



SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2018-19-070
Business Name: San Francisco Zen Center
Business Address: 300 Page Street
District: District 5
Applicant: Myles Cowherd, Development Director
Nomination Date: June 19, 2019
Nominated By: Supervisor Vallie Brown

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

1881 Bush Street from 1962 to 1969 (7 years)
 300 Page Street from 1969 to present (50 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: July 25, 2019

Richard Kurylo
 Program Manager, Legacy Business Program



**Member, Board of Supervisor
District 5**



City and County of San Francisco

Vallie Brown

June 17, 2019

Office of Small Business
Small Business Commission
City Hall, Suite 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to nominate the San Francisco Zen Center, located at 300 Page Street, for the Legacy Business Registry Program.

Established in 1962, the San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC) is widely understood as the founding institution of the Zen community in the Bay Area. Since then, SFZC has served as a neighborhood hub— often contributing significantly to issues facing the greater community. For instance, in the 1970s, SFZC was instrumental in helping the community deal with issues around housing, a lack of recreational space. The SFZC also worked at that time to provide funding for paid-internships for local youth living in the then low-income neighborhood in which it is situated.

During the AIDS crisis in San Francisco, SFZC was actively involved in the care of those afflicted. In 1987 they opened their doors, offering hospice care. Eventually that hospice care program expanded and increased its capacity to serve a larger community.

The SFZC has not changed owners and has not closed for any significant period of time since it opened. It has remained engaged with the surrounding community, all while remaining committed to their original mission to “express, make accessible and embody the wisdom and compassion of Buddha”.

It is for these reasons that I elect to nominate the San Francisco Zen Center for the Legacy Business Registry Program. Should you have any further questions related to this letter, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (415) 554-7630 or BrownStaff@sfgov.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vallie Brown".

Vallie Brown
Supervisor, District 5
City and County of San Francisco

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
San Francisco Zen Center		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Linda Galijan, President		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
300 Page Street San Francisco, CA 94102		(415) 863-3136
		EMAIL:
		ccoffice@sfzc.org
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
http://sfzc.org/	https://www.facebook.com/zencenter/	https://www.yelp.com/biz/san-francisco-zen-center-san-francisco-2?osq=san+francisco+

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Myles Cowherd	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Development Director	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
300 Page Street San Francisco, CA 94102	
TELEPHONE:	
([REDACTED])	
EMAIL:	
[REDACTED]	

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1881 Bush Street, San Francisco CA	94109	1962
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	7years	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
300 Page Street, San Francisco CA	94102	Start: 1969
		End: Current

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Myles Cowherd

6/17/2019



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

The San Francisco Zen Center (“SFZC” or “Zen Center”) was established in 1962 under the leadership of Shunryu Suzuki (a.k.a. Suzuki Roshi) (1904-1971), and today is one of the largest Sōtō Zen residential training and practice centers outside of Asia. The Sōtō Zen, or Sōtō school, is the largest of the three sects of Japanese Zen Buddhism. In contrast to the Rinzai or Ōbaku schools, the Sōtō school focuses on the role of meditation without the use of koans, stories, chants, or “anchors.” This form of meditation is called Shikantaza.

When first incorporated, the SFZC was located at the Sokoji Zen Buddhist Temple (1881 Bush Street) where the largely white, Western membership shared space with the established Japanese-American Zen community. Differences in practice created tension between the more conservative and traditional Japanese-American membership at Sokoji and the Western membership of the Zen Center, who came to Zen practice through a growing interest in Asian culture and eastern spirituality. For many, the counterculture of the Beat Generation made ideas of enlightenment, Zen, and a non- Western spirituality accessible, and in the 1960s this fascination with alternatives to established norms in America became widespread. As the Zen Center grew, attracting more of the San Francisco counterculture, it became necessary to look for an independent home.

Since 1969, the Zen Center’s main location – “Beginner’s Mind Temple,” or “City Center” – has been at 300 Page Street. This building, which was originally the Emanu-El Residence Club, was designed to support a residential community with small rooms for boarders on the upper floors and large communal spaces on the lower floors for activities. This layout proved to be ideal for the SFZC, allowing it to create its unique residential learning community. The SFZC also runs the monastic retreat and seasonal resort at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in the Los Padres National Forest (established in 1966) and Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, in Marin County (purchased in 1972). The SFZC continues to use the building at 300 Page Street as their primary location, with daily activities for both the public and its membership, and runs many of its outreach programs from this location.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

The San Francisco Zen Center has not ceased operations for any significant amount of time since it opened in 1962.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Not applicable.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

The ownership history of San Francisco Zen Center is as follows:

1962 to 1991: Corporation Sole (head priest or abbot is considered the owner)

1962 to 1971: Shunryu Suzuki

1971 to 1983: Richard Baker

1983 to 1985: Dainin Katagiri

1986 to 1991: Reb Anderson

1991 to 2015: California Religious Nonprofit

2015 to Present: 501(c)(3)

The SFZC was incorporated in 1962 as a Corporation Sole and led by the chief priest (later called the abbot) and a board of directors. While the Zen Center has gone through a number of revisions to its corporate structure since its establishment, that structure has always included a board of directors acting in collaboration with a chief priest, or abbot, or with two or three co-abbots. In 1991, the Zen Center became a California Religious Nonprofit, and since 2015 it has been a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Suzuki Roshi served as the chief priest of the Zen Center until his death in 1971, when leadership began to be passed down through his students. His chosen successor, Richard Baker, oversaw much of the expansion of the Zen Center in the 1970s with the acquisition of Green Gulch Farm and the opening of Green Gulch Greengrocer (sold in 1989), Greens restaurant (later established as a separate for-profit business), and the Tassajara Bread Bakery (now closed). Scandals in the 1980s led to a perception of mismanagement within the leadership, and the requirement of having two or three co-abbots was introduced in 1988. A full list of abbots and abbesses of the SFZC are included at the end of this narrative.

Within the Sōtō Zen and Zen Buddhist traditions, dharma transmission between the teacher and the disciple creates a spiritual lineage that fosters consistency between the generations of practitioners. This transfer of ideals from teacher to student additionally creates consistency within leadership, as only after years of training with a master can a student be placed in a leadership role in the Zen Center.

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the

business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the organization verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.”

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The San Francisco Zen Center is located in a Julia Morgan-designed building at 300 Page Street. This structure was originally built by the Emanu-El Sisterhood as the Emanu-El Residence Club in 1922 and is a Category A historic resource as evaluated by the San Francisco Planning Department. In 2010, the Planning Department’s Market Octavia Survey determined the building eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places; however, the building is not currently listed in a city, state, or national historic registry.

The building was designed as a home for single Jewish women at a time when women were not supposed to live independently from their families. The Emanu-El Residence provided a home as well as educational, recreational, and spiritual activities for the nearly 60 women living in the building at any one time. In plan, the building reflects this dual public and private purpose, with more public spaces on the lower floors – areas that men would have been allowed to visit – and more private, residential spaces above. The building is generally H-shaped with a large formal courtyard with a fountain and arcade for visitors and residents on the east side and a smaller, informal service courtyard located on the west side. Today the SFZC uses this building in the same way as it was designed, with currently practicing residents living in the sparse but comfortable rooms on the upper floors, and visiting members and the public mingling with residents in the large, active spaces on the lower floors, including meditation halls and meeting rooms.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

The San Francisco Zen Center is the origin of many of the Zen centers around California and provided the foundation for the current Zen community in the Bay Area. Suzuki Roshi’s leadership at Sokoji and his choice to welcome white, Western practitioners with a serious interest in Buddhism helped to establish a formal Zen community in San Francisco that was welcoming to all. The practitioners who studied under Suzuki Roshi and other priests from the Sōtō Zen School went on to become teachers themselves. Many have stayed at the SFZC, but a number have opened their own schools, while others have traveled and lived internationally to study with other Zen priests, expanding this community internationally.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

The San Francisco Zen Center was an early responder to the AIDS crisis in San Francisco and began to offer hospice care in 1987. While this first included providing care at 300 Page Street, by 1988 the Zen Hospice Project was formed as a separate organization and went on to open the Guest House (273 Page Street) and create a long-term partnership with Laguna Honda Hospital, offering volunteer assistance for long-term care wards and running programs on mindfulness and stress reduction for caregivers.

