging, illness and death can easily cause alienation. My effort in the years since is to try to bring these issues into a more integrated, healthy, wider and genuine view of reality.



Vases at Green Gulch Farm

BUTCH BALMUT

Before my diagnosis, some of the happiest moments in my life arose while I was driving home in the evening rush hour traffic—after a long day of work at a job that I loved, heading home to a lover I adored and to dinner and a lazy evening with him, I felt plenty of contentment and belongingness. I think we take this content and belongingness for granted, just as we take our health for granted, until something shows it to be so fragile and temporary. After my diagnosis I was suddenly dealing with huge, different realities. All my notions, visions and aspirations for the future, the things that usually motivated me (AND, I am pretty sure, others), were suddenly moot. And soon things started to fall apart—I became weaker and more easily fatigued, and eventually went on disability. Not long after that, my partner was transferred to the East Coast; a nine year relationship suddenly ended with little realistic possibility of anything to arise in its place.

Upon my diagnosis, I watched a whole set of dynamics come into play. There was and is an overwhelming self-imposed pressure to "handle it well" whether or not I am wise or strong or kind enough to know how to do that. At times I feel obligated to keep quiet, cut the grieving and just "face the music" properly. At times I feel flooded with an odd and protective obsession with myself. It is tremendously difficult to cut through my self-concern and remain awake to wider horizons and realities.

All of these tendencies and dynamics are alienating.

I am unable to tolerate the very toxic side effects of the so-called "miracle drugs;" as hard as this has been to simply accept myself, friends persist in treating my not taking these "stab in the dark" pharmaceuticals as "a bad decision." The unpredictability of the element of time and living in this situation for so long has been very draining. Time has worn at me, as a cat endlessly plays with a captured, injured mouse. Last year my sense of alienation further increased when I realized I no longer had the strength or endurance to participate in practice periods or sesshins. Here was another big part of my life in which my ability to participate became unrealistic, and that recognition was devastating—another massive disenfranchisement.

Some years ago I was diagnosed with an aggressive, very advanced lymphoma. My life expectancy was estimated at two to four months, maybe six if I did chemo. My response to the diagnosis was surprisingly one of relief, gratitude and deep calm. I felt that soon my concerns and my responsibility for "handling things well" would be moot; a "dead issue," one might say. Soon, I thought, I would genuinely be unable to control my life, and would be without further responsibilities and recourse. My doctor told me that that is a common reaction to that sort of news with people who have been living with HIV for a long time. It was the Tibetan doctors who somehow managed to get the lymphoma to vanish within three months. Up until then, the Western doctors seemed to sort of "humor" me in regards to Tibetan medicine; now, happily, they were speechless.

Thankfully I successfully resisted the ridiculous amount of pressure from the Western doctors to do chemo, but I felt profound sorrow for more typical patients who are in shock and follow the high-pressured advice of most doctors.

My situation shines a light on various ways in which I'm conflicted within and with the wider world. Several friends, exhausted from many years of coping with AIDS, have gently distanced themselves. I, too, would probably distance myself from HIV if I could. AIDS can seem especially nasty. It has been difficult not to succumb to a sense of duty not to haunt or disturb others by sharing my sense of trauma and innumerable concerns, yet I want to float my views and I want companionship and support in all this.

My views are often not congruent with those of others in general, and often do not even match those of other people with HIV. For instance, I severely upset a whole HIV discussion group by saying that my effort was to learn to live "without a future" and that although I have faith in nature, I don't squander any energy on hope. Also, I added, I was trying to integrate the realization that in fact I have nearly no control at all. The group reacted very strongly against what I said, which of course was another instantaneous instance of alienation.

Another example of my views not fitting with mainstream attitudes is my opinion that there is something very unbecoming and flawed in what I consider the "life is precious" trip. Mainstream reaction almost always is "fight AIDS, fight cancer, struggle, get fierce, take toxic medicines, spare no expense, pull out all the stops." That attitude assumes to me a panic and desperation. Death and life seem abundant, so couldn't it be more like "easy come, easy go?" Is all this much easier than we make it out to be?

I also have views on euthanasia that have arisen through my witnessing many of what seemed to be pointlessly long and extremely difficult illnesses and deaths. Euthanasia does not seem to be a choice to be made by legislators, but is rather an extremely profound and personal decision. However, in a Buddhist text somewhere, I read that in the case of "self-deliverance," all that remains, karmically, is the killer. This perspective in relation to my experience with HIV and AIDS is another enormously conflicting one and can grow substantially haunting.

Many of my friends have died. For some, after months or years of their struggle to stay alive, death itself was very simple, anti-climactic and easy. It was a happy moment to scoop all of their now irrelevant medications into the trash. The most emotionally devastating deaths for me were of those who tried to remain sweet and brave. The friends who screamed and panicked were somehow a shade easier to handle; I have no idea why.

