Wind Bell

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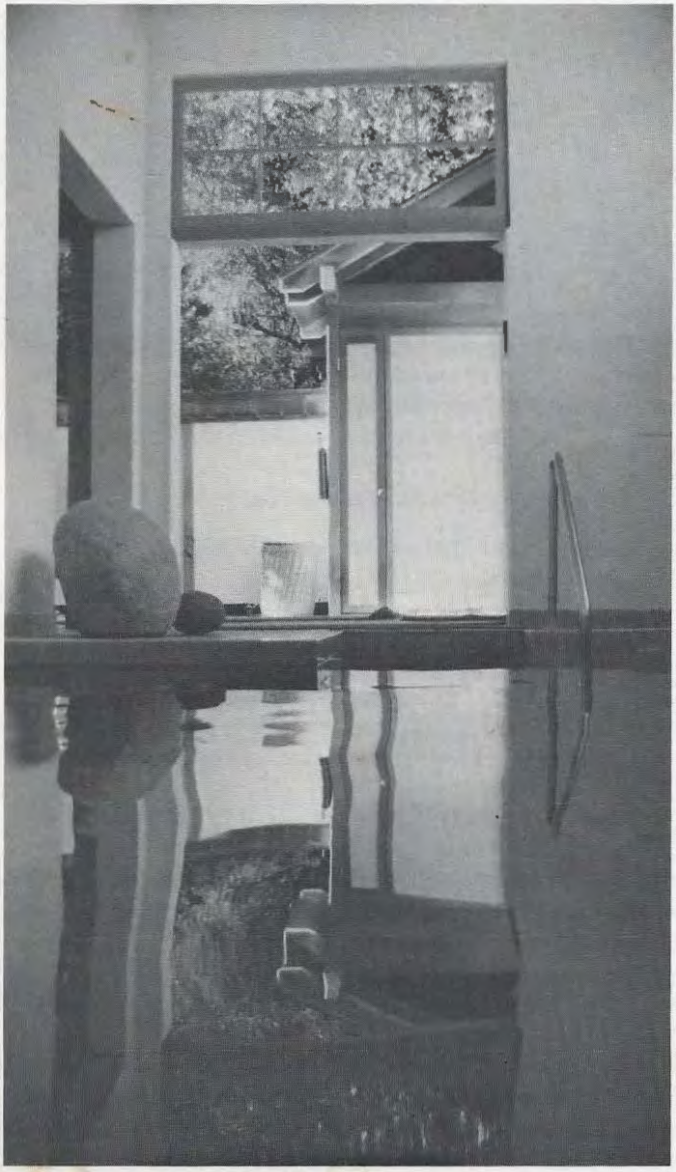

Cover photo: View from the women's plunge, Tassajara baths 1986–1993

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New Abbot Norman Fischer

We are pleased to announce that Norman Fischer, Green Gulch Tanto (head of practice) since 1988, has accepted the request of the council of elders to take the position of abbot beginning in 1995.

Norman has resigned as Tanto at Green Gulch in order to accept a job teaching English at Tamalpais High School for one year. He and his family will remain at Green Gulch. Norman has devoted himself wholeheartedly to the Zen Center sangha for many years, while at the same time preparing himself for work "outside" as a high school teacher. We wish him well in his teaching job and look forward to having him back with us in the new role of abbot.

A group of Tassajara residents and members of the deconstruction crew moved the entry roof from the women's side of the baths across the creek in one piece.

Tassajara Bathhouse Deconstruction

by Gene DeSmidt

Gene DeSmidt is a contractor, poet and musician. He has done several construction projects at Tassajara beginning in the mid-1970s.

It was with shock and disbelief that I responded to architect Helen Degenhardt's call from Tassajara. She said that the mountain directly behind the bathhouse had been determined to be "unstable" and "likely to let go" by a geotechnical engineer, a soil engineer and a geologist. The final four days of guest season had no hot springs baths available. The planned repairs on the steam rooms would be canceled. I spent the next few days wandering around in a daze and a little nauseous.

As I came back to my senses, I kept seeing visions of the construction of the bathhouse back in 1985. I pulled out the photo journal I kept during the project and started listing all the elements of the bathhouse that could be salvaged. As I did this, I also calculated the value of the materials and the

labor to put them together. All the white cedar roof rafters, the red cedar roof decking, the covered entries, the doors and windows—everything I could think of that could be reused.

I called Michael Wenger and asked him what he thought about relocating the bathhouse. I faxed to him a valuation sheet as well as an estimate of the cost of deconstructing the existing bathhouse. There was a strange energy coursing through me . . . I guess I felt there was no time to ponder the inevitable! Action now would be both therapeutic and perhaps the only option that made sense.

With uncharacteristic speed, Zen Center and Tassajara made the decision to deconstruct and relocate the bathhouse. On Friday, September 17, with myself, my crew, bathhouse architect Mui Ho, and Tassajara residents present, a closing ceremony was held at the bridge entry. Many people spoke of their individual memories of the bathhouse. We all chanted together. Then with hard hats and heavy hearts, we proceeded across the bridge and began the process.

The asphalt roofing shingles were pulled off. All the plywood shear panels were removed and saved. Next the red cedar roof decking was taken out intact. The white cedar rafters and ridge beams were unbolted, marked and paired. The entry roof at the women's side was removed in one piece down a ramp and carried across the river and over to the road by a group of twelve people. It served as a symbol to me of everyone working together to save the bathhouse and place it somewhere else.

My crew carefully broke out all the stucco around the doors and windows and removed each one completely intact. The wooden screens were dismantled and numbered. All the rail systems were unbolted and saved. Mirrors, clothes hooks, benches, shelves and anything else that could be used again was taken out. We were not sure whether we should relocate the troll that lives near the stone stairs!

On Sunday September 26, my wife Sharon and I left Tassajara in the afternoon. All that remained of the bathhouse were the desolate white walls with huge empty holes—like something reminiscent of an impressionist painting—sad and stark. Before we left, I walked over to where the yurt was being disassembled, and I could visualize the rails and roofs of the bathhouse being put together again in this new place. I recalled what Beclee Newcomer Wilson had said to me about disaster, "Undoing is a form of doing. When these things happen, one cannot not do something."

Just This Person

by Abbot Tenshin Anderson

I want to say a few words to encourage all of us to practice upright sitting. My intention to speak in this way comes from my faith and understanding that upright sitting is the way of entering the self-fulfilling awareness which all the awakened ancestors of our tradition have held to be the true path of peace and freedom for all living beings.

For me, upright sitting means for each of us to be thoroughly and completely ourselves. So that by fully acknowledging and expressing our limited individuality we totally transcend it. By sitting still in each moment of our life and becoming just ourselves, we may finally realize that we are not ourselves at all, but that in reality we are so deeply connected with each other and so completely supported by each other that in fact we are nothing other than all living beings. Realizing this is realizing Buddha's mind because Buddha's mind is the mind of all sentient beings. In such a way we are awakened from our fundamental human delusion that we are separate from each other and are free from all the misery which is born of this delusion.

> Just before leaving, Good Servant (Tung-shan Liang-Chieh) asked, "If after many years, someone should ask if I am able to portray the Master's likeness, how should I respond?"
>
> After remaining quiet for a while, Cloudy Cliff (Yün-yen T'an-sheng) said, "Just this person."