Through the Zen Center's establishment of Green Gulch Greengrocer in 1975 (which sold produce from Green Gulch Farms in a storefront across the street from City Center) and the creation of Greens restaurant at Fort Mason in 1979, the SFZC has been involved in bringing attention to the California cuisine and organic food movements that, while considered mainstream today, were not the norm in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1970s, the SFZC also became more directly involved in the immediate neighborhood around City Center. Through the establishment of a separate organization, The Neighborhood Foundation (TNF), the Zen Center helped the community deal with issues around housing conditions, a lack of recreational space, and funded paid-internships for local youth. The SFZC and TNF were also involved in the establishment of the David E. Koshland Community Park at Page and Buchanan streets in 1973.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

The Zen Center has been widely covered in the media from its early days at Sokoji to its later work at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, Green Gulch Farm, and at Beginner's Mind Temple (300 Page Street). Some examples of this media coverage are included in this Legacy Business Registry application. The SFZC also actively creates documentation, first through their early newsletter, *Wind Bell* (1961-2012), and also with the publication of relevant resources to Zen practice, such as *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* by Shunryu Roshi.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Many well-known people have both supported and moved through the Zen Center at its various locations. In particular, a number of people associated with Zen religious and spiritual practices both nationally and internationally, have visited, taught, lived, or studied at the SFZC. In 2013, Thich Nat Hanh, the renowned Vietnamese Buddhist spiritual leader and peace activist, visited the SFZC in 2013 while on a tour of North America. Artists, musicians, writers, and poets have been frequent members and friends of the SFZC, but politicians, corporate leaders, and others have also been involved in various capacities. However, for the SFZC, the most important historical figure remains Suzuki Roshi. It was his leadership and spiritual guidance that was integral to the establishment of the Zen Center. His leadership and role as a teacher to many

holds an essential place in the history of Zen in California, since many of his early students and many within his spiritual lineage have established the various Zen centers around the Bay Area, as well as greater California, the United States, and Europe.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

The mission of the Zen Center, “to express, make accessible and embody the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha,” includes a desire to share Zen mindfulness with a broad community. It focuses not only on monastic methods of learning in Buddhism, but believes in incorporating compassionate and intentional interactions into the lay experience. The building remains open to the public, inviting all who are interested in Zen practice to become familiar with it, but the SFZC is also engaged in going out into and serving the larger community of San Francisco. This is often geared towards troubled populations, like those who are incarcerated, formerly homeless, in recovery, or in transitional housing. Outreach includes supplying healthy meals, teaching mindfulness, meditation practices, and stress reduction, fundraising for these groups, and running a prison correspondence program for incarcerated persons to maintain – or grow – their Zen practice.

The SFZC has recently established a relationship with Creativity Explored, a local organization that provides opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to express themselves through art and helps many to become self-employed artists. The Zen Center has a rotating art exhibit that changes monthly at 300 Page Street, and art from Creativity Explored will be featured each year.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

The SFZC serves a number of communities, from the active members, residents, and visitors of the Zen Center, to the broader community that benefits from their outreach efforts, as well as the larger community of Zen Buddhism worldwide.

Members of the public interact with the Zen Center through their daily open zazen meditation at 300 Page Street, but also do not have to be affiliated or actively engaged with Zen practices and can visit Greens Restaurant at Fort Mason, or stay at the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. The SFZC’s robust outreach programs serve a number of different groups including seniors, families in transitional housing, the formerly homeless, residents of the city’s residential hotels, people in recovery, and the currently incarcerated.

There is also an international component to the SFZC community, with a number of international students coming to the SFZC to live and learn in the Zen Center’s unique environment, and a number of students from the Zen Center traveling to study and teach internationally.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

For nearly 50 years, the SFZC has been located at 300 Page Street. This building was constructed in 1922 as the Emanu-el Residence Club, and was designed by Julia Morgan and Dorothy Wormser. As the Emanu-el Residence, the building allowed for single Jewish women to live and work away from their families, which was not the norm. The residence served a crucial function in allowing these women to pursue opportunities that would have been impossible if they remained at home, but also provided for their educational, recreational, and spiritual needs with a gym, theater, and meeting areas. The building is significant not only as the home of the SFZC, and as the work of a master architect, but also for its first use as a home and a refuge for Jewish working women in the 1920s.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

The SFZC, through its presence at 300 Page Street, is able to offer a unique residential experience for their students while inviting a diverse public to experience the Zen Center on a daily basis. This would be lost if the SFZC were to close or relocate. An additional loss would be felt throughout the broader community with the end of the large number of outreach and volunteer efforts that are run by the Zen Center in San Francisco.

A number of affiliated Zen organizations have been established by many of the members of the Zen Center and would continue to provide spiritual guidance for the Zen community, but the central location of the SFZC which is closely tied to the spiritual heritage and the teaching of Suzuki Roshi would be a huge loss to this local, national, and international community.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

The SFZC is defined by its traditional Zen practices and its vision to act with and to offer compassion and wisdom as a response to the uncertainty and complexity of daily life. The main building at City Center offers one place for quiet, reflection, meditation, and compassion, not only for residents and members, but for the public. The quiet courtyard garden and large rooms for meditation and services allow for this personal, yet communal, experience. This duality – of personal and communal – is seen throughout the unique residential and educational environment of City Center that prioritizes the personal spiritual journey, but also provides a home, with all that entails, to a number of people living as a residential community.

The community of City Center and its Zen practice is also held in contrast, and deepened by, a focus on service and interacting with communities outside the Zen Center. The extensive public outreach and volunteer work of the Zen Center is an essential component of the organization and has grown as the business has evolved.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to

retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

In 2004, the SFZC completed a strategic plan to help guide the future of the organization. While the Zen Center is deeply tied to maintaining its spiritual traditions, the strategic plan process helped to determine where they could engage with new audiences or better serve those they were already in contact with.

Additionally, attention was drawn to ensuring that the SFZC will have the stability and means to continue to exist for the next 50 years, creating plans for financial security, stewardship, and property maintenance.

Conversations around maintaining tradition while continuing to evolve to meet new challenges have illustrated that flexibility has always been at the heart of the Zen Center; its establishment was due in part to Suzuki Roshi's understanding that a Western audience, while interested in Buddhism, would not be receptive to some of its traditional strict rules, such as those around the separation of genders within the practice. Balancing a respect for tradition and the Zen practice, with an understanding of the need to adapt to changing realities, issues, and contexts has allowed the SFZC to remain an active and vital organization throughout its over 50-year history

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Many of the Zen Center's important characteristics are reflected in how the Zen Center uses its building. The idea of living, learning, and working while engaged in Zen practice is an essential component of Beginner's Mind Temple's unique community, and the building's design allows for a number of residents to live on the upper floors. Additionally, the building's openness to the public, with a focus on being accessible and relevant to larger community needs, is central to the Zen Center's mission; the building's public spaces that are used as meditation halls (zendo), a dining hall, courtyard, and other gathering spaces allow for the public to join daily zazen and attend other events.

300 Page Street relates to the immediate neighborhood in scale, although it was built after the general period of construction of its immediate surroundings, which consist primarily of late-nineteenth century Victorian residential buildings.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or

materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a Zen practice and educational center for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.”