Soon after my diagnosis, an awareness arose of all the other people who are ill and how unaware of this I was before. To be healthy and uncon-

cerned about illness and death suddenly seemed a very rare and brief reality. As tragic as an incurable disease was for me and others, how much more tragic is it that people die of starvation or from a disease which is curable? As part of my distress, I felt an outrage that we, as a world society, cannot get more food to the Sudan or twelve cents worth of vaccine to a child in Angola. Or that we deliberately kill people in Iraq. Everything can begin to seem like an acute tragedy, like it's all falling apart moment after moment. A dharma buddy once commented, "But don't forget it is also always coming together!"

This all may seem like rich theoretical territory, but along with the fundamental psychological and spiritual challenges, there are the harsh, persistent and increasingly frequent physical realities that cut through all theorizing.

The basic questions seem to be:

> How can I integrate this dynamic of alienation and denial that arises around illness and death?
> How do I give birth to a healthy and well understood renunciation around it all?
> Is it possible to find a belongingness among others in the face of illness, loss and death even if I or us together cannot transcend it?
> How do I share such enormously disturbing circumstances with others so that it facilitates an inclusion and not fear or revulsion?
> How can I steadily shine a light on my instinctual existential views and realize something beyond them?

I feel I have tried my utmost to understand, to the verge of craziness, but oddly, even after all this time, a real or overall resolution does not seem evident.

Chogyam Trungpa was teaching one night on the meaning of death. He painted an especially bleak and deliberately ruthless picture of impermanence. In closing his talk, Trungpa apologized for being so brutal with us, then added: "But as you go home tonight, take consolation in the fact that the earth is crumbling and decaying beneath your feet." We all sat there in stunned silence, and suddenly Trungpa had a good loud laugh. Although I still don't understand how Trungpa had such a good laugh on this, I felt there was some kind of transmission in it, and HIS being able to laugh so heartily made me feel refreshed, in that, on some level other than any of the ones I know, things MUST be completely okay.

BARBARA WENGER

Co-Abbess Zenkei Blanche Hartman led the fall practice period at Tassajara.

Just to be alive is enough

BY *Blanche Hartman*

IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S SIMPLY AWESOMELY amazingly wonderful just to be alive! It's a wonderful gift and especially on a beautiful spring day like today. But it took me several years of meditation practice and a heart attack before I really got it that just to be alive is awesome. As I was walking out of the hospital having survived a heart attack about eleven years ago, I thought, "Wow! I could be dead. The rest of my life is just a gift." And then I thought, "Well, it always has been a gift from the very beginning and I never noticed it until it was almost gone."

I think that it is true of many of us that we don't notice what a gift it is just to be alive. How could we not notice? Well, we sort of take it for granted. But this gift is not without its problems. One of these problems is actually the very thing that made me realize how awesome life is, what a gift it is and how much I appreciate it, and that was the fact that it is evanescent, impermanent. It is precious because I can't just take it for granted. When we realize this, we may wonder, "Well, if my life is a gift, how shall I use it, how shall I give it back, how shall I express my appreciation for it or completely live this life which is wonderful and evanescent?"

In *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,* Suzuki-roshi tells the story of the four horses. One of the horses starts to run just seeing the shadow of the whip before it even touches him. The next one starts to run just having the whip touch the hair of its skin. The third horse starts to run when it really feels the pain of the whip on its skin. And the fourth horse doesn't really get going until it feels the whip to the marrow of its bones. What is this whip? This whip is just that evanescence of life, just that teaching of impermanence. One of the Buddha's most significant teachings is to hold it up for us to see, but actually it is just how things are if you look at anything, anytime, anywhere. There is a Pali chant which expresses this:

> All things are impermanent
> They arise and they pass away.
> To live in harmony with this truth
> Brings great happiness.

If you see how things are, "things as-it-is" as Suzuki-roshi used to say, you see that they arise and they pass away. The trick is to live in harmony with the way things actually are; our suffering comes from wanting things to be different than they are.

I don't know why those of you who came today for the first time came. Why are you here? Why is anyone here? Why I'm here is that I began to notice that all things are impermanent including myself. I first came to practice the first time I almost died; I really came to recognize what a joy it is to be alive the second time I almost died. Now maybe that's like the fourth horse, right. I didn't get it till it really got to the marrow. But maybe it's not so bad to be the fourth horse because when it gets to the marrow, you've got it through and through. You don't think, "Well, maybe just some things are impermanent . . . maybe, but not me . . . Maybe I'll live forever . . . or maybe whatever I love will live for ever . . . or maybe impermanence is not really the truth." So we may try to bargain with impermanence or get into denial about it. But somehow, if we're lucky, we do come to understand "things-as-it-is" and that this is actually the life we are living. Then the question of how we do live it becomes really urgent for us. It's not

going to last forever; I just have a limited amount of time to live in a way that feels satisfying to me, that feels right, that feels in consonance with the way things are. "To live in harmony with this truth brings great happiness," the Pali chant says.