Good Servant was lost in thought. Cloudy Cliff said, "Good Servant, having assumed the burden of this Great Matter, you must be very cautious."

Good Servant remained dubious about what Cloudy Cliff had said. Later, as he was crossing a river, he saw his reflected image and experienced a great awakening to the meaning of the previous exchange. He composed the following gatha:

Earnestly avoid seeking outside,
Lest it recede far from your self.
Today I am walking alone,
Yet everywhere I meet him.
He is now no other than myself,
But I am not now he.
It must be understood in this way
In order to merge with Suchness.

When we wholeheartedly practice the teaching of "just this person," all beings come forth to meet us, and we realize that they are "now no other than myself," no matter what their form in terms of race, gender, species, and so on.

The way of freedom from self delusion comes forth from the thorough acknowledgment of such delusion. Our compassionate ancestors studied, understood and taught completely how self-delusion arises and how it is the source of all our misery. Buddhas are those who deeply enter into learning about self-delusion and are greatly awakened in the midst of studying delusion. We call the gate to this liberating study of the self, "upright sitting."

Our great ancestor Thoreau says in *Walden*: "You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods, that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns."

By sitting still we enter into the real study of the self. By just sitting we give up mediating our experience and preparing ourselves for it. Thus the self that comes to us through upright sitting is not a self we choose to study, not the self we expect to study, but the self that "may exhibit itself to us by turns" when we just sit. It is a fresh, unexpected, troublesome, difficult, immediate self. This is the self that's fruitful to study, because when the self which appears is fresh and immediate and not what we expect, we are shocked out of our numb complacency and into total engagement with it.

I find that the more troubled I am by an event, the more immediate it is; and the more immediate, the more engaging. So I'm interested in what's fresh and immediate for people, and lately, as a way of finding what's most im-

mediate I've been asking people, "What is bothering you most?" One person answered that she has been bothered by her swallowing while she is sitting in the zendo. It's not that she couldn't swallow, but rather, that she was doing so often and noisily. She was troubled and worried that her swallowing might be bothering her neighbors. As she continued to sit and watch her breathing and swallowing and worrying, she noticed something else. She noticed that the reason she was worried about bothering others was that she was afraid they would dislike her for the noises she was making. She was bothered by a fear that she would be disliked. After telling me about all this, she said, "Is this kinda like the right direction?"

I was very happy to hear her story of upright sitting and said, "I don't think it's right or wrong but I do think it's very good that through your sitting you are becoming more engaged with yourself." This self was not the self she might have chosen to study, but an unexpected self which she witnessed being born in the advent of swallowing, worrying, and fear.

At first she thought she was concerned about bothering or harming others, but sitting and looking more deeply, things turned around and she saw that

On the last day of spring sesshin, this Great Blue Heron paid a shocking visit to the City Center and ate scores of goldfish from the courtyard fountain—while everyone was busy participating in a shosan ceremony with Abbot Sojun Weitsman.

she was worried about others harming her. She thought she was concerned about others, but realized that she was really concerned about herself.

In our tradition there are innumerable stories like this which show that when we sincerely practice the ancestor's simple instruction of "just this person," we will see how completely contradictory an independent self is, and the more we see how self-contradictory the self is, the more we realize who we really are and the more we are fulfilled. The more fully we can affirm the contradictory nature of ourselves the more fully we can affirm the contradictions in our life. And if we can fully affirm these contradictions, we will be able to affirm our death. Thus, we will have the courage to just sit and be our self beyond our idea of our self—our self in complete identity with what it is not—namely, all living beings. This process culminates in our realizing that we are in a paradoxical way completely identical with the other, thus freeing us from our basic delusion of a separate self.

Referring to this awakening from the nightmare of separate existence, the old Buddha, Yunmen said, "On South Mountain clouds rise, on North Mountain rain falls."

Here is one more story of sitting upright. When George Washington Carver was a little boy, he lived in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Missouri. On a certain piece of remote and unused land he created his own little garden. From discarded material he built a secret greenhouse far back in the woods. When asked what he was doing out in the woods, he said, "I go to my garden hospital and take care of many sick plants." He brought sick plants to his green house and took care of them and they became well; they became healthy. He knew how to heal the plants. The ladies in his neighborhood heard about him and asked if he would take care of their sick house plants. He did. He took care of them and then he returned them when they were healthy again. They asked him, "Little boy, how do you know how, where did you learn how to heal these plants?" Little George said, "All the little flowers talk to me and so do the hundreds of living things. I learn what I know by watching and loving everything."

"Watching and loving everything" was his way of upright sitting. This was his gate into the true study of self. He realized himself through his intimacy with the plants, through his listening to the flowers. Watching and loving them was his fulfillment. For him, the plants were not something external. They were the flowering of his genius, and by fulfilling him they were healed.

Sitting upright with innumerable living things, we naturally enter the self-fulfilling awareness of Buddha, the awareness which liberates and heals all living beings.

Enlightening the Shadow Demon, Nourishing the Hungry Ghost: The Segaki Ceremony

by Shosan Victoria Austin

Zen practitioners often speak of saving all beings. For many of us, the Segaki Ceremony creates a powerful experience of the field of all beings and what we mean by saving them. We do this by remembering and nourishing the unseen part of our lives. We pay particular attention to beings in the less fortunate realms of existence.

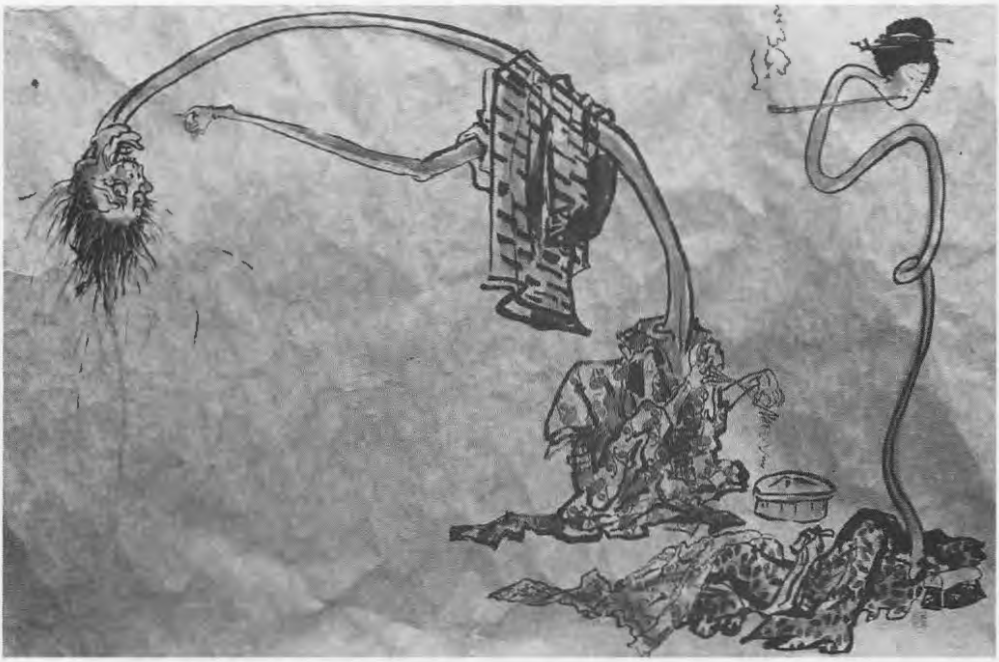
In Japanese, the word *segaki* means "feeding the hungry ghosts." In traditional Buddhist cosmology there are six realms of existence. Denizens of the three lower realms—hell, animals, hungry ghosts—are too tortured, fearful, or craving to turn to the Dharma in their suffering. Beings of the two uppermost realms—jealous gods and gods—are too self-righteous or blissfully self-absorbed to care about practice. Only in the human realm can one practice and realize the Way. The hungry ghost, or *gaki*, has a scrawny neck and a large belly—it has huge desires but is unable to take in nourishment.

