

Excerpts from 4th grade  
autobiography by  
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## Chapter #12

### What Tassajara Actually Is

To get to Tassajara you have to go over bumpy mountains on a even bumpier road, Tassajara is located in Carmel Valley.

It is a place for people belonging to the Zen religion to stay, and practice Zen. It is a nice place to be because it is quiet. The students pay 3 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  dollars a day, and for their kids its 1 dollar and a  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

In the summer Tassajara is a great resort, and for the people of the Zen religion. When you come as a guest you have to pay about



14-32 dollars per person, but its worth it. Every morning all the guests would have the cabin girls make their beds. They would also get their towels and soap changed. At 8:45 am one of the cooks would ring a bell to tell the guests that in fifteen minutes breakfast would be served.

The guests would have plenty of time. They had to walk up a hill a little way and down a little slope through some bamboo and into a building that looked like a restaurant, it had long tables with red table cloths on them. I liked to help set the tables, but it was sort of frustrating because everything had to be so perfect.

Every morning I would get up at 7:00 am. That was when we ate breakfast. The student food wasn't the greatest. So luckily my mother arranged for me and my brother and some other



brothers and some other kids to have guest food, but we didn't get to eat in the guest dining room. We got to eat on the back porch of the kitchen.

Almost every day I went swimming in the pool. Every 5 days we got to go down to a swimming hole. It was a mile away. The swimming hole was called The Narrows. It was 20 feet deep and not very wide. It also had a little water fall that was fun to slide down. In the Narrows there are trout and crawdads. Luckily the crawdads were mostly on the bottom.

By the repair shop there was a small camper. A man was trying to get rid of it so he sold it to my parents for ten dollars, because the only thing he was using it for was to keep his motorcycle in. He had been looking for a trailer for several months.



## Chapter #14

Our Next Summer

The next summer we went to Taraján again. Things were very similar to the summer before, except our cabin was much smaller, and our meal system was different.

My nana came to visit us for two weeks. The night before coming, she stayed in San Francisco with my Aunt. Her suitcases were in her car parked in front of my Aunt's apartment, when she was ready to leave in the morning her suitcases had been stolen. The only clothes she had left were



the ones she was wearing. When she arrived at Tassajara my mother took her to the good-will bins and they found some clothes for her to wear.



## Chapter #15

### We Moved To San Francisco

We brought our animals to Tassajara. On the way back we lost Flora. When we opened the door, we thought she had gotten out. We called her for an hour, and we also drove around, but we couldn't find her.

Finally we gave up. When we got to San Jose, that was where my mama lived. We stayed at her house. The first person to get out of the car was our cat Flora. She had been under the seat of the car all the time.



After we said good-bye we went to San Francisco. The Zen Center of San Francisco already had a place for us to live in. We rented it from them. It was a upper flat. I had the front rooms. After a few weeks another family came to live with us. So Lethe and I had the back room, because it was much bigger. Lethe and I got along very well together. She was ten and I was only eight. Lethe could draw much better than I could. Her pictures were like stories.

At night we would look out the window, and read all the light ups.

We would go up to the top of Zen Center, and swing in the hammock.



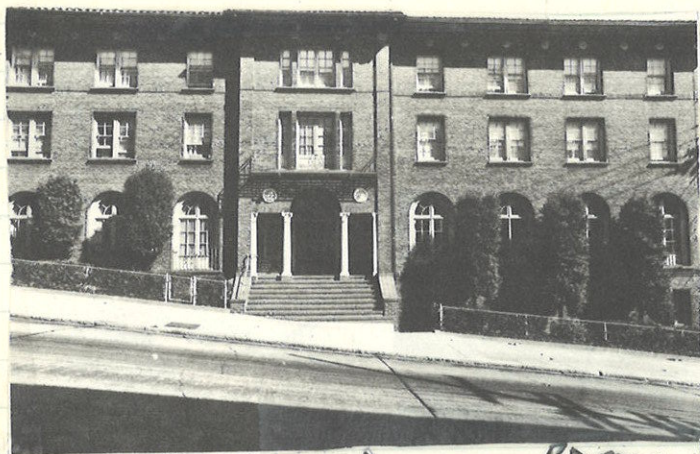
We would look down, Zen Center is four stories high. On one side there is a courtyard that we could play in, because we didn't have to go through Zen Center to get to it.

I also had another friend. Her name was Hilary. My other friend Mini lived close by. She had moved in while I was in Tassajara the second summer. All of my friends that lived around Zen Center belonged to the Zen religion.