When I first came to Zen Center I heard Suzuki-roshi say, "Just to be alive is enough." That went right past me and it may be going right past you. I just put it out there so you can take a look at it and decide what it means to you. But I do think that we become curious about Zen practice or any kind of religious discipline when we begin to run into some of the difficulties of life and the question of how to live with those difficulties becomes a direct issue for us. Or, we may notice that how we are living doesn't feel quite right. Or that the familiar fixed ideas we have don't seem to hold up on closer examination.

The chant that we did at the beginning of this lecture says:

> An unsurpassed, penetrating and perfect dharma
> Is rarely met with even in a hundred thousand million kalpas,
> Having it to see and listen to, to remember and accept,
> I vow to taste the truth of the Tathagatha's words.

It doesn't say that an unsurpassed, penetrating and perfect dharma is rare—that is just the truth of things-as-it-is and it is always in front of you every moment of your life. It is right here, nowhere else. The chant ends, "I vow to taste the truth of the Tathagatha's words." This is a vow to taste the truth of how things really are, a vow to see directly. Taste is a very intimate sense—you get it right on your tongue, right here in your body. That is what my heart attack did for me; I got it right up close and personal. And each of us has some experience in our own life where the way things are is tasted directly, personally, right here. And that changes our life. We look at our life and we say, "This life is not in harmony with the way things are. That's why I'm always uncomfortable. So how do I bring myself into harmony with the actuality of this life?"

Kobun Chino once said in a sesshin talk that when you realize how precious your life is and that it is completely your responsibility how you manifest it and how you live it, that it is such a big responsibility, naturally, "such a person sits down for a while"! He continued, "It is not an intended action, it is a natural action."

Some of you came here today for meditation instruction, for zazen instruction, for instruction in how to just sit. Now, why do you need instruction in how to just sit?

There was a wonderful young Danish man who came to Tassajara in the early days when Tassajara was quite new. He arrived at the gate and he said, "I want to come in and be a Zen monk." The person he was speaking

BARBARA WENGER

Lou Hartman, perennial chiden at City Center, helps with clean up after the traditional Buddha's birthday ceremony in the mini park down the street from Zen Center.

to asked him, "Have you ever sat?" English was not his native language so he kind of took the question in and considered it for a bit, looking perplexed. Finally he drew himself up to his full height and he said, "All men have sat!"

So, why would you need to have instruction in just sitting? Well, just sitting doesn't mean merely sitting. It means completely sitting; not doing anything else, just sitting. You may have noticed that when you sit down intending to just sit, there is a lot going on! We don't really notice how active our mind is until we sit still with the intention of not deliberately thinking. Even though we are not deliberately thinking, a lot of thinking is going on! I had no idea how completely, incessantly busily active my mind was until I sat down with the intention of just being still and just being quiet and not grasping the thoughts that came along.

So, one of the reasons we need instruction in how to just sit is that we need to know what might support us in letting some of that busyness just go along without grabbing onto it. Like paying attention to posture and paying attention to breath. Paying attention to what's happening right here and right now, which is this physical body, whatever sensations there might be, and breathing. Most of the stuff that is going on in our mind is not about what is happening right here and right now. Check it out sometime and see; most of the stuff that is going on in your mind is either chasing after the past or chasing after the future. Or worrying about the future and regretting or rehashing or chewing over the past incessantly. And figuring out who to blame for all our difficulties. It takes a long time to realize that there is no one to blame and to be willing just to be here.

I was invited last Wednesday to participate in a spirituality discussion group. My friend said the group was going to be giving attention to what

BARBARA WENGER

City Center head of practice Teah Strozer shows off Buddha's millennial birthday cake after the annual Buddha's birthday celebration in the Rose-Page Mini Park.

we do in situations where there has been some real loss, where things are never going to be the same again. Someone you know and love has died; you have had a serious illness or an accident or something has occurred that feels like a terrible loss that can't be recovered. How do you work with those circumstances?

Some of the people there had experienced losses which they could relate to the question, but the discussion was really about how our lives were going now and about how to arrive at a sense of ease and comfort or a feeling of composure in our lives. One person said, "Things are going pretty well for me now but I just noticed today that even though everything is fine I have this kind of worried uneasiness, not about anything in particular, and it seems strange when everything is going fine." The teaching that there is suffering in the midst of joy was right there in what he was saying; the worried uneasiness that although everything is fine now, something might happen and it won't be fine. Have any of you ever had that kind of experience? It is a very common human experience. We have all kinds of ways of imagining the future that distract us from actually living in the present. What just sitting, what zazen is really about is living in the present so that we can actually manifest this precious life in a way that feels right, a way that is consonant with our inner understanding of the dharma, of the truth. Shortly before he died, William Butler Yeats said, "If I had to put it in a single phrase, I would say that one can live the truth but one can really not know the truth and I must express the truth with the remainder of my life." I can live the truth but cannot know it and I must express it with the remainder of my life.