In *Still Point*, Kyogen Carlson described how Buddha recognized the plight of a hungry ghost:

> The festival is said to have begun when Moggallana, a disciple of the Buddha, was plagued by dreams of his recently departed mother suffering in a world in which she could neither eat nor drink. Food would turn to fire, and water would turn to blood or pus whenever it touched her mouth. Moggallana went to the Buddha and told him of his dreams . . .The Buddha explained that Moggallana was seeing the suffering of his mother in the world of the . . . hungry ghosts . . .
>
> Mogallana's dreams were due to his deep connection with his mother, and the Buddha's advice to him was that he make an offering to her of whatever food she could most easily accept and digest. This was to be done in a ceremony, dedicated in her name, at the time when the monks conducted their regular gathering to confess their transgressions. [1]

Unless we are haunted by dreams about a relative, it is easy to think of hungry ghosts as a legend, an abstract idea, not us. But in fact, many of us, or people around us, are deeply hungry for nourishment. We all know times when we are unable to find sustenance in daily life.

In *Touching Peace*, Thich Nhat Hanh talks about the hungry ghost state as arising from a person's fundamental rootlessness or unconnectedness. The



Hungry ghosts

everyday positive, nourishing aspects of the world are unavailable; one is unable to experience the beauty of human life. In its widest sense, sangha building is our practice of rooting our lives in each other. We include each other's pain and build relationships that allow us to find nourishment in the life we share with all beings. The *se* of *segaki* means the full range of nourishment, from regular food to the sustenance of Dharma.

Hungry ghosts are also people who have died without completing their karma. They have intentions, but do not have bodies with which to fulfill their intentions. In the Segaki Ceremony we recognize this condition and, because we have human existence, we can do something about it. Speaking to a group of priests, Abbot Tenshin Anderson once said, "Another kind of ghost is all karma of body, speech, and mind that has not been done with full presence. If I die without having recognized it, that's maybe a ghost for other people, and I can't do anything to complete it. The ceremony is to release the ghosts, to help them burn up and complete their process. This purifies us and the temple."

At Zen Center, we started to do the ceremony at Kobun Chino Roshi's suggestion. He thought it would be helpful to us to have a deeper relationship with the negative aspects of our lives. Speaking to Rick Levine, Chino Roshi said the Segaki ceremony "makes a statement about . . .how to deal with negative things, negative happenings, negative parts of phenomena . . . For

it is a kind of reminding ceremony, expanding your awakening to the darkness . . . Awareness is expanded to existence which is unseen, unknown, unthinked . . . Negative is another positive side. Awareness is already round and pure. [We can] expand our practice of compassion, in space as well as time . . . perhaps [with] this ceremony."[2]

In the ceremony we do at Zen Center, we remember people who have died in the past year. The head of the meditation hall keeps the name cards of all the memorial services and funerals at Zen Center each year. Before the ceremony, he or she hands out cards so community members can add names of people they want included. The ceremony is designed to invite them, fully acknowledge their lives, and fulfill any unfinished business or need. Although we particularly emphasize hungry ghosts, the intention of the ceremony is to acknowledge and fulfill all beings, great and small.

Our cultural context for Segaki is both similar to and different from the context in Japan. In Asia, venerating ancestors is an everyday part of life. This traditionally includes food offerings and naming the dead. Many cultural strains in American society have different customs in relation to the dead, but everyone celebrates a secularized version of Halloween, which was originally a religious holiday to include all souls. Halloween is a time when the dead walk the earth; we offer candy to children costumed as ghosts and skeletons. At Zen Center, as in Japan, the whole community gathers to perform Segaki. People of all ages and opinions can come together to nourish those who need to be remembered.

For Segaki, we decorate the Buddha Hall with pictures of ghosts and demons, and the dining room with skeletons and jack-o-lanterns. We don't use the regular altar because the grandeur of the images might intimidate beings in the lower realms of existence. Instead, we make an inviting table at the rear of the hall and fill it with good food and water on attractive dishes. We hang banners around the special altar to make it inviting, and to dispel fear and doubt. Many people come in masks or costumes, both children and adults. The atmosphere and masking remove inhibitions and allow parts of us to be present that would not normally come to the Buddha Hall.

After the participants have entered the Buddha Hall, a procession winds its way down from the Founder's Hall. Some of the people in the procession might be in costume, others dressed in meditation clothes. The *Doshi* (presiding priest) carries a staff with metal rings that jangle with every step.

Once the procession enters the Buddha Hall, everyone makes a low, spooky sound that swells to a roar, and then dies away. People use unusual instruments, including a Tibetan horn, a conch shell, party noisemakers, drums and flutes. The sound is meant to call all the spirits in the world, beings who might otherwise be afraid to come. The feeling is noisy and eerie, but calm

and present. We repeat the call three times, to make sure that all the spirits are near.

The Doshi walks slowly towards the special altar, making a statement: "Welcome, hungry ghosts. Be at ease, the vaguely known, the unconscious and unknown. Receive the best food. Welcome. Be safe." This first statement is a gentle invitation to turn the spirits inward and to lead us down, going toward the shadow. The Doshi offers incense at the special altar and recites a chant of homage to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in the ten directions. We also call on our original teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha; the great reliever of suffering Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva; and the revealer of the teaching, Ananda. This chant invokes the world of practice and awakening as the context in which it is possible for hungry ghosts to be held and nourished.

Then we chant the preface to the *Kan Ro Mon*, or "Gate of Sweet Dew." "Sweet dew" is *amrta* or nectar, the elixir of life. So Gate of Sweet Dew means the actual opening of the possibility of nourishment, even for the part of being that usually lacks the capacity to be fed. The preface describes the intention for all the actions of the ceremony:

> Giving rise to the Bodhi mind we respectfully hold one bowl of pure food. We offer it to all the hungry ghosts in all ten directions extending to the end of vast emptiness and encompassing every minute particle of the Dharma Realm. We invite all deceased ances-

Ready for trick-or-treating through the Page St. neighborhood

tors, the spirits of mountains, rivers, and earth, and all the demons of untamed lands to come and assemble here.