Abbots and Abbesses of the San Francisco Zen Center

1962-1971 – Shunryu Suzuki
1971-1983 – Zentatsu Richard Baker
1984-1985 – Dainin Katagiri
1986-1995 – Tenshin Reb Anderson
1988-1997 – Sojun Mel Weitsman*
1995-2000 – Zoketsu Norman Fischer
1996-2003 – Zenkei Blanche Hartman
2000-2007 – Eijun Linda Cutts**
2003-2006 – Kiku Christina Lehnherr**
2003-2012 – Paul Haller
2007-2017 – Myogen Steve Stucky
2012-2014 – Kiku Christina Lehnherr**
2014-present – Eijun Linda Cutts**
2014-present – Rinso Ed Sattizahn
2014-present – Furyu Nancy Schroeder

* 1988 was the start of having two or three co-abbots/abbesses.

** have served as abbots or abbesses non-consecutively

San Francisco Zen Center Legacy Business Application
Section 5: Supplemental Historical Documents

1962-1969

Soko-ji (1881 Bush Street)

First home of the San Francisco Zen Center

“We are protected from within”

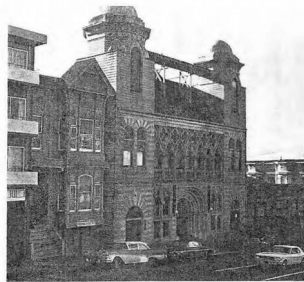
■ The purpose of Zen is to teach men to live with serenity and fulfillment by developing an inner strength based on the realization of the oneness of existence. It is an intensely practical and practicable religion, a way of life that results in an enlightenment which allows man to enter the stream of life with perfect control, and yet, freedom and spontaneity.

Since Zen insists that enlightenment is an experience which can only be imparted by direct experience within the relationship of student and Zen master, it is absolutely necessary for a person wishing to be trained in the Zen life to obtain a qualified leader. An increasing number of San Franciscans are taking advantage of the presence among us of one such Zen master, Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, and of the facilities to study and practice Zen at the Zen Soto Mission at 1881 Bush Street. There are only three other locations in the continental United States where such instruction can be obtained directly from a Zen master: Los Angeles, Monterey and Chicago.

Rev. Suzuki is the sixth of the Zen masters sent by the Soto School to lead San Franciscans in the ways of Zen. Housed for approximately the last 90 years in the Sokoji Temple (Soko means San Francisco; ji means temple), an edifice originally built as a Jewish synagogue, the membership consisted entirely of people of Japanese ancestry until his arrival a little over five years ago. The official temple roster now numbers approximately 30 contributing and uncountable Caucasian members as well as more than 100 Japanese.

Because of this phenomenal growth, the Japanese headquarters of the Soto School sent Rev. Dainin T. Karigita to assist Rev. Suzuki in February 1964. A handsome,

Lofton
 Rev. Suzuki, San Francisco's Zen master (left). Rev. Karigita, assistant priest and missionary from Japan, leads kishin (walking meditation) practiced during sesshin (all day meditation) (right).



Originally built as a synagogue, Sokoji Temple at 1881 Bush St. is now the religious and social center for the Zen Soto Mission's active Caucasian and Oriental members.

text and photos by Joan B. Mayer



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

Sokoji, and the Other Half of Our Practice
 by Ananda Dalenberg

I often think of the early beginnings of Zen Center at Sokoji Soto Zen Temple in San Francisco. Sokoji was very important to us in those early days, and I think it remains symbolically important for us even today. In fact, the role of Sokoji in the development of Zen Center has become a kind of koan for me.

In those days Zen Center occupied only a corner of Sokoji. It was, however, adequate for our size, and we felt quite at home in sharing space with the Japanese-American congregation there. We also shared in having the same teacher, Abbot Shunryu Suzuki, who was the head of both Sokoji and Zen Center. There was then some inner sense of unity between the two groups.

As Zen Center grew, our differences became greater, and the two groups separated. The reasons were various, but I would say it was mostly because of a difference of views in regard to practice. At Zen Center we were very enthusiastic about zazen, and it was very difficult for us to conceive of real zen practice as being anything else.

Left: c. 1964 article, available through the San Francisco Public Library History Room; Right: from a 1986 edition of the SF'ZC's WindBell newsletter, reflecting on their origins at Soko-ji

1967

First year at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center



1969

Move to 300 Page Street (City Center)



Photo credit: Robert S. Boni



1970

WindBell newsletter discussing new home at 300 Page Street

Zen Center is not complete or perfect, but our difficulties, individual and collective, are blessings that give us the incentive to practice, to work.

The next two issues of the *Wind Bell* will again be special issues. One will be devoted to our relationship, as Buddhists, to our environment. The other will be the second issue on American Zen, covering Zen in San Francisco in the 50's and the activities of Suzuki Roshi and his students preceding the formation of Zen Center.

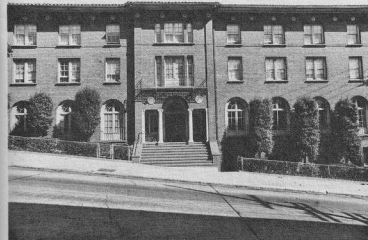
Reader's comments are strongly encouraged and gratefully received.



300 PAGE STREET

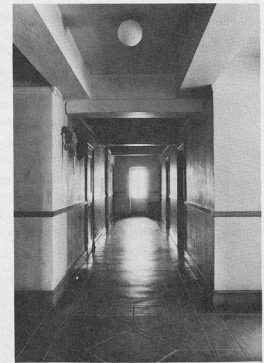
The opportunity for extended Zen practice afforded by the establishment of Zen Mountain Center in 1967 had considerable effect on the activity of Zen Center in San Francisco. Since 1959 students had been sharing the spiritual leadership of Suzuki Roshi with the Soto Zen congregation of Sokoji Temple, a Buddhist Church within the Japanese community of San Francisco. We also rented our practice space from Sokoji. But by the summer of 1969, interest in Zen practice had grown to the extent that over 120 students were regularly participating in the scheduled *zendo* (meditation hall) activity, and the limitations were becoming increasingly apparent. It was clear that these students needed full time teachers and a less limited space in San Francisco in which to develop an extensive city practice in conjunction with the monastic practice at Zen Mountain Center. Experiments in communal housing for Zen students in San Francisco had been carried on since early 1968 in five large apartments across the street from Sokoji. As at Tassajara, living together in the city was found to be an effective way to extend Zen practice into everyday student life. Hence, a movement towards a more integrated physical community—one in which students and teachers could live, study and practice *zazen* together under one roof—gradually emerged.

Suzuki Roshi's resignation from his duties with the Sokoji congregation was accepted in July of 1969 and he was then freed to fully devote his time

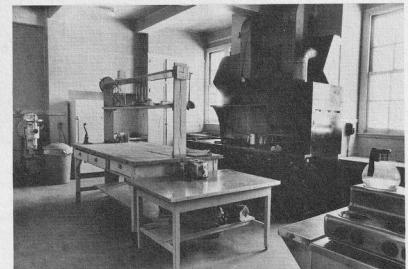


Entrance to 300 Page Street.

The courtyard. Suzuki Roshi has begun a rock garden here.



Upstairs corridor.



The kitchen. There is also a small "snack kitchen".

1971

Practice in Buddha Hall at 300 Page Street (City Center)



1975

Green Gulch Greengrocer opens across from City Center



Looking west on Page Street, the Zen Center building is at right. This procession began the opening ceremony of the Green Gulch Greengrocer, diagonally across the street from Zen Center (see page 23).

1975 WindBell newsletter



c. 1983-1984, SFZC member Ryushin Paul Haller working at Green Gulch Greengrocer

2012

Coverage of the 50th Anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center




San Francisco Zen Center members listening to a Dharma talk by Sensei Vietnamese in the Buddha Hall of City Center.