Dogen Zenji, the Japanese founder of this particular stream of Zen, said about the precept "I vow not to disparage the Three Treasures (Buddha,

Dharma, Sangha)," "To expound the dharma with this body is foremost. Its virtue returns to the ocean of reality. It is unfathomable. We just accept it with respect and gratitude." It is unfathomable. We cannot know it. The inconceivable really is inconceivable! But we still try to find a way to grab onto it.

In his lecture for the Millennium's Edge series, Stephen Batchelor was talking about a willingness to live in perplexity, a willingness to live in the realm of not knowing. This is quite difficult. We can expound the dharma with this body, we can live the truth; we just can't grasp it. We can feel in our body when we are out of line with it. That is why Kobun Chino says it is such a big responsibility that naturally a person sits down for awhile. We want to attune ourselves carefully to our body and mind so that we can notice when we are out of line with our deepest intention. We want to cultivate that intimate knowing without words and ideas—an intimacy with ourself—so that we can tell if we are living our life the way we really want to or whether it is just a little off. We can do this by just tuning in with ourself, with our fundamental human nature, which is sometimes in Buddhism called Buddha nature. Suzuki-roshi says a human being practicing true human nature is our zazen. Buddha nature is not something mysterious or arcane. Buddha just means awake; one who is awake. We find out how to be awake and to align ourselves with our true intention, with our true being, with the wisdom and compassion that is already inherent in each being, including ourself. No one is the one single exception to the fact that all beings are Buddha. We are not that special!

The complete excerpt from Kobun Chino's sesshin lecture which I referred to earlier is as follows:

> The main subject of this sesshin is how to become a transmitter of actual light, life light. Practice takes place to shape your whole ability to reflect the light coming through you and to regenerate your system so the light increases its power. Each precept is a remark about hard climbing, maybe climbing down. You don't use the precepts for accomplishing your own personality or fulfilling your dream of your highest image. You don't use the precepts in that way. The precepts are the reflective light world of one precept, which is Buddha's mind itself, which is the presence of Buddha. Zazen is the first formulation of the accomplishment of Buddha existing. The more you sense the rareness and value of your own life, the more you realize that how you use it, how you manifest it, is all your responsibility. We face such a big task, so naturally such a person sits down for a while. It's not an intended action, it's a natural action.

Zen Center Board and Officers and Directors

MEMBERS OF ZEN CENTER'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2001

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Jordan Thorn

MEMBERS OF THE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS GROUP

New president **Victoria Austin** was previously head of practice *(tanto)* at Tassajara.

Outgoing president **Barbara Kohn** has moved to Austin, Texas to be the teacher at Austin Zen Center.

Treasurer **Kokai Roberts**

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Preserving Suzuki-roshi's teachings and lineage

WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, San Francisco Zen Center has inaugurated a new program of support called Planned Giving—accepting and encouraging donations of cash, stocks and other assets typically given through supporters' wills, retirement plans and charitable trusts.

Already, many members and friends have arranged to continue their Zen Center support beyond the end of their lifetimes. Others have come forward with stated intentions, and are now actively considering how best to balance the future financial needs of both immediate family and the greater sangha.

> May we, together with all beings, realize the emptiness of the three wheels: giver, receiver and gift.

Although some types of deferred gifts require the services of an attorney to set up, planned giving need not be a complicated process. One of the easiest deferred gift arrangements is to simply name Zen Center as the beneficiary of any unused retirement benefits, such as your company 401(k) plan. If left to your family or other heirs, these benefits could be taxed at very high rates. But if left to Zen Center, the full value of your gift would be available to help sustain Suzuki-roshi's lineage, while also resulting in significant estate and charitable tax deductions.

If you appreciate the dharma teachings offered by San Francisco Zen Center's three practice sites, please consider leaving a legacy that will help ensure their availability for future generations.

For sample bequest language, referrals to qualified professional advisors, or other help in arranging a planned gift to Zen Center, please call Deborah Russell at 415-865-3790.

Deborah "Russ" Russell
Planned Giving Director
San Francisco Zen Center
300 Page Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-865-3790
giving@sfzc.org

Real to Real: Buddhism and Film

As Buddhism moves to the West, its influence on modern culture is growing. Likewise, modern art forms are also being used to express and teach Buddhism. The meeting of east and west, old and new, sacred and profane is embodied in a growing corpus of films from around the world. Film, by its very nature a series of flashing still pictures, reflects the ephemeralness of existence. It also encourages one to identify with the characters portrayed and develop compassion toward others (and sometimes one's self as well.)