Now with compassion and empathy we offer each of you food. We sincerely hope that each and every one of you will receive our offerings, turn it over, and pass it on to all Buddhas, arhats, and sentient beings throughout the realm of vast emptiness. May you and all sentient beings together be fully satisfied. Again, we hope your bodies will be conveyed by these offerings and mantrams so that you may let go of all suffering, attain liberation, be born in heaven, receive joy, and play freely in the pure lands of the ten directions.

We support you in producing the awakened mind, practicing the Way of Bodhi, moment by moment becoming Buddha without regressing. May those who have previously attained the Way vow to realize the other shore together with all other beings.

Again, we hope you and everyone day and night without end will sustain and protect us so that our vows will be fulfilled. Thus we offer this food to you. We convert and dedicate the merit of this offering to all sentient beings in the Dharma Realm so that they may all receive it equally. With all beings, equally holding this benefit we turn it over and dedicate it to the unsurpassed Bodhi and all the liberating insights. We hope for your swift attainment of Buddhahood free from unfortunate retribution. May all conscious life of the Dharma Realm be conveyed in this manner to accomplish quickly the Buddhas' Way.

In the preface, over and over we emphasize that all beings are equally the source and the receivers of Dharma nourishment. But how does this equality occur? Usually, we do not see beings as equal. We make distinction between demons and Buddhas. The vehicle for equality in giving and receiving the Dharma is mutual compassion and empathy. Demons awake us to our vow to practice and realize together with all beings, and Buddhas encourage us to enter the world of awakening.

The *Kan Ro Mon* itself, which we chant next, acknowledges the Buddhas of all different abilities, colors and manifestations. We call them with yogic sounds that themselves invoke the qualities of different types of awakening in us. The chant calls the various Buddhas by epithets specifically for this ceremony, rather than their usual names. We invoke the qualities of these Buddhas to protect the ceremony and allow the unfinished, negative karma to be transformed to nourishment. Abbot Tenshin Anderson taught that this chant is offered in the context of the Bodhisattva vow, and of everyone's inmost request to release suffering through perfect wisdom and compassion. It's not just to remember the ghosts, but to encourage their spirit, or this

karma, to be included in practicing the Way. Nothing is destroyed, but it can be completed. During the *Kan Ro Mon*, the Doshi says the mantras of the Buddhas and makes offerings of food and water to the ghosts, while praying that all the hungry and thirsty will be satisfied. The chant encompasses the entire range of experience, from profound suffering to profound samadhi. The Doshi says mantras that acknowledge food and water as the Dharma, that open the throats of the hungry ghosts, and that invite the spirits to return from whence they came, now satisfied.

After the *Kan Ro Mon*, everyone recites the *Dai Hi Shin Dharani*, or Great Compassionate Heart Yogic Sound. This is a transliteration of a Sanskrit chant that we usually recite at funerals and memorial services. The sounds carry a yogic teaching of opening oneself and all beings in compassion. During the chant, there are several incense offerings for the benefit of any unfinished karma, any un-nourished spirit, that might remain.

In the final dedication the chant leader says the names that people have asked to be remembered "and for boundless wandering beings, thirsting in a swirling daze for the material and Dharma worlds. All these beings, real and unreal, that suffer in myriad forms today, have been brought together, and their deep desires completely satisfied. Freed from the burdens of conscious and unconscious karma, the light and dark worlds become the seeds of wisdom and perfect enlightenment. May this great being be one with our compassionate Mind."

After three bows, the procession slowly leaves. Everyone is invited to individually offer incense.

After the ceremony we have a big Halloween dinner. Many people come in costume, so they can be hosts or guests for the trick-or-treating to come.

The process of the ceremony—setting a protected space, inviting the shadow in a ceremonial space in which it can be safely held, and meeting it with everyday kindness through our Bodhisattva vow—is an enactment of our deepest compassion. In practice we have to be able to enter hell for the benefit of a suffering being, whether it's ourselves or someone else. We have to be able to be moved and have our practice continue. Sometimes we just suffer. The end of suffering is not to banish our negativity; then it becomes a hungry ghost and haunts us. The deepest compassion is to feed the hungry and nourish the unsatisfied in body, speech, and mind, just when an opportunity presents itself. At Segaki, we activate the mind that can do this, and follow it with a rousing celebration of haunting and freedom, shadow and light.

[1] *Still Point*, Dharma Rain Zen Center, October, 1988

[2] Unpublished notes by Arnie Kotler, from a tape of Kobun Chino Roshi speaking with Rick Levine, 1974.

Chews Ridge Ceremony

by Teah Strozer

Zen Mountain Center Director Teah Strozer attended a meeting of the Four Winds Council , which includes the New Camaldoli Catholic Hermitage, the Esalen Institute, the Native American Esselen tribe's "Window to the West," and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. All four centers are located in or near the Ventana wilderness and the Los Padres National Forest. The Navy has proposed to house a star-gazing inteferometer on the peak of Chew's Ridge Mountain. The Navy needs this technical instrument to help ships navigate better on the sea. It would no doubt bring further development to the area. The council met with representatives from the US Navy and the US Forest Service at the Esselen tribe's local ceremonial grounds.

We gathered in the Round House, a covered amphitheater dug into the ground. We sat on dirt benches molded out of earthen walls. Four huge tree trunks placed in a square in the center held up wooden beams, like an earthen tee-pee, the center hole open to the sky. Under the open sky in the middle of the four huge timbers was a large ceremonial fire. There we all sat and waited.

Tommy Little Bear, Chief of the Esselen tribe, welcomed and purified us all with sage incense. He then reached for the Two-Faced-Talking-Stick, one side a smiling mask, painted white, with feathers and ribbons, the other side a sorrowful face, painted black with strips of leather and beads. He explained that whoever was holding the Talking Stick could speak uninterruptedly and be heard. There were many speeches that day, all of them heart-felt expressions, asking to leave the mountain untouched. Each speaker was interesting, but the room got smoky from the fire and the day was getting long. I was wondering if anything being said was having any effect.

Off and on during the talking I noticed an elderly Native American man and his son slowly and methodically putting on their tribal dress. Quietly the father adjusted the son's feathered headdress. The son helped his father with the belt and skirt. Later, when I looked across the room, they had removed their shirts to put on arm bracelets and paint. Meanwhile, the Talking Stick was making its way around the room. I became increasingly interested in what they might have to say, but I was tired and uncomfortable in the smoky room and ready to take a break.

Then, the father reached out his hand and took the Talking Stick. He turned and looked long at his son who by then was fully dressed, painted, and sitting quietly, holding ceremonial objects in his hands as they rested on his knees. The father turned and walked slowly to the fire, looked at the fire, and then looked at each person in the circle. There he stood in his native dress, a feather fan in one hand, the Talking Stick in the other, and said, clearly and distinctly, "I think all white people should be killed." He had our attention. Then he shared with us a dream that all white people were put on ships and sent back to Europe, their land taken from them, the animals killed, and sickness and death spread through their people. He talked about how life was for his ancestors before white people came with their guns and greed. He said that everybody thinks the first atomic bomb fell on the Japanese, but in reality it fell on the Native Americans who were down wind in New Mexico. Their land was poisoned. They suffer even now from high rates of cancer and illness.