I went to a private school. Hilary also went to the same private school. It was called San Francisco Montessori School. Lethe couldn't afford The Montessori School. She went to Shira School. They found a building for sale and bought it. Mini went to another private

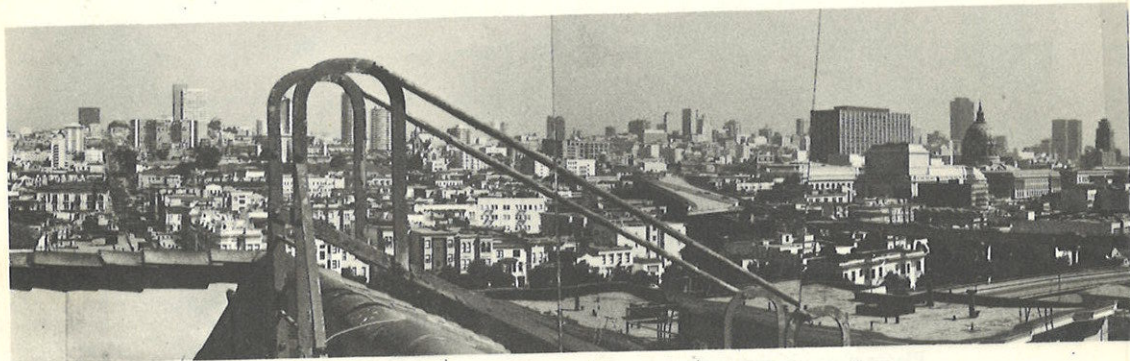


school. It was much more strict.



Here's the way the front of Zen Center looked.

View looking down from Zen Center



My kendo teacher helping me get ready. I enjoyed kendo which was separate from Zen center/religion.



## Chapter \*17

Our Third Summer At Tassajara

We brought our guinea pigs and Chloe our dog (Flora had gotten hit by a car. Our neighbors buried her). My father and I built a cage for the guinea pigs. It actually wasn't a cage, it was a pen with a top. We kept them outside.





We had a cabin right next to the cabin we had the first year. It had three rooms in it. It didn't have a kitchen, and no living room. What it did have was a bedroom for my brother and I, and another bedroom for my parents and Phillip, plus a bathroom. Maybe that size of a house doesn't sound big enough for five people but it was. When you stay at Tassajara all you need a house for is to sleep in, because we ate in the summer school, and we spent most of our time outdoors.

A family lived in back of the school. The mother Lynne was the head of the school. (My mother also worked there.) Lynne had a nice daughter Cymi, and a son who was named Aceron, the same name as my brother. It was their first summer at Tassajara. They



lived in the same cabin we lived in the first summer we visited.

This year we ate student food at the school. It was nice because there weren't so many flies.

Since the student meals weren't very filling, the kids got to have a snack after we did our jobs. The snacks were cake, cookies or something like that. Kids would get picked to go to the kitchen and help make tea with a man named Jeff at 3:00pm.

Lethe came to Tassajara and I played with her more than anyone else. She stayed in the cabin across from ours.

Lethe and I built an A-frame by the good-will. While we were gone some people stacked up wood on the side of it. We were mad.