The San Francisco Zen Center and the Asian Art Museum/Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture are presenting a Buddhist film series at the Museum's Trustees' Auditorium in Golden Gate Park. A distinguished speaker will introduce each film. The schedule is as follows:

	Film	Speaker
April 6	**Enlightenment Guaranteed**	**Doris Dörrie**
April 20	**Fearless**	**Gretel Ehrlich**
May 4	**King of Masks**	**Peter Coyote**
May 18	**Mandala**	**Robert Buswell**
June 8	**Windhorse**	**Yvonne Rand**
June 22	**Blue**	**Michael Wenger**
July 13	**Burmese Harp**	**Rina Sircar**
July 27	**Caravan**	**Gaetano Maida**
August 10	**Groundhog Day**	**Reb Anderson**
August 24	**Way of the Lotus**	**Wimal Dissanayake**
September 7	**Monkey Makes Havoc...**	**Maxine Hong Kingston**
September 21	**After Life**	**Donald Richie**

All screenings are on Fridays at 7:30 PM. Tickets are $7 each, $70 for all twelve films, and include admission to the Museum. Free parking is available. For more information, call 415-863-3133 or visit our web site at www.sfzc.org.

An update from the Zen Center accounting office

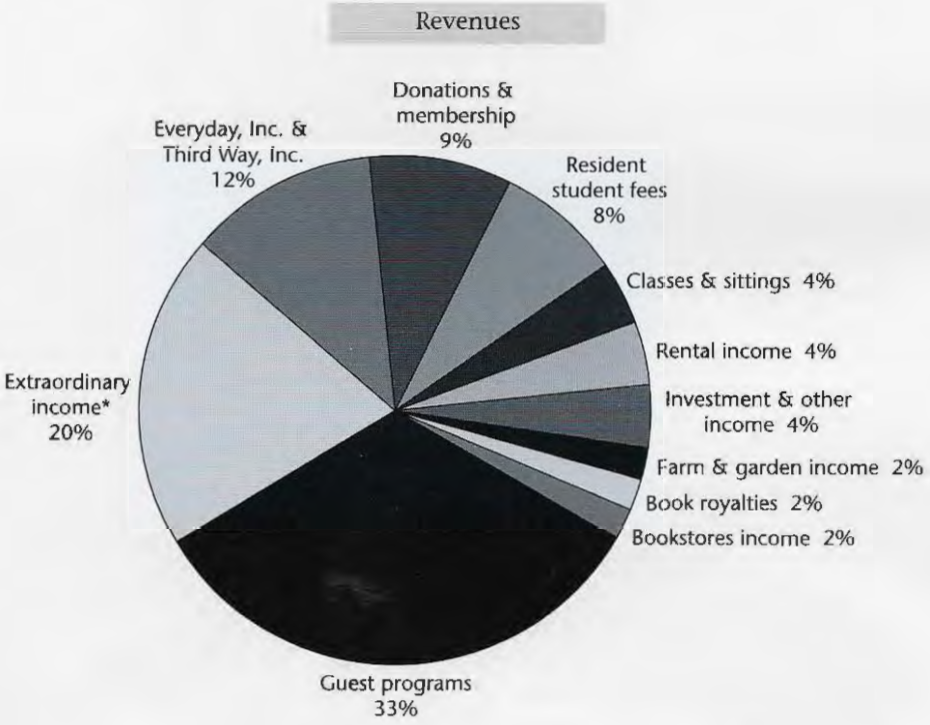
OUR LAST WIND BELL *FINANCIAL REPORT* was in the fall of 1991. Since that time much has happened in the Zen Center accounting office. After many years of devoted work Bill Lane was asked to leave his position as treasurer after irregularities were discovered. This began a time of upheaval and change as we realized that it was unhealthy for one person to shoulder the responsibility and operation of the accounting office. Bill was replaced by Myo Lahey, whose job it was to restructure the office staff and pull our record keeping into a shape which would reflect accepted accounting principles. Realizing that he could not do the job alone, he asked Janet Rianda, our outside accountant for Greens and Everyday to help. She agreed and recruited the aid of Jane Janson, who worked as a consulting CPA in our office for three years to restructure and clarify our financial records.

Myo succeeded in creating a system that can allow for the rotation of the treasurer or chief financial officer at Zen Center. As Myo's successor I am deeply appreciative of all the work he and the others have done to make the accounting office an area that can produce accurate and timely financial information as well as provide fertile ground for practice.