He wanted us to understand how much he hated what had been done, how hard he struggled trying to understand the white culture's insatiable need to control and subdue the land his ancestors lived with in harmony, and to know that this selfishness continues. The suffering of his people, the desecration of the land, was getting difficult to listen to. But as he spoke, his voice—sometimes quiet and timid, sometimes loud and strong—was magnetic. His comportment was confident, his stance proud as he walked round and round the fire chanting this litany of sorrow and rage. He was taking us on a tour of his own psyche, and we felt every emotional rise and fall. He suggested that there is a pattern whereby the whites in power simply take whatever they want, and that protesting probably wouldn't do any good.

But he also said he still believed that we were all one people, that we needed to listen to each other and the Great Spirit. In a humble way he asked the Great Spirit if he could offer his pain and the pain of his people, the pain of all people, the pain of all living beings, in a prayer that we could hear each other, and learn from the earth how to live in harmony.

Then he asked his son to come to his side and he asked another man who had a drum to stand behind him. The drum began a steady, slow, hypnotic beat, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, like the background beating of my own heart. It sent shivers throughout my body: "What is happening?" As the drum beat the father explained that he was going to chant a song expressing an offering and a prayer. As the drum continued, the father turned toward the fire, held his arm up to the heavens and began to chant. As he did this, the son unwrapped some objects from a ceremonial pouch. One I could clearly see; it was a scalpel. With the utmost sensitivity and care, he began to cut a piece of flesh from his father's arm, near the shoulder. The father never missed a word of the chant as his son cut into him. I felt the only way to stay in the room was to witness what was happening. I made myself watch as the blood ran down his arm. Time stopped. I wanted this to be over. It hurt to watch. Halfway through the cutting the father looked at the son with a calm and completely open face. The son looked up into his father's eyes. At that moment it seemed to me that I could see an ancient, unbroken human lineage, as far back as could be imagined. I saw a man pass on to his son the truth of the suffering of this life, and teach that one could stand there in that pain—still and open, with perfect equanimity and grace. When the son finally finished, I felt limp, clear, and empty, both physically and emotionally. At that moment I would have given them anything.

The father motioned for the son to sit down and the drum to stop. He began again to circle the fire, this time letting his blood drip into it as he began to pray. He prayed for the well-being of all of us, for the earth, trees, grass, and pebbles. He prayed for understanding of the interconnectedness of everything, and for the return of balance. As he gave his flesh to the fire, he left us feeling that the fulfillment of such a prayer was possible. When he stopped, the room was silent and still.

I'm sure the buildings the Navy wants to build on top of Chew's Ridge would not be built if the vote had been taken right then. But I could see as I looked around the room that people were already putting themselves together. They were insulating themselves from the pain and reason returned. It was only a small development on top of a mountain, not of any real importance to anyone. The connection we felt in the room dissipated, the suffering we witnessed wasn't really our own.

As of August 15, the money for the Navy project has been taken out of the budget 'til at least 1997, if then.

Photo on facing page:
Bill Porter (second from left) and Steven Johnson (third from left), photographer for the book, search for hermits in the Chungnan Mountains with a local guide (left) and Buddhist monk K'uan-ming (right).

Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits by Bill Porter

A book review by Michael Wenger

> Q: What sutras do you study?
> Kuo-shan: I can't read. I never went to school. I just meditate.
> Q: Why do you live so far away from people?
> Kuo-shan: I'm a monk. I've seen through the world of red dust. As long as I have enough to eat, I stay on the mountain. I live by myself. When I run out of food, I go down. That's why I'm going to the village today. I'm out of provisions.

This is an interchange between Taoist master Kuo-shan and Bill Porter, the author of *Road to Heaven* (Mercury House), who translates under the name Red Pine. The book chronicles Bill Porter's search to discover if the hermit tradition survives in China today. He asked in the cities and was assured there were no longer hermits. He was told the same in the towns. In the small mountain villages, however, they were known. These hermits, both Taoist and Buddhist, may meet once a week or go to town once a month to trade or purchase what they need. Rather than being solemn and shunning human contact, Porter finds them friendly and hospitable, ready to offer a cup of tea to a stranger. Some hermits had been persecuted and suffered during the Cultural Revolution. Others had not and had never heard of Mao Zedong.

The hermit sage has always played a respected role in Chinese culture—seen as the carrier of culture rather than someone on the extreme margins of society. This is an illuminating book about China today as well as about those engaged in solitary mountain practice, with excellent photos by Steven Johnson.

The following mondo took place between Porter and Yang, a Taoist hermit.

Q: What difference do you see between Buddhism and Taoism in terms of practice?
Yang: Buddhists and Taoists walk the same path. They just dream different dreams. Essentially Buddhism and Taoism are the same. Their sacred texts talk about the same things. It's just that Taoism emphasizes life, and Buddhism emphasizes nature. But people who truly cultivate, cultivate both. In terms of actual practice, Buddhism is somewhat better than Taoism. Even though Taoists talk about cultivating the mind, they often have a harder time controlling their emotions. They have a harder time suppressing feelings of pride. But to cultivate either of them successfully is very hard.
Q: Has Taoism changed in recent decades?
Yang: The Tao never changes. What we eat and wear has changed, but the Tao hasn't changed. There have been advances in science and society, but so what? We're eating better now, but it's the same old Lao-tzu.

Going Home

by Jeffrey Schneider

Where is my final destination?
Foreign land
bell echoing
last evening of the year
—Mitsu Suzuki

In October of this year Mitsu Suzuki Sensei, tea teacher, haiku poet, widow of Zen Center's founder Suzuki Roshi, will return to her native Japan after living in this country since 1961. She has been a resident at Page Street since Zen Center acquired the building in 1969.

To say that she will be missed is a gross understatement. For those of us who have had the privilege to know her over the years, it will be like saying good-bye to a favorite grandmother. Okusan has been, in many ways, the guiding spirit of Zen Center—always there, doing her exercises on the roof (or, in rainy weather, in the second floor hallway), arranging flowers in the kaisando or coming into the kitchen for a jar of millet to feed the birds. And teaching, gently and quietly civilizing the barbarians.

Two or three years ago, I was working in the front office at City Center, tearing open the morning's mail when I became aware of Suzuki Sensei standing near me. She handed me the letter opener.

"No, Jeff-san. Not Suzuki Roshi's way. This [the letter opener] is Suzuki Roshi's way. Your way, letter not happy. Jeff-san not happy."

I can't say that I always remember to use the letter opener; but I know that I will never forget Mrs. Suzuki, who is the best teacher of Zen I have been lucky enough to know.

The spring 1991 issue of Wind Bell *was devoted to Mrs. Suzuki on the occasion of her 77th birthday.*

69-09-08

The Only Desire That is Complete is Buddha's Desire

by Suzuki Roshi

Our way is not asceticism. If you read our precepts literally, it looks like there is no difference, but what we mean is completely different. Tonight I want to talk about this difference. There must be some reason why so many people come to Zen Center to practice Zen and to study Zen.

Our civilization has already come to a dead end. You realize you cannot go any further, and you may come to Zen Center to find out some way to go. The foundation of our culture is individualism; individualism is based on the idea of self. From the time of the Renaissance we awoke our human nature, and we started to put emphasis on our human nature rather than "divine" nature or "holy" nature. We wanted to express our human nature as much as possible. So holy nature or Buddha nature was replaced with human nature. This is the starting point of our mistake. Whatever the thought may be: communism, capitalism, or individualism, these thoughts are based on individual right or individual power—supremacy of the individual.