Always Beginner's Mind

ZEN CENTER AT 50

Practice at San Francisco Zen Center starts in the zendo and extends out to the farm, the kitchen, the workplace, the human heart. COLLEEN MORTON BUSCH reports on one of American Buddhism's most important communities as it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.

I STAND BAREFOOT on the wooden walkway behind the zendo with the other members of my serving crew, the hot breakfast pots set out on tables. According to the thermometer, it's 32 degrees. It's the eighty-eighth practice period in the history of Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, but my first. I'm one of sixty participants ranging in age from one and a half (the head student's toddler) to an 84-year-old recently ordained priest who once served Shunryu Suzuki Roshi scrambled eggs at her home. I shuffle my feet and tuck my hands inside my robes. It's said that Zen is transmitted "warm hand to warm hand." At this moment, my frigid fingers are dubious. But the head server signals us, and we bow and file into the zendo in choreographed order. As warm pots and the motion of serving thaw my extremities, I forget about the cold. I merge with the dance that is formal *oyoshi*—literally, "just enough"—breakfast. The community raises their bowls in *sync* and takes the first bite in unison. We've been in *sync* for hours, actually, since we settled into our seats, facing the wall, for 4:20 a.m. zazen, or meditation. For the next hour, coughs were muffled and bodies sat silent and still while the creek outside the zendo splashed over



Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, founder of San Francisco Zen Center, in front of City Center, c. 1969.

PHOTO BY ROBERT K. SPON

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SHAMBHALA SUN SEPTEMBER 2012 31

Above: *Shambhala Sun* magazine

SFGATE SECTIONS

SF Zen Center's 50 years of opening hearts, minds

SPIRITUALITY

By Julian Guthrie Published 4:00 am PDT, Monday, March 12, 2012




SUZUKI ROSHI

50

CELEBRATING 50 years of opening hearts, minds

Always SUZUKI ROSHI'S

By JULIAN GUTHRIE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2011

PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

Bottom left: *SF Chronicle*;

Bottom right: poster for 50th anniversary events, designed by Dana Elliott

2016

New Years Day ceremony on roof deck at 300 Page Street



2018
Practice in Buddha Hall at 300 Page Street



Photo credit: John Anklow

Current
300 Page Street



Current
300 Page Street



Current
300 Page Street



San Francisco Chronicle

SF Zen Center's 50 years of opening hearts, minds

SPIRITUALITY

By **Julian Guthrie**

Published 4:00 am PDT, Monday, March 12, 2012



People participating in the noon service at the main meditation room of the San Francisco Zen Center in San Francisco Calif., Thursday, March 8, 2012. It will be the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center which operates in San Francisco, Green Gulch Farm in Muir Woods, and Tassajara monastery in Carmel Valley. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle

In 1959, a Buddhist priest with a slight build, shaved head and ready laugh arrived in San Francisco from Japan and began teaching the power of "just sitting" and "the beginner's mind" - looking at life as full of potential.

Three years later, in the summer of 1962, the priest, Shunryu Suzuki, who went by the name Suzuki Roshi, and his informal community of students founded the San Francisco Zen Center out of a small temple in Japantown.

Now, the San Francisco Zen Center - which now operates out of a historic 1922 brick building in Hayes Valley designed by Julia Morgan - is celebrating its 50th anniversary and is credited with quietly influencing the teaching of Buddhism in America.

But its reach is beyond meditation. The Zen Center runs one of the nation's first organic farms, as well as artisan bakeries and monasteries. It offers programs for veterans, the homeless, incarcerated, drug-addicted, and sick and dying. It operates vacation retreats and classes in everything from Zen writing and cooking to "queer Dharma" and "young urban Zen." Plans are under way to build a first-of-its-kind, \$32 million Zen-inspired senior living center.

"We believe that peace comes from balance and from sitting silently but also working in the world," said Robert Thomas, a former restaurant and bar owner who is now a married Zen priest and president of the San Francisco Zen Center. "You don't have to shave your head or change your clothes. What we hope is that people will take with them compassion and kindness in whatever they do."

The San Francisco Zen Center also runs the Tassajara monastery and retreat in Carmel Valley, Green Gulch Farm in Marin County, and Hope Cottage, a rustic cabin high in the Marin Headlands. Over the years, the sites have attracted and housed an array of artists and musicians, inventors and politicians, including Steve Jobs and Jerry Brown.

"The first time I went to Green Gulch was in the '70s," said performance artist, musician and composer Laurie Anderson. "I first went to Hope Cottage maybe eight years ago and stayed there with my dog. A performance piece was inspired by that stay. Being there is like flying; you're so high up. It's just inspiring."

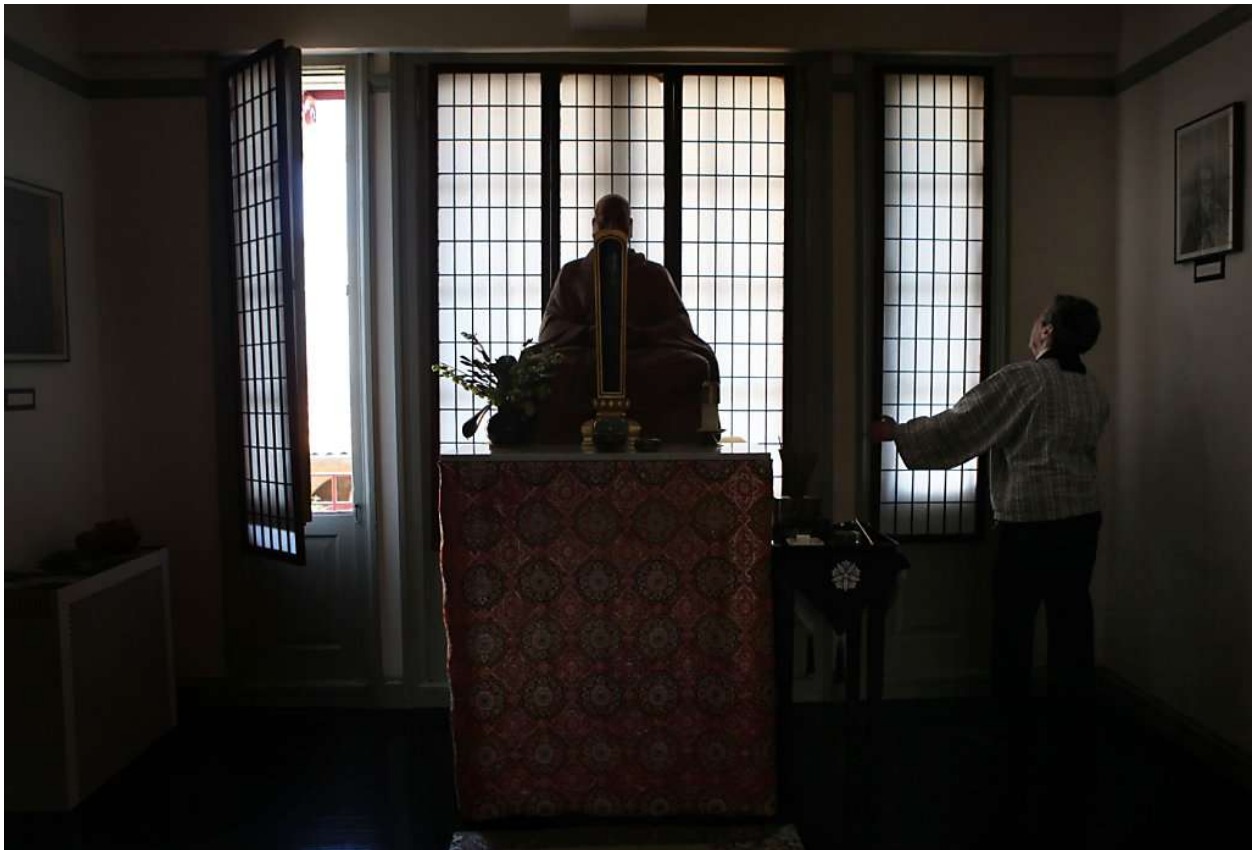
Anniversary benefit

Anderson, a practicing Buddhist for almost four decades, said, "It's a place that has always grounded me and has been an important anchor."