Our current staff is Cliff Winn, accountant; Denis Rodriguez, accounts payable clerk; and Susan Rice, CFO assistant. Our temple treasurers are David Basile at City Center, Roberta Werdinger at Green Gulch and Leslie James at Tassajara.

While Zen Center's mission is not to make money, we rely upon the work and contributions of many people to maintain the container we call San Francisco Zen Center. It is this container which has allowed us the financial freedom to offer work practice, residential practice, outreach programs and an environment which enhances our zazen and study. In this way of everyday practice our labor in the accounting office is instrumental to our understanding of the Dharma. We have a long lineage of work practice in which the accounting office is as much a part of the Buddha Way as sweeping a path or preparing a meal. We strive to maintain an attitude of service and attention to detail as we work to maintain the financial health of our organization in all its aspects: budgeting, paying bills, payroll, insurance, maintaining our general ledger, etc. It is in this spirit that all of us in the accounting office offer an overview of our Fiscal Year 2000 financials for your perusal. Nine bows.

Kokai Roberts
Chief Financial Officer of San Francisco Zen Center

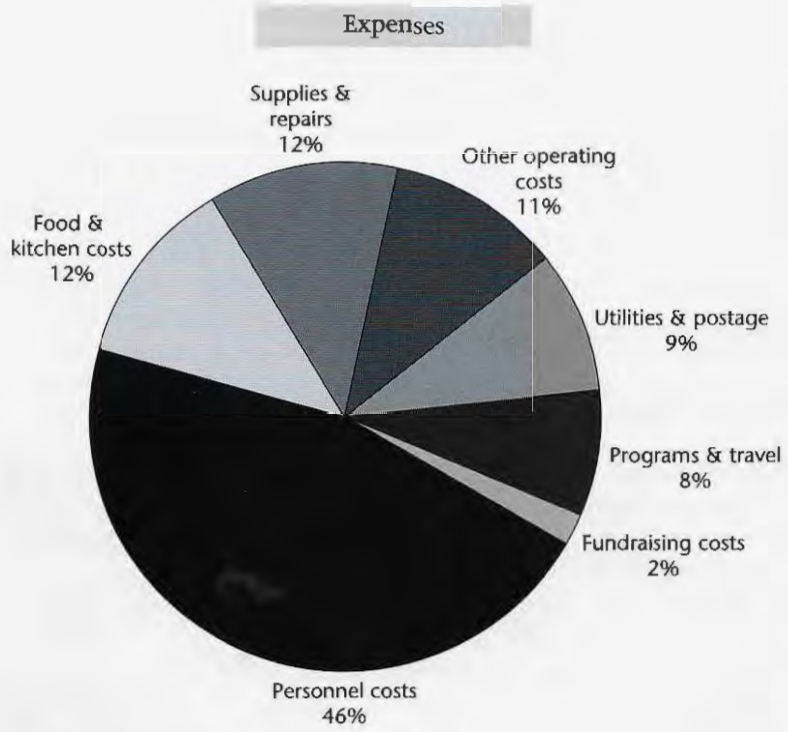


Zen Center Income

Fiscal Year 2000

REVENUES	
Guest programs	1,453,734
Extraordinary income*	869,582
Everyday, Inc. & Third Way, Inc.	523,374
Donations and membership	385,047
Resident student fees	339,694
Classes and sittings	166,530
Rental income	158,241
Investment and other income	156,988
Farm and garden income	107,385
Book royalties	101,766
Bookstores income	100,925
Total income	$4,363,266
Actual income w/o non-cash gains*	**$3,493,684**

**In fiscal year 2000 SFZC received a one-time non-cash gain of $869,582 on the sale of Everyday stock to Third Way.*



e and Expense Report

May 1999 through April 2000

EXPENSES	
Personnel costs	$1,375,872
Food and kitchen costs	368,047
Supplies and repairs	366,313
Other operating costs	342,522
Utilities and postage	278,405
Programs and travel	249,083
Fundraising costs	49,814
Total expenses	**$3,030,056**
TOTAL REVENUE	**$3,493,684**
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$3,030,056**
INCOME FROM OPERATIONS	**$463,628**
DEPRECIATION	**$309,059**
NET INCOME FROM OPERATIONS	**$154,569**

Related Zen Centers

BUDDHISM IS OFTEN LIKENED TO A LOTUS PLANT. One of the characteristics of the lotus is that it throws off many seeds from which new plants grow. A number of Zen centers have formed which have a close relationship with San Francisco Zen Center. A partial list of these follows:

CENTERS WITH DAILY MEDITATION

Within California

Arcata Zen Group, 740 Park Ave., Arcata 95521. Contact Maylie Scott at (1) maylie@humboldt.com or (2) 707-826-1701.

Berkeley Zen Center, 1931 Russell St, Berkeley 94703, 510-845-2403. Sojun Mel Weitsman, abbot.