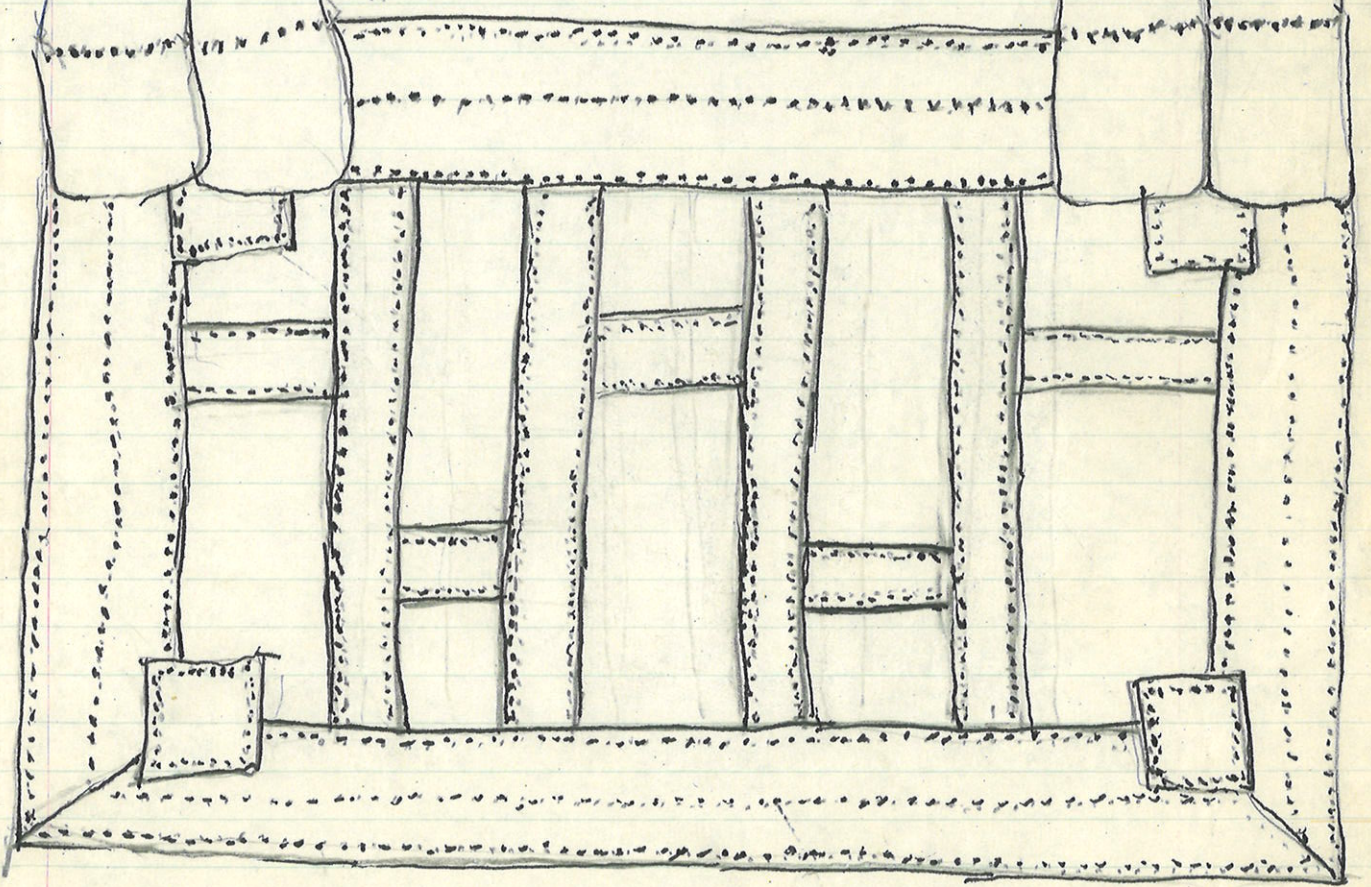


because the sides were sagging in. Lethe and I complained to the work foreman of Tassajara, but he wouldn't do anything. Finally we made him have men take it down. We made him by begging him a lot. We went to the good-will to get some things for it.

All the kids got to make rakusuu. A rakusuu is part of what you wear if you are in the Zen Buddhism. Grownups had to be in the Zen Buddhism for three years, but the kids could make one right away. I started mine in San Francisco. I made my rakusuu the way the grownups did. A lady roshi named Yoshida Roski she helped me with my rakusuu. Mine was done first, because I started it in San Francisco. After all the kids finished



theirs we all took  
 a special bath. I put my  
 hair up. We all went to the  
 Zendo. Suzuki Roshi led the  
 ceremony. He splashed water over  
 our heads and other things. Almost  
 everybody came. Suzuki Roshi  
 gave all the kids Buddhist





names. He wrote them in Japanese on the back of our rakasus. My Buddhist name is June-ko.

My brother Aaron found a lizard that had been caught by a cat, and had gotten away. My brother put him in an ashtray. He showed him to me. I held him in the sun, and rubbed him all over. I went down to the school and got some medicine. I put it on his sores. He got much better. When I let him go around the cabins he ran right back up on my shoulders. The next time I let him go, he went.

My father went over to Berkeley to find a house for us. Sometimes our whole family went. We wanted a house by the Berkeley Zencho. We looked and looked



but we couldn't find a house. A man named Boyd, and a lady named Crista asked my parents if they would come and live in Santa Barbara, and help with the Zen Buddhism religion in Santa Barbara. My parents said that it sounded like a good idea, but we're going to go to Berkeley.

The next time they visited Tassajara they kept trying to get my parents to come to Santa Barbara. Finally my parents agreed. We moved to Santa Barbara. First we stopped at my uncle's and aunt's house to pick up our things that we didn't need at Tassajara. Boyd and Crista looked for a house so by the time we got to Santa Barbara they had a home already for us. We got to move right in. They got us quite a large house on 333 E Anapamu Street which had room for people to come sit zazen.