As part of the center's 50th anniversary, Anderson will appear onstage Thursday at the 142 Throckmorton Theatre in Mill Valley with Tenshin Reb Anderson, the former head of the Zen Center and a teacher at Green Gulch. The event, a benefit to raise money for the restoration of Hope Cottage, kicks off celebrations to run through the year.

"This practice of sitting still in the midst of wisdom turns out to have great utility," said actor Peter Coyote, who practiced at the San Francisco Zen Center from 1974 to 1984 and is now a Zen priest. "It has produced all of these impressive things - Green Gulch, the center, the ministries and jail programs and food kitchens and Greens Restaurant and a bakery. It all began with this little guy coming here in 1959 and starting to sit by himself."

Part of the beauty of Buddhism, Coyote noted, is that it "is not technically a religion. Buddha was an ordinary man. We make no claims for him being a son of God. What he did is solve this apparent dichotomy that we feel separate from the rest of the universe, this feeling that we are like a little grain of sand. What Buddha teaches is that we are all indisputably connected to the entire universe."



Director of the San Francisco Zen Center Tova Green opening windows at the Suzuki Roshi room of the San Francisco Zen Center in San Francisco Calif., Thursday, March 8, 2012. It will be the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle

Diverse programs

Tassajara, situated on 320 acres in the Ventana Wilderness, opened in 1967, making it the oldest Soto Zen monastery in the United States. As part of the training, monastic students - who live communally and cook, clean and dine together - began baking bread. The bread spawned the first artisanal bread cookbook, "The Tassajara Bread Book," its own bakery in Cole Valley, and Greens Restaurant at Fort Mason.

Today, Tassajara - known for its remoteness, accessible only by a steep and winding 14-mile dirt road - operates from September through April as a center for monks in training, and from May through August as a place for anyone to come and stay and explore Zen teaching. It offers hot springs, vegetarian cooking and classes, and evening Dharma talks.

"I became a monk at Tassajara and lived there for five years," said Norman Fischer, who runs the Everyday Zen Foundation. "I went to the San Francisco center to learn meditation from Suzuki Roshi and lived at Green Gulch until 2000."

Fischer, who now brings "Zen to the non-Zen," including employees at Google, added, "What's unique and wonderful about the Zen Center is that it serves the community in a wide way. You can come to deepen your commitment to Christianity or Islam. You can come seeking a deeper understanding of what lies within. It's just unprecedented."

Susan O'Connell, who arrived at the San Francisco Zen Center on December 31, 1995, after a successful career in acting and filmmaking, simply needed something different.

"I thought I'd stay for two months," she said with a laugh, sitting in the quiet, sunlit dining room. Ordained as a priest in 1999, O'Connell serves as vice president of operations.



Reverend Fu Schroder, a teacher and leader of the practice period at the Center, pauses for a portrait near the library building. Green Gulch Zen Center is celebrating its 50 year at its Muir Beach, CA location. Tuesday March 6th, 2012. Photo: Michael Short, Special To The Chronicle

'This place is a miracle'

Students who become residents meditate twice a day, at about 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. More than 150 students, ranging in age from 19 to 90, live and work at the three sites, paying nothing and earning a small stipend after a period. Everyone shares jobs, from cleaning bathrooms to cooking, planting and sowing. (At Tassajara, students meditate for up to 14 hours a day.)

"You rotate jobs, so that you have no idea what you are doing," O'Connell said, speaking to the philosophy of approaching life with a "beginner's mind."

At Green Gulch, opened in 1971, residents and visitors inevitably learn the art of farming. The Muir Woods center, with a small bookstore and a formal Japanese teahouse open to the public, has 110 verdant acres and six under cultivation. Winding pathways lead to small, peaceful gardens dotted with Buddhist iconography.

Greenhouses are filled with new life, and produce from the farm is sent to local farmers' markets, Greens, and other restaurants.

"I feel like this place is a miracle," said Emila Heller, a Zen practitioner and center resident for 40 years. "I do a lot of farm work and coordinate the apprentice program." Walking the grounds, she said hello to the farm's head baker, Mick Sopko, who baked at Tassajara in the '80s and has been at Green Gulch for eight years. Almost 400 loaves are baked every week, he said.

"I was married and lived here with my husband until four years ago, when he died," Heller said. "There are single celibate priests here. There are married priests. There are farmers and artists. It's diverse. Everybody is your teacher."

"The San Francisco Zen Center is like the mother ship. It has spawned a lot of groups across the country."

Looking to future

The San Francisco center, which has a \$5 million annual budget - Greens operates autonomously and also has a budget of about \$5 million - gets 85 percent of its revenue from programs and the rest from donors. O'Connell and President Thomas said the center is in the midst of a \$17 million capital campaign to create an endowment, and has raised \$14 million.

"The 50th anniversary is about the past, present and future," O'Connell said. In addition to developing plans to build the first Zen senior living community - to open in the Bay Area within five years - the center is looking at expanding its nationally embraced Zen hospice, a "contemplative care" program started in the early 1980s by students to care for AIDS patients. In August, the center plans to introduce its "fourth practice site," launching a new website offering a compendium of 50 years of Buddhist teaching through audio files and podcasts.

Included in those audio files will be talks by the center's beloved founder, who died in 1971. Roshi, author of the spiritual classic "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind," opened the book with a line that still guides his followers today: "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few."

Center benefit

An evening with Laurie Anderson and Tenshin Reb Anderson. 7 p.m. Thursday. 142 Throckmorton Theatre, 142 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley. (415) 863-3136. sfzc.org.



A small shrine sit next to a stand of bamboo. Green Gulch Zen Center is celebrating its 50 year at its Muir Beach, CA location. Tuesday March 6th, 2012. Photo: Michael Short, Special To The Chronicle



Residents and staff having lunch after noon service at the San Francisco Zen Center in San Francisco Calif., Thursday, March 8, 2012. It will be the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle



Shoes lined up in front of the main meditation room of the San Francisco Zen Center in San Francisco Calif., before noon service on Thursday, March 8, 2012. It will be the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle



Residents Eric Sergee (left) and Chris Steele (right) participating in the noon service at the main meditation room of the San Francisco Zen Center in San Francisco Calif., Thursday, March 8, 2012. It will be the 50th anniversary of the San Francisco Zen Center which operates in San Francisco, Green Gulch Farm in Muir Woods, and Tassajara monastery in Carmel Valley. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle



Staff, guests, and students gather in the dining area for lunch. Green Gulch Zen Center is celebrating its 50 year at its Muir Beach, CA location. Tuesday March 6th, 2012
Photo: Michael Short, Special To The Chronicle

Julian Guthrie is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. jguthrie@sfchronicle.com



LION'S ROAR

BUDDHIST WISDOM *for* OUR TIME

New San Francisco Zen Center Abbot talks “dharma for the 22nd century”

BY [SAM LITTLEFAIR](#) | MARCH 5, 2019

An interview with David Zimmerman, the newly installed abbot of San Francisco Zen Center’s City Center.



David Zimmerman, courtesy of San Francisco Zen Center.

This past weekend, David Zimmerman was appointed the new abbot of San Francisco Zen Center’s City Center. Zimmerman takes over for Ed Sattizahn, who moves into another position in the organization.