Clear Water Zendo, 607 Branciforte St, Vallejo 94590. Contact Mary Mocine at 707-649-2480 or marymo@att.net

Dharma Eye Zen Center, 333 Bayview St, San Rafael 94901. Mon–Fri 5:15 a.m. zazen and service; Monday 7:30–9:30 p.m. zazen, tea and discussion. Call for sesshin schedule or zazen instruction, 415-258-0802. Myogen Steve Stucky, teacher.

Hartford Street Zen Center, 57 Hartford St, San Francisco 94114, 415-863-2507. Zenshin Philip Whalen, abbot.

Jikoji, in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga, 408-741-9562. Ryan Brandenburg, director.

Kannon Do Zen Center, 292 College Ave, Mountain View 94040, 650-903-1935. Keido Les Kaye, abbot.

Santa Cruz Zen Center, 113 School St, Santa Cruz 95060, 831-457-0206. Wednesday zazen 7:10 p.m., lecture/discussion 8 p.m. Katherine Thanas, teacher, 831-426-3847.

Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, 6367 Sonoma Mountain Rd., Santa Rosa 95404, 707-545-8105. Jakusho Kwong, abbot.

Outside California

Austin Zen Center (Clear Spring Zendo) 1308 West Ave, Austin TX 78701, Website: www.austinzencenter.org, 512-479-4022. Teacher Seirin Barbara Kohn, e-mail: kohnbarbara@netscape.net; president Flint Sparks, e-mail: flintspar@aol.com

Chapel Hill Zen Center, Use mailing address to request information—P.O. Box 16302, Chapel Hill NC 27516; meeting location, 5322 NC Hwy 86, Chapel Hill NC 27514; 919-967-0861. Taitaku Patricia Phelan, teacher.

Hoko-ji, Taos, NM, 505-776-9733. Kobun Chino, abbot.

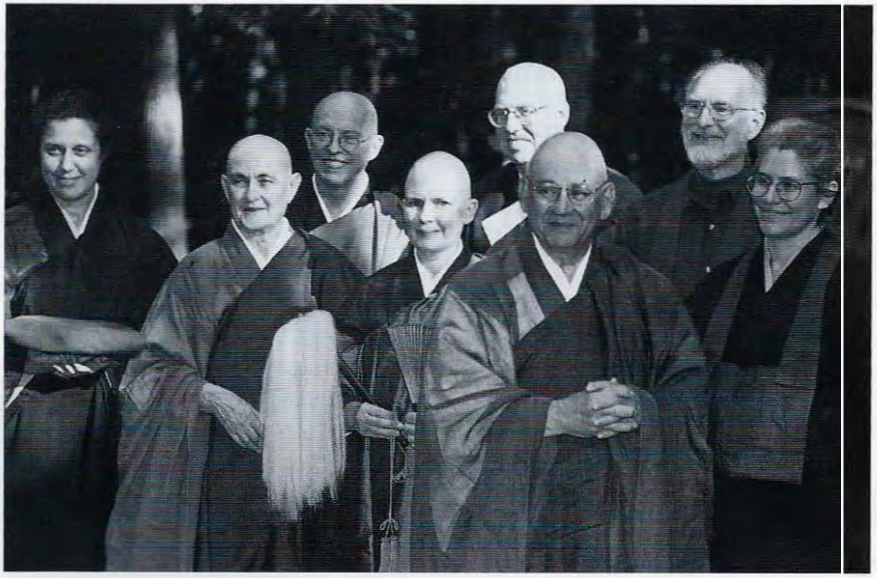
Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, 3343 E. Calhoun Pkwy, Minneapolis MN 55408; 612-822-5313.

Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave, Omaha NE 68131-1363; 402-551-9035. Nonin Chowaney, abbot. E-mail nzc@aol.com Website: www.geocities.com/Tokyo/temple/7228

Pond Village Zendo, 42-44 Shore Rd, North Truro MA 02652. Mailing address PO Box 354, North Truro MA 02652. Monday–Friday 6 a.m. zazen; Monday evening zazen, tea, service, reading or talk. Contact Chuck Hotchkiss, 508-487-2979. Call for special events, zazen instruction or newsletter. E-mail: oldpond@tiac.net

Silver City Buddhist Center, 1301 N. Virginia St., Silver City, NM 88061, 505-388-8874. Priest Sozen Schellin, e-mail: sozen@gilanet.com; president Paul Stuetzer, e-mail: drpaul@cybermesa.com; visiting teacher Barbara Kohn, e-mail: kohnbarbara@netscape.net

Taitaku Patricia Phelan, center of picture with fan and whisk, was installed as abbess of Red Cedar Mountain Temple at Chapel Hill Zen Center in a Mountain Seat Ceremony on October 7, 2000. Others who participated in the ceremony are, from left: Elaine Maisner, San Francisco Zen Center Abbess Blanche Hartman, Tom Hardison, Michael Wenger, Berkeley Zen Center Abbot Mel Weitsman, Howard Smither and Mo Farrell. Pat Phelan practiced at San Francisco Zen Center for many years before moving to Chapel Hill, NC to lead the Zen group there.