For instance, capitalism seeks freedom of desire and communism puts emphasis on equality. Equality and freedom are not compatible. You want to

Suzuki Roshi at Tassajara

Zen Center friend Jakusho Bill Kwong, third from left, attended a Zen teachers' meeting with the Dalai Lama at Dharamsala last spring.

extend your desire as much as you can. If you want to extend your desire freely, limitlessly, you cannot divide things equally. We tell ourselves, "We should be free to extend our desire, possess things as much as we can, if we don't disturb people." But if you have too much when others do not have so much, you don't feel so good. Those ideas are not compatible.

This kind of individualism, freedom of desire, and equality of our rights are incompatible because our thought is based on a self-centered idea. When we say "equality," equality means equality of our human power. When we say "desire," "limitless desire," "freedom of desire," it means my freedom or someone's freedom. There is no idea of a holy being or Buddha or God. There is no idea which will give some background, give an appropriate position to equality, desire, and freedom. To accommodate these thoughts without difficulty, it is necessary for us to postulate some big, fundamental idea of non-selfish desire or limitless boundary of material or place, which is not just material or spiritual. Something beyond material and spiritual is necessary. As long as our life is controlled by or based on a selfish idea, it is not possible for every thought to find its own place without them fighting each other. So there is no wonder why we have difficulty in our lives, when our life is based on just a superficial idea of self or the individual.

Asceticism before Buddhism put emphasis on a future good life—to be born in some place where they have lots of enjoyment or a more perfect world. That is a kind of extension of selfish practice. In Buddhism our motivation is not based on selfish desire. The purpose of our practice is to control our desire so that our desires find their own place. When you study Buddhism, you have a lot of selfish ideas: "I study. I must find out what it is." The reason you have a teacher is to learn the truth in its pure form, without extending selfish practice or self-centered understanding. You think there is nothing wrong in extending your desires. That is the mistake. Something matters; something is wrong. There is something wrong if you just extend your desire without thinking or without reflecting or without observing.

When I say you should restrict your desire, I mean you should not extend your desire in its limited sense. For instance, "This is my desire."—you limit the nature of desire already. Without limitation means to have a wider understanding of desire which you can extend forever. The only desire that is complete is Buddha's desire. We should understand this. The only perfect desire belongs to Buddha—the perfect one, which includes everything. Whatever he does is all right, because he is just one whole being. For him there is no friend or enemy. What exists is Buddha himself.

We say you should practice zazen without a gaining idea—gaining idea is based on selfish idea. When you just sit because that is Buddha's way, *only* because that is Buddha's way, you have not much selfish idea in your practice. When you eliminate that selfish idea from your practice, that is actually non-selfish practice, the true way of practicing truth.

In the first chapter of Shobogenzo, Dogen Zenji refers to an interesting story. There was a priest called Gensoku, who was taking care of the temple of Hogen Zenji. He thought he understood Buddhism very well, so he didn't ask any questions of the master for three years. At last, Hogen Zenji asked him, "It is already three years since you came here; why don't you come and ask some question?"

"I studied for a long time under Seiho Zenji, and I think I understand what Buddhism is completely."

"How do you understaud Buddhism?"

"When my former master asked me about my understanding of the saying, 'To study Buddhism is to seek for fire,' I answered, 'It is like a man who was born in the Year of Fire seeking fire.' Buddha studies Buddha. That is my understanding of how we study Buddhism."

"You don't understand what Buddhism is at all."

Gensoku was very upset and he went away. Before he had traveled long, he thought, "Hogen is a famous Zen master. There must be some reason why he said this. It may be a good chance for me to have a real understanding of Buddhism." So he went back and asked Hogen what was the way to study Buddhism. And the master said, "It is like a fire seeking for fire."

As Dogen Zenji explains, when Gensoku thought, "I understand Buddhism; my understanding is perfect," his understanding was not perfect. When he gave up his intellectual understanding, his limited understanding, to seek for the truth, his mind opened and he was enlightened. Dogen Zenji says, "If you understand like the acolyte and think that is the way to understand Buddhism, Buddhism will not continue so long. If we stick to some teaching, Buddhism cannot be transmitted to us. When we limitlessly extend our true nature instead of selfish, limited self, then Buddhism is there. When we forget all about the intellectual limitation of the teaching, then true Buddhism will be extended forever."

Even though Shobogenzo is perfect, there is a need to study Buddhism under some teacher. That is why we recite the sutra before we start the lecture: Shobogenzo is here, and I bow to Shobogenzo; I study Shobogenzo with you. If I say I know something, that is wrong. The extended practice of bowing to the Shobogenzo is how I speak about it and how you listen to it. Confidence is not in some *thing*, but is something which you can extend forever. Something which comes from selflessness—the base, the foundation of all teaching. Instead of putting emphasis on Soto way or Rinzai way or Tendai way, we put emphasis on nothingness. Everything comes from nothing, and our way will be extended forever, limitlessly. That is how we study Buddhism.

Without being strict with ourselves we cannot do anything. We should reflect on our practice; before we say something we should reflect on ourselves. This is a very, very important point. You should not rely on some teaching, but you should reflect on yourself and polish yourself and get rid of selfish idea as much as you can. Even though you attain wonderful enlightenment, if you forget to polish yourself, that enlightenment will not work.

When we realize ourselves and we are able to see "things as it is," whatever the thought may be, it is acceptable. Capitalism is all right; communism is all right. When our understanding is based on a selfish idea and when we try to force our opinion on others without reflecting on our way, our effort will come to a dead end. You will fight with others, that's all. You cannot survive because you lose your background, your true background.

Constantly we must open our eyes, open our minds, and see the situation. That is the point. Okay? Thank you very much.

Racism and Buddhist Practice

We brought together a small group of practitioners—Lewis Aframi, Hilda Gutierrez Baldoquin, Srisakul Kliks, Oga Marsch, Kim Redemer, and Sala Steinbach—to discuss issues of practice and of racism. Sala acted as moderator. Hilda says: "If we choose to actually see and hear racism, our entire reality will shift. Once we have really seen and heard racism, our actions to dismantle it will have a solid foundation. Such a shift in reality brings tremendous growth. Without question, such growth will then propel us farther on our journeys toward enlightenment."

Sala: We wanted to find out—and give voice to—what people of color (and that's such an American term, but that's who we are by one definition)—why we're here. What, if any, were barriers to our being here? If our experi-

ences at Zen Center are going to be as similar and dissimilar as everybody else's, is there anything else? Is there any way that we feel about being here that people should know about?

Thank you for coming, first of all. I'd like to start by knowing who you are, and what brought you to Zen Center.

Susie: My name is Srisakul, or Susie, as most people call me, here in America anyway. I'm from Thailand, so I was born and raised with Buddhism, but I was not exposed to Mahayana Buddhism until I came here to the United States. I was quite happy to find that there was a Buddhist temple in my community, and I went there first because it was the only temple I knew of that offered meditation practice. There, my horizon opened; the style was different and I've been able to make comparisons, to learn more, and to practice in a very flexible way.