Having joined San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC) in 2000, Zimmerman’s appointment signals a changing of the guard at one of America’s most prominent Buddhist organizations. SFZC was founded more than fifty years ago, in large part by counterculture participants trying to establish Buddhism in mainstream America. Perhaps surprisingly, they succeeded. Now, the next generation of leaders at SFZC — including Zimmerman — are looking towards the future. Lion’s Roar spoke with Zimmerman about his plans at the head of an institution of American Buddhism.

Sam Littlefair: Your appointment as abbot seems emblematic of a generational shift happening at SFZC.

David Zimmerman: The founding generation — the first couple decades of those who really worked to establish Zen and Zen Center here in the US, who received what they did from Suzuki Roshi and other Asian teachers — they crafted the initial container. At this point, they're retiring, or getting ready to retire, or have died. I would say I'm the next generation. I moved into Zen Center in 2000, with the new millennium.

I'm 55, so I feel like I have my feet in two generations: the baby boomer generation and the next generation. Being this bridge person, I'm very curious to see how those who are much younger than me are already stepping into leadership positions — people who are 20, 30, 40 years old. These people are the leaders of the future. It's quite exciting to see that I'm just another wave in the river of dharma that's flowing here in the US.

What do you think makes these generations of the SFZC sangha distinct?

A difference between the founding generation and my generation is that we have a little bit more license to be creative about how we express the dharma. We're not limited to trying to establish it or validate it. I have a sense that we have more license to color outside of the lines. I see a little more effort to turn the lens outward and see how we can take in a wider field of concern, in terms of our practice in the world, our social conditions, political situations, the environment, and so on.

In what ways are you and members of the community starting to color outside the lines?

I would say that our online offerings are a way of doing that. Many dharma communities are trying those platforms, but I think it's being kind of encouraged and led by the next generation.

There's also a continuing emphasis on diversity, inclusivity, equity, accessibility. That is being definitely pushed up from the younger generation. We're really making more of an effort to find ways to speak to particular practice constituencies.

For example, we have a lot of affinity groups at San Francisco Zen Center. There is "Meditation Recovery." There's "Queer Dharma." There's a women's group. There's the "Unpacking Whiteness" group. There's "Dharma Espanol." There's a willingness to create micro-sanghas within the meta-sangha as a way to address the diversity of experiences and needs of people coming to Zen Center.

I think we're also more willing to incorporate other disciplines, particularly in how we structure and navigate our communal way of being together. For example, right use of power. These are ways to study and identify how it is that we have power, how we use power, and how to be conscious of how we use power.

There are other disciplines that we are looking at bringing into how, institutionally, we make decisions, relate to each other, and address power, inequity, and traditional forms of hierarchy and patriarchy.

So now, with your new role, you're playing a key part in these projects. In what ways do you want to encourage moving forward?

I've been wondering: What are the forms of Zen training for not just the 21st century, but the 22nd century?

<https://www.lionsroar.com/new-san-francisco-zen-center-abbot-talks-dharma-for-the-22nd-century/>

We've inherited a lot of forms that are in some cases thousands of years old and were appropriate for a particular time and place and culture. I think a lot of it is no longer relevant. So, we have to find ways to let go of those old forms and find new forms of training the mind and body that are applicable to who we are now. For example, the use of the keisaku, the "encouragement stick." We've stopped using that because, for many people in the US, it was not so encouraging. It was more a traumatic experience.

We still chant both in Japanese and in English, and there's a question: maybe, since most of us don't speak Japanese fluently, do we really need to be chanting in Japanese?

I love the Zen forms. I love the robes. I love a lot of the traditional ritual that we use. But, for many people who first come, it could be off-putting. It could be somewhat alienating. So, are the robes essential to our practice?

We assume that decisions need to be made by elders in the community, rather than being more inclusive. We could we have a more diverse group of people in terms of age and practice experience helping to decide on the direction that we go as a community.

There is a lot of efficacy in the forms as we've inherited them, but often, when we examine them, we find the outward expression of the form might no longer be relevant or applicable. What do we keep that is the essential component?

I think the forms offer a mirror, to see ourselves. I think that's the most powerful aspect of the forms. So, how do we change these particular forms to be relevant to the current realities?

When someone introduces a suggestion for a change to a form, we take a lot of time in our practice committees, looking at: What is the intention here? How are we trying to meet people? What new expression of the form might better serve to meet people, without again losing the spirit of the form. So, we experiment. We try something for a period of time and see whether or not it works.

It sounds quite challenging to try to fathom the essence of a sacred traditional form and then judge its value.

And also to identify what new form and what new expression would equally support that particular expression to come forth. I think that's where the innovation and the creativity really is required. And, sometimes it comes organically—like when someone says, "I can't sit in this particular posture, because of my physical situation or other conditions in my life, but I am a sincere practitioner and I really want to practice." Is there a way that you can adapt or change the form in order to meet the reality of this particular embodied being? So, we say, what would that look like? What can we do differently?

What do you think dharma will look like in the 22nd century?

When Buddhism entered into China, it took centuries for it to really be planted and integrated, to be translated by the Chinese Buddhists, to find metaphors, and to find teaching modalities that really met the Chinese people. The same thing is happening now here. But, I think it's happening much more quickly.

I'm very curious to see, even within the next 50 years, what is the dharma going to look like? What will be the forms of community, of sangha?

<https://www.lionsroar.com/new-san-francisco-zen-center-abbot-talks-dharma-for-the-22nd-century/>

I think initially there was a lot of emphasis on particular individuals and particular teachers as carrying the dharma. What's coming forward more is: how do we as a community hold and express the dharma?

Thich Nhat Hanh has said that the next Buddha will be sangha. When I talk about the collaborative quality of the next generation, I really feel it focuses more on sangha. It really is focused on how we as a sangha support each other, and not be so dependent on individual teachers. I think that's a very dynamic unfolding.

WIKIPEDIA

Coordinates: 37.774009°N 122.426075°W﻿ / ﻿

San Francisco Zen Center

San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC), is a network of affiliated Sōtō Zen practice and retreat centers in the San Francisco Bay area, comprising City Center or **Beginner's Mind Temple**, Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, and Green Gulch Farm Zen Center. The sangha was incorporated by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi and a group of his American students in 1962. Today SFZC is the largest Sōtō organization in the West.

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Friends of SFZC

Alumni - partial list

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San Francisco Zen Center



Religion

Affiliation Sōtō

Location

Location 300 Page St., San Francisco, CA 94102

Country United States

Architecture

Founder Shunryu Suzuki

Completed 1962

Website

www.sfzc.org (http://www.sfzc.org)

History

On May 23, 1959, Shunryu Suzuki (then age 55) came from Japan to San Francisco to serve as head priest of Sokoji—a Soto Zen temple then located at 1881 Bush Street in Japantown. He was joined by his wife Mitsu (also from Japan) in 1961. Sokoji—founded by Hosen Isobe in 1934—had been housed in a former Jewish synagogue that is now Kokoro Assisted Living. Upon Suzuki's arrival at Sokoji, the congregation was composed entirely of members of the Japanese-American population. Unlike his predecessors, Suzuki was a fluent speaker of English who actually wanted to come to the United States. Suzuki's arrival came at the tail end of the Beat movement and just prior to the social movements of the 1960s, both of which had major roots in San Francisco. Before long, Sokoji had non-Japanese Americans — mostly beatniks— coming to the temple to sit zazen with him in the morning. Soon these Westerners participated in regular services, and new non-Asian students came to outnumber the Japanese-American congregation. This change in demography caused a rift in the Sokoji community. The tension was alleviated when Suzuki's Western students began gathering for separate services, albeit still at Sokoji, in 1961. Some of these students began calling their group City Center, and they incorporated in 1962 as the San Francisco Zen Center.^{[1][2][3][4][5]}

The number of practitioners at SFZC grew rapidly in the mid-sixties. Within a couple of years, Suzuki considered founding a monastery to host more intensive practice for those students who were interested. In 1966, Suzuki and Baker scouted Tassajara Hot Springs, located in Los Padres National Forest behind Big Sur, as a possible location for the envisioned monastic center. After a major fundraising effort led by Baker, Zen Center purchased the land—which contained a rundown resort and mineral springs in 1967. Tassajara Zen Mountain Center ("Zen Mind Temple" or *Zenshinji*) was the first Zen Buddhist monastery built in the United States, and the first in the world to allow co-ed practice.