WEEKLY MEDITATION GROUPS

Within California

Almond Blossom Sangha, 4516 Bluff Creek Dr, Modesto CA 95355. Wednesdays 7–9 p.m. Website: http://webpages.ainet.com/meditate/

Bolinas Mountain Source Sangha, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 30 Brighton Ave, Bolinas. Day-long zazen one Saturday a month (usually the second one) 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Contact Taigen Leighton, 510-649-0663 or Liz Tuomi, 415-868-1931.

California Street Mountain Source Sangha, St. James' Episcopal Church, California St between 8th and 9th Aves, San Francisco. In the parish hall downstairs from the main church. Wednesdays 7:30–9 p.m. zazen and discussion. Contact Taigen Leighton, 510-649-0663.

Monterey Bay Zen Group, meets at Cherry Foundation, 4th and Guadalupe, Carmel. Tuesdays 6:30 p.m. Mailing address: P.O. Box 3173, Monterey CA 93924. Katherine Thanas, teacher. Contact Kathy Whilden at wildini@aol.com or at 831-647-6330.

North Peninsula Zen Group, Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Dr, Burlingame CA 94010. Meets Thursday evenings 7:30–9 p.m. Contact Darlene Cohen, 415-552-5695.

Oakhurst-North Fork Zen Group/Empty Nest Zendo, 54333 Two Hills Rd, North Fork 93643. Wednesday 5:45 p.m. class and sitting and Sunday 8:45 a.m. One half-day sitting per month. Contact Grace or Peter Shireson, 559-877-2400.

Occidental Sitting Group, 3535 Hillcrest, Occidental 95465. zazen, kinhin, talk, discussion Sunday 9:30–11:30 a.m. Meet at Anderson Hall—please call for directions. Contact Bruce Fortin, 707-874-2234.

San Rafael Mountain Source Sangha, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Court St. between 5th and Mission in parish offices to right of church. Wednesdays 7–8:30 a.m. zazen and discussion. Contact Taigen Leighton 510-649-0663.

Thursday Night Sitting Group, Marin Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, 240 Channing Way, San Rafael. Thursdays 7–9 p.m. Contact Ed Brown, 415-485-5257 or U.U. Fellowship, 415-479-4131.

Zen Heart Sangha of Redwood City, Mt. Alverno Conference Center, 3910 Bret Harte Dr, Redwood City 94064. Meets Monday evenings 7–9 p.m. Contact Misha Merrill, 650-851-0934.

CHRIS HONEYSETT

Work meeting at Tassajara

Outside California

Bellingham Zen Practice Group, Bellingham Dharma Hall, 115 Unity St, Suite D, Bellingham WA 98225. Zazen, kinhin, service, discussion, weekend retreats and annual sesshin. E-mail Tim Burnett: tim@kami.com, or call John Wiley at 360-671-6064.

Elberon Zen Circle, 1032 Woodgate Ave., Long Branch NJ 07740. Zazen, kinhin, service, classes, discussion. Contact Brian Unger, 732-870-9065.

Eugene Zen Practice Group, 1S15 Hayes, Eugene OR 97402. Wednesday mornings. Contact Gary McNabb, teacher, 541-343-2525.

One Pine Hall Zazen Group, Seattle WA. Zazen, kinhin and service. Mondays 6:30–7:30 a.m. Contact Robby Ryuzen Pellett, 206-789-6492. Please bring your own cushions.

Siskiyou Sansui Do, 246 4th St, Ashland OR 97520. Zazen, kinhin, service, lectures, discussion. Contact Harold Little or Patty Krahl, 541-552-1175. E-mail: www.gmrdesign.com/sangha.

San Francisco Zen Center
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Information may be obtained from the City Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco CA 94102, 415-863-3136, or from Green Gulch Farm, 1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito CA 94965, 415-383-3134.

Tassajara Zen Mountain Center usually offers two three-month practice periods: September to December and January to April, when the center is closed to visitors. During the Guest Season in the summer months, visitors may come as guests or as students. For more information on the opportunities available, please contact the office in San Francisco.

WIND BELL STAFF:
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF: **Michael Wenger** and **Wendy Lewis**
EDITORS: **Victoria Austin, Rosalie Curtis, Norman Fischer, Kokai Roberts, Dana Velden**
DESIGN AND LAYOUT: **Rosalie Curtis**