Kim: I got involved with the Zen Center by accident, or maybe in a very intuitive way. I had a strong urge to go to Green Gulch on a personal retreat and it happened that there was a real retreat going on there—a seven-day sesshin. I ended up sitting for the whole seven days. Even though I was born in Thailand, I did not really understand about meditation until I came to America. What I found here was very stimulating intellectually.

Lewis: The way I got here was a very bookish sort of approach: reading books on Taoism and the Tao Te Ching, then hearing that Zen Buddhism was a combination of Taoism and Buddhism. The first book I read that actually talked about practice was by Toni Packer—although she doesn't call herself Buddhist anymore, she talks about sitting. Finally in December of '91, I saw the ad for free meditation instruction at the Berkeley Zen Center.

Hilda: I first began to think about practice somewhere around '86 or '87. My lover gave me a copy of Suzuki Roshi's *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, and I read through that. She also gave me the *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Putting the two together, meditation began to make sense to me. I spoke with Paul Haller on a Thursday in August, 1990, and Monday I moved in as a guest student.

Oga: Similar to Lewis, I'd done some reading about Taoism and Buddhism. It rang a familiar chord to the very Asian upbringing I had. For example, the interdependence of all beings—understanding and living oneself in the context of "us." Then one day I was visiting a friend who goes out to Green Gulch on a regular basis, and he took me to see the grounds. I loved the beauty of the whole setting, and I said to myself, if I ever want to get away, this is a place that I'd like to come to collect myself. Then I found out about Tassajara, which sounded even more appealing. One thing led to another and I found myself in Tassajara for the summer.

Sala: I started by going to Tassajara as a vacation place. I work very hard when I'm not on vacation, and a friend started a tradition—there were five women, and every year we would go to Tassajara. I heard a description of the world and of compassion that was an articulation of what I felt inside. Nobody was asking me to believe anything, and that was very important; all that was being said was to observe the world.

Sala: What is practice to you? What does practice mean to you?

Oga: We use words such as practice, compassion, so much that I often feel a certain numbness towards their meanings. But I do know when I irritate somebody, and I do know when somebody's pleased with me. I do know when I'm happy with myself, or when I'm not happy with myself. Perhaps underneath the level of likes and dislikes there's a base of understanding that helps me to sometimes do the right thing by others and for myself. So for me, practice would mean discovering and developing that innate life understanding that we all have.

Hilda: I guess for me practice is what I'm doing, what I'm experiencing right now. I might just need to put this out to answer the question: I'm trying to reconcile the fact that we're a group of people of color, regardless of how we identify, once again doing the work so mostly white practitioners would read our words. So my practice right now is to sit with my anger about that. I think it's wonderful that this is happening, and at the same time, I experience it as an unfortunate event because we're around all the time, and engaging with us is not that difficult. I think that's part of practice: engaging with each other as human beings on a day to day.

Oga: That's interesting, because race is not an issue that's come up for me within this Zen community. It's very possible I walk by you but really don't look at you as non-white.

Hilda: I wonder how that could be, if you see me.

Oga: Of course I know that you're Hispanic, and I know that you're from Cuba, but when I say I don't notice it, it means that basically it does not register in a significant way. If we were in a different setting, these issues would take on a different level of importance, but in our Zen community context your identity as a Cuban is a fact with little political consequence.

Hilda: When I talk to other friends of color about what I do, they can't believe I come to the Zen Center and have a positive experience. The issue for me is how to deal day to day with coming to the Center to do my practice when I know that people who look at me do not take my difference in a significant way, because we're all Zen practitioners. I think that's a fantasy, be-

cause there's no way that all of us that are not white can walk down the street and not have that difference have incredible impact.

Oga: As an Asian, my participation in this discussion tonight is an anomaly. Zen practice—you couldn't get any more Asian! As far as I'm concerned the whites are the minority in this cultural context. All these non-Asians who are trying to understand the philosophy behind this Asian religion, and they respect it and honor it—I am in the minority in terms of skin color, but I'm in the majority here in the cultural sense. Maybe you guys and the whites should get together and talk, and leave the Asians out, because we're doing what is culturally very comfortable for us.

Kim: Getting back to your question, practice for me means that when I sit, or in my daily life, whatever I do, I'm mindful now to remember my practice, the teaching, the Dharma. When I go through a life transition or issue or problem, I resort to the Buddha's teaching; that's what practice means to me. Also, when I go to the Berkeley Zen Center, I feel very supported by the priests and by the people who practice there; I feel very safe, very welcome.

Suzuki Roshi in Japantown on Buddha's birthday

Susie: I've come to the feeling that practicing means, how are you going to live your life? What is right livelihood for you, and how are you going to be able to do it? And to have the support—all the other people who are practicing—to help you live that life. I found this to be very, very difficult to do in this society. For example, non-competitiveness, compassion, staying away from defilement. It's not easy, every day.

Lewis: For me, two things come to mind about practice. One is, it's really about finding out for oneself, rather than taking someone else's word for it. And the other is waking up and beginning to see. I wasn't involved in any kind of race work before I came to Buddhist practice. It was actually the practice that helped me begin to see things. I don't know whether any of us knew what to expect tonight, but the fact that it's happening is exciting—yes, let's talk about it, get the words out, explore things.

Oga: How did practice bring up these issues for you in a very positive way?

Lewis: Slowing down to actually look. I was really raised not to see racism. And wherever I got that from, I got it, and I ended up going through the world ignoring and not seeing—turning a blind eye to racism. It was especially the teaching about how conditioned our minds are, how our thoughts are conditioned by our past and our present and by others and the atmosphere we live in. I began to see how conditioned I was not to see racism.

Oga: You're the first African-American I've come across who said that he was raised not to see racism. That's an incredible statement.

Lewis: Well, I was raised in Berkeley, where you're taught that the civil rights movement of the sixties solved everything. And then being raised in predominantly white settings . . .certainly as a child I was very adaptive. It would have been too much if I saw everything, so I chose not to see it. I began to examine my conditioning, and it wasn't someone coming from outside saying, "You know, racism's really still a problem, Lewis." All of a sudden I saw how racism was a problem *within me.* So of course I'm going to do something about it!

Hilda: I see the issues of race and class intertwined in this society. I've not traveled in Asia, so I'm not familiar with Asian countries. I always confront this when I do a sesshin here: I have the privilege of blocking out a week of my time to come here. I would say that ninety percent of the people of color in this country don't have that privilege. You're shaking your head.

Kim: It's a very personal choice.

Hilda: This is where we would disagree, because I know people in my community who could not afford to take that time to sit.

Kim: They don't have to come to the temple to sit.

Hilda: I understand. And that then asks the question which we are trying to answer: what is practice?

Kim: Practice is very simple, that anyone can become enlightened. It's more what you do than where you do it. You don't have to live in a monastery or come to a temple.

Susie: Yes, but they have to start somewhere.

Hilda: Some teachings, and some support. Because what I've found coming here is that I have the support to sit through challenging practices. It helped me in my practice when I said, this is a privilege that I have. Because of where I am in my life, I can take time out.

Sala: What difference does it make that there is a division—there are predominantly European-American Buddhist centers and then there are other Buddhist centers. What do you think about that?

Oga: For those recent Asian immigrants to the US (not those of us who have gotten jobs within the mainstream, who speak English fluently), because Asian culture and Western culture are so different, it's wonderful for these people to have religious centers where they can speak and hear their native languages, so the fact that there are different centers based on ethnic lines, it's what the ethnic Asians also want. Lack of common language can be a tiring barrier. It is good to have different centers where one can understand the words of dharma.

Lewis: One of the things that happens to me, as an African-American practicing in a predominantly white Buddhist center . . . it feels odd—strangely odd but strangely familiar—that once again, here I am learning about an Asian tradition, but it's been mediated by whites. [Chorus of yes.] So often the relationships between the African and Asian immigrant groups are mediated by white culture, white values, white assumptions, and it doesn't sit right with me.

Oga: But Lewis, you can go to other centers, where there are Asian teachers.

Lewis: Right. Yeah. I don't know what to do about that. I notice in myself a desire to see an African-American center, where the Buddha's words and the teachings and traditions that have come down through Asia would be

looked at with, among other things, Black Liberation in mind. It would be a place where the potential for Black Liberation that the dharma has would be realized in a communal way.

Do you think that Buddhism has a role in the fight for social justice?

Hilda [and others]: Yes, absolutely.

Susie: In a way, but it's up to how it's translated into action. Buddhism is justice for everything. Justice within oneself as an individual, justice within your life in this world, and justice before and after. That's one of the main things I feel that's so comforting about Buddhism, because it helps you explain justice, that it's not limited to this life.

Hilda: I like this emphasis of Buddhism in America, I think we're on to something here. Buddhism has given me a window into the pseudo-reality that's out there. If one is a person of color or a woman or gay or lesbian or disabled, the pseudo-reality says "You're oppressed, you're less than human, you get less of the goodies." So seeing through the pseudo-reality, I've been able to say, "Hey, no. At a personal level, I can be anything I want to be. I can handle this oppression that comes my way in whatever way, creatively, I can think of." I think Buddhism has incredible relevance to social justice. Everyone that I touch, I can impart my perception: "Yes, there's this pseudo-reality that says that I'm not supposed to be so and so, yet the Dharma says that we're actually here for a very short time. I might be getting oppression from this person right now, but in this piece of impermanence, do I get glued to this situation right now, or do I make different choices? Because again, this is all illusion." Of course, most of my friends think I'm crazy when I talk about this.

It's also the fact that the dharma in itself is about liberation. Depending on who it's mediated by, there's the danger of whether it is relevant or not.

Kim: Buddhism teaches a way to prevent oppression, to promote justice, but it depends on what roles we are in. If you are a priest in Thailand, your role is not to be an activist, your role is to teach dharma in a way that promotes justice, that decreases oppression. Your role is not to go out and protest.

Lewis: Just playing the devil's advocate, I'll say a quick no to the notion of justice. Only in that, it's Buddhism that's got me questioning notions right and left. What is justice? It's a dualistic myth—it always comes down to who deserves what. Buddhists talk more about ending suffering. When people are poor, they suffer, and justice is kind of irrelevant. I don't think we can ever calculate who deserves what. And Buddhism certainly pulls out from one any ground from which we would try to do that. You've lost

your God, you've lost your authority, you've lost your self. So it seems clearer to me to think of it in terms of ending suffering.

Oga: For me the beauty of Zen Buddhism is that it tells you on the one hand what's right and what's not right, and on the other hand, it says, "Uh-uh, no judgment." So you're on a double-edged sword. There is room and relevance for activism in Buddhism, but you have to be very careful where you're coming from, and you have to really examine your own concept of what is just at that moment. And to also fully understand the target of your action. For me, the wisdom of Buddhism is to be able to make judgments in a non-judgmental way.

Hilda: Another thought just came into my mind: I often see movements that are pro-social justice in an unconscious way move under the assumption that, "I'm working in this movement pro-social justice of those people over there." I think social justice begins with the self.

At the risk of being mundane, I thought of an example that I encountered here at the Zen Center, if I may. When I started practicing here there was a sign, and I think the intention of the sign, which was the right intention, was to make people aware of the crime that goes on in the neighborhood. However, the sign began with big letters: "THIS IS A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD." And then it went on to say how these horrible things happen. I've lived in San Francisco for years, I've hung out here, I've lived right in front of public housing. I never thought of this place as a dangerous neighborhood. I thought about it as a neighborhood that I need to be aware of. About a year ago, I mentioned it to the Ino: "I'm aware of the right intention, which is for us to be aware, but it doesn't feel that it's fair or just to the rest of the people who live in this neighborhood. It looks like we at the Zen Center need to protect ourselves, and perhaps the people who live outside the Zen Center aren't concerned about it." And the next time I came back, the sign had been changed. I don't know if you've noticed the sign that's there, which still communicates the right intention. I think that's an act of social justice.

Sala: What can the European-Americans at Zen Center do to bridge the gap between us?

Kim: I don't see any gap. I was surprised to hear the concern.

Hilda: I have an answer. I'm not speaking for my group, only for myself. What would be useful is that, when I encounter white Zen practitioners who are trying to be very liberal and not make a mistake, or act in a racist way, I would like for them to just give that up. Because in this society, every white person has been conditioned with racist misinformation. So when

whites act in a way that says, I'm one of those good whites, I'm not one of those whites out there, it feels a little offensive to me, like trying to cover the sun with a finger. We know that it feels uncomfortable or shy for you to approach me, for whatever reason. I would rather have that discussion. Say, "I really want to get to know you but I don't know how to do it." Also I would be aware of what happens when people come to the Zen Center. I'm speaking of the center in particular. When I was staying here as a guest student, I had a friend meet me for dinner; she was a black woman. The person who answered the door acted like, "Well, what can you be doing here?" Now this was one person's reaction, but I'm saying in general, to notice about the warmth, inviting people who might be different.

And I really love the way that different holidays are celebrated here. I think they're wonderful with the rituals and the dinner—to also be aware that there are other holidays of people of color, and to include, or make some kind of celebration around certain holidays. There's Cinco de Mayo, there's Black Liberation month, and maybe just have a dinner or invite speakers

PLEASE BE CAREFUL!
ONGOING, THERE HAVE BEEN MUGGINGS AND CAR BREAK-INS IN THE AREA SURROUNDING ZEN CENTER.

PLEASE TAKE CARE AND STAY ALERT WHEN GOING TO AND FROM YOUR CAR OR THE BUS. THE BEST DEFENSE IS ALWAYS AWARENESS OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT, TRUSTING YOUR INTUITION AND NOT PUTTING YOURSELF IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS IF YOU CAN HELP IT.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE SOMEONE TO WATCH FOR YOU IN THE MORNING OR ACCOMPANY YOU TO YOUR CAR, BUS, OR HOME IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, PLEASE SEE THE INO (HILARY PARSONS).
THANK YOU.

This is the sign now on the bulletin board near the zendo at the Laguna Street entrance to the City Center.

from the community. Because I think the dharma speaks in different languages.

Lewis: I guess I'm next. The Taoist in me is wanting to say, "Nothing