1967 also saw the arrival of Kobun Chino Otagawa of Eiheiji, who served as assistant to Suzuki. Kobun was resident teacher at the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center until 1970. Around 1970, he began sitting regularly with a group in Santa Cruz that went on to form the Santa Cruz Zen Center. In 1971, he became resident priest at Haiku Zen Center, a practice center in Los Altos where Suzuki-roshi had been giving lectures, and soon after the sangha there grew and changed its name to Bodhi. He served as Abbot there until 1978, moving the group to Jikoji in Los Gatos, California in 1979.^{[5][6][7][8]}



Kobun Chino Otagawa

Another assistant priest at SFZC was Dainin Katagiri-roshi, who served there from 1969 to 1971. Katagiri would go on to establish his own practice center—the Minnesota Zen Center—in 1972 in Minneapolis.^[5]

In 1969, Sokoji's board of directors asked Suzuki to resign his position as the temple's priest, asserting that he was spending more time with his Western students than the Japanese-American congregation. Months later Suzuki—with the help of his American students—purchased the current (and

larger) City Center building, located on 300 Page Street.^[9]



Green Dragon Temple at Green Gulch Farm

In 1970, Suzuki gave Dharma transmission to Richard Baker, his only American Dharma Heir and chosen successor at SFZC. Suzuki planned to give transmission to Bill Kwong but died before his completion. Kwong's transmission was later completed by Suzuki's son, Hoitsu.^{[1][10][11]}

Suzuki died of cancer on December 4, 1971. He was 67 years old. Despite having only had 12 years in the United States, Suzuki had gone a long way toward establishing Soto Zen in America. His death came shortly after the publication of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, a collection of lectures translated into numerous languages considered a classic of contemporary Zen literature.

Suzuki had asked Baker to locate a farm in the area for entire families to live a Buddhist life while working together. Green Gulch Farm ("Green Dragon Temple", or *Soryuji*), located in Sausalito, California in a valley on the Pacific Ocean, was acquired by SFZC in 1972. The land was purchased from one of the founders of Polaroid, George Wheelwright. Despite hesitance of some members of SFZC due to the size of 80 acres (320,000 m²), Baker felt that acquiring Green Gulch Farm was very important for Buddhism in America. Members soon raised funds for a zendo to be built there, and over time the farm transformed into a monastery and retreat center for residents and guests with an organic farm, flower gardens, a teahouse and a plant nursery.^{[10][12][13][14]}

In 1976, SFZC purchased the Gallo Pastry Company to found the Tassajara Bakery, which became popular before being sold to the company Just Desserts in 1992. The bakery was closed altogether in 1999. Tassajara Bakery was a Zen Center venture promoted by Richard Baker as an extension of the baking practices at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. Tassajara baked bread for student and guest consumption since 1967, and Edward Espe Brown's *Tassajara Bread Book*, demonstrated consumer interest. The bakery supplied Greens Restaurant and some local grocers.^[15]



Edward Espe Brown

Greens Restaurant, opened in 1979 in Fort Mason of San Francisco, was another business venture by SFZC under the influence of Baker. A pioneer of gourmet vegetarian cuisine in America, the restaurant's first chefs were Edward Espe Brown and Deborah Madison. The duo published a book of recipes in 1987 titled *The Greens Cookbook*. Throughout the 1980s Greens, which obtained produce from Green Gulch Farm, was one of the most popular restaurants in San Francisco.



Green Gulch tea garden

The center received significant media coverage concerning the 1984 resignation of then abbot Zentatsu Richard Baker, who was ousted after it was alleged that he had been having an affair with the wife of a prominent Zen Center member. In the wake of Baker's resignation, SFZC transitioned to a democratically elected leadership model until in 2010 there was a new introduction of a predesignated slated of board members.

Additional businesses run by SFZC were the Alaya Stitchery storefront, which made zafus, zabutons and clothing, and Green Gulch Grocery, which sold produce from Green Gulch Farm. Neither business is operative today.^{[5][15][16][17][18]}

SFZC today

In 2000 Jiko Linda Cutts was appointed Abbess, having received Dharma transmission from Tenshin Reb Anderson in 1996. In 2003 Paul Haller, who received transmission from Sojun Mel Weitsman in 1993, was installed as co-abbot with her. In 1987 SFZC started the Zen Hospice Project, a volunteer hospice program run out of a guest house on Page Street with five residential beds. Zen Hospice Project also continues to train and coordinate volunteers who provide non sectarian, non-medical care to residents of the hospice and palliative care ward at Laguna Honda Hospital, a skilled nursing facility operated by the City and County of San Francisco. The volunteer project's founding director was Frank Ostaseski, who served until 2004.^[19] Zen Hospice Project provides hospice care for individuals of any or no religion who are looking for a compassionate end to their life.^{[20][21][22]} Today SFZC is the largest Soto organization with a foothold in the West.^[1]

Tassajara Zen Mind Temple

Located atop a bumpy 10-mile (16 km) road which is difficult for some vehicles to climb, Tassajara offers shuttles to and from the retreat for those inclined to forgo trying to make the trek on their own. Visitors can enjoy the springs, go swimming or on hiking trips, and have the opportunity to arrange for practice with the community living at the monastery for a few days. The monastery is closed to outsiders from the months of September through April, then opens to the public by reservation from May through August - offering retreats, seminars, and workshops. Students that come to practice at the monastery from September through April must undergo the tradition known as tangaryo. They will sit for five days or longer in the zendo before they are formally admitted into the monastery—a physically daunting challenge.^{[1][14][23][24][25]}

Green Gulch Green Dragon Temple

The organic farm at Green Gulch supplies local restaurants and food suppliers and sells flowers, produce and herbs at Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in [San Francisco](#). Guests stay at the [Lindisfarne Guest House](#), a traditional [Japanese](#) building with a wood-burning stove as the heating source. Zen practice is not required to stay at Green Gulch, though guests are welcome to participate in [zazen](#) or any other activities. [Tenshin Reb Anderson-roshi](#), former abbot of City Zen Center, is senior [Dharma](#) teacher at Green Gulch—training priests and [laypeople](#), leading [sesshins](#), giving talks and conducting workshops while also living onsite.^{[26][27][28][29]}

Controversies

Baker resigns

In March 1983 Baker was accused of engaging in a sexual relationship with the wife of an influential sangha member. Although Baker claimed that his relationship was a love-affair which had not yet been consummated, the outcry surrounding the incident led to accusations of impropriety, including the admissions by several female members of the community that they had had affairs with Baker before or during his tenure as abbot.^[30] The community's sense of crisis sharpened when the woman's husband, one of SFZC's primary benefactors, threatened to hold the organization legally responsible for its abbot's apparent misconduct.^[31]

These revelations led Baker to resign as abbot in 1984.^[1] San Francisco Zen Center's web site now comments: "Although the circumstances leading to his resignation as abbot in 1984 were difficult and complex, in recent years, there has been increased contact; a renewal of friendship and dharma relations."^[32]

In the 1980s Baker ordained [Issan Dorsey](#) as a priest. This was likely prompted by a conversation between [Robert Baker Aitken](#) and Baker at San Francisco Zen Center concerning the question of Zen's availability to interested [gays](#), for Dorsey went on to become abbot of the [Hartford Street Zen Center](#).^[33]



Zentatsu Richard Baker



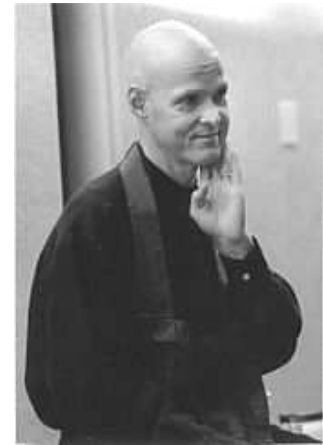
Dainin Katagiri

Following Baker's resignation, [Dainin Katagiri](#) led the community until 1985. When Katagiri left, [Tenshin Reb Anderson](#) assumed Abbotship of the Zen Center—serving until 1995. In the early 1990s the Board of Directors at the Zen Center created the "Ethical Principles and Procedures for Grievance and Reconciliation" for its members, for conflict resolution mediation guided by [Buddhist precepts](#). The Board of Directors at SFZC also began election of leaders. In 1995 [Zoketsu Norman Fischer](#) was installed as Abbot at SFZC, and in 1996 [Zenkai Blanche Hartman](#) was appointed as co-Abbot with him (becoming the first female Abbot in SFZC history).^{[1][14]}

Tenshin Reb Anderson's arrest

In 1983 [Tenshin Reb Anderson](#) received [shihō](#) from Zentatsu Richard Baker, becoming Baker's first Dharma heir (though Baker disputes this). From 1986 to 1988 he served as abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, and from 1988 to 1995 he served there as co-abbot with [Sojun Mel Weitsman](#). Anderson became entangled in an incident in 1987 that reached back to 1983— just after [Zentatsu Richard Baker](#) had resigned as abbot. While jogging through [Golden Gate](#)

Park, Anderson deviated from the path to urinate in some bushes. There he found the corpse of a man with a bullet wound to the head and a revolver nearby. Rather than report this to the police, Anderson returned to the body over several days to meditate over the corpse. On one visit he decided to take the revolver home with him.^[34] Upon his final visit he found the body no longer there, and a fellow priest in whom he had confided showed him a newspaper article covering the apparent suicide. Five years later (in 1988), roughly fifteen months after Anderson had become abbot of the San Francisco, Anderson was arrested for brandishing this same firearm in public. He reported being mugged at knifepoint by a man just a block away from the San Francisco Zen Center at 300 Page Street. Anderson remembered stowing the revolver away in the San Francisco Zen Center's garage and quickly retrieved it. He then drove after the alleged mugger and followed him into a housing project with the revolver (unloaded) in hand, being arrested minutes later by a police officer with his own gun pointed at him.^[35]



Tenshin Reb Anderson

This 1987 incident has had a damaging impact on Anderson's reputation as a teacher, since his arrest received national media coverage. The leadership of San Francisco Zen Center required Anderson to take a leave of absence from his position as abbot. After six months, he returned to his position. Shocked by the series of scandal involving its senior teachers, the organization decided to appoint two abbots, who would share the position at any one time. Zen priest Mel Weitsman served with Anderson as a co-abbot during the remainder of his term, and the tradition of two sitting Abbots continued for the next few decades.

Regarding this ordeal, Anderson wrote:

"On both a personal and a professional level, I am still dealing with the consequences of this episode. Some people felt that I had committed an irrevocable betrayal of trust, and have discounted me and my teaching ever since. Others were more forgiving, but their trust in me and my integrity was permanently shaken. Even newer students, who come to Zen Center and find out about these incidents, are sometimes confused and question whether I can be their teacher. These events are a helpful reminder—both to me and to others—of my vulnerability to arrogance and inflation. I see how my empowerment to protect and care for the Triple Treasure inflated my sense of personal authority, and thus detracted from and disparaged the Triple Treasure. This ancient twisted karma I now fully avow."^[35]

Friends of SFZC

SFZC is connected, in an unofficial capacity, to the following Zen Centers:^[1]

- Berkeley Zen Center
- Hartford Street Zen Center
- Kannon Do Zen Meditation Center
- Santa Cruz Zen Center
- Sonoma Mountain Zen Center
- Austin Zen Center
- San Antonio Zen Center
- Houston Zen Center
- Dharma Vow Zen Sangha, Santa Monica

Alumni - partial list

<u>Shunryu Suzuki</u> (founder)	<u>Zentatsu Richard Baker</u>	<u>Edward Espe Brown</u>	<u>Kobun Chino Otagawa</u>	<u>Taigen Dan Leighton</u>
<u>Jakusho Kwong</u>	<u>Sojun Mel Weitsman</u>	<u>Tenshin Reb Anderson</u>	<u>David Chadwick</u>	<u>Seirin Barbara Kohn</u>
<u>Ryushin Paul Haller</u>		<u>Philip Whalen</u>	<u>Jiko Linda Cutts</u>	<u>Zoketsu Norman Fischer</u>
<u>Dainin Katagiri</u>	<u>Josho Patricia Phelan</u>	<u>Zenkei Blanche Hartman</u>	<u>Hozan Alan Senauke</u>	
<u>Wu Bong (Jacob Perl)</u>	<u>Furyu Nancy Schroeder</u>	<u>Fenton Johnson</u>	<u>Yvonne Rand</u>	<u>Maylie Scott</u>
<u>Issan Dorsey</u>	<u>Angie Boissevain</u>	<u>Joanne Kyger</u>	<u>Dairyu Michael Wenger</u>	<u>Gil Fronsdal</u>

See also

- Buddhism in the United States
- Bush Street Temple
- Hartford Street Zen Center
- Kannon Do Zen Meditation Center
- Timeline of Zen Buddhism in the United States

Notes

1. Ford, 121-137, 725-726
2. Japantown Task Force, 100
3. Clarke, 44-46
4. Leighton, 208
5. Prebish, 14-15
6. "Kobun Chino Roshi" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120427200950/http://www.jikoji.org/kobun.html>). Jikoji.org. 2002-07-26. Archived from [the original \(http://www.jikoji.org/kobun.html\)](http://www.jikoji.org/kobun.html) on 2012-04-27. Retrieved 2012-10-14.
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9. Johnson, 53-55
10. Richmond, xiii, xiv
11. Suzuki, 9
12. Oda, 13-14
13. Graham, 5
14. Seager, 101-101
15. Sinton
16. Madden, 173

17. Sim Van der Ryn, 163
18. Fields, 268
19. "Metta : Frank Ostaseski Bio" (<http://www.mettainstitute.org/Fbio.html>). Mettainstitute.org. Retrieved 2012-10-14.
20. Dimidjian, 27
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23. Swan, 184
24. Owens, 271
25. Zen With a Difference
26. Pierce, 375
27. Joyce
28. Rose
29. "Senior Dharma Teacher Tenshin Reb Anderson - San Francisco Zen Center" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130131065318/http://www.sfzc.org/zc/display.asp?catid=3,76,107&pageid=96>). Sfzc.org. 2012-09-29. Archived from the original (<http://www.sfzc.org/zc/display.asp?catid=3,76,107&pageid=96>) on 2013-01-31. Retrieved 2012-10-14.
30. Schneider, David. *Street Zen* pp.138-140
31. Crews, Frederick C. *Follies of the Wise* pp. 283-284
32. "Lineage" (<http://www.sfzc.org/zc/display.asp?catid=1,5&pageid=426>). San Francisco Zen Center.
33. Prebish, 81
34. Being Upright; 187-189
35. Anderson, 187-189

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External links

- [Official website](http://www.sfzc.org/) (<http://www.sfzc.org/>)
 - [Zen Hospice Project](http://www.zenhospice.org/) (<http://www.zenhospice.org/>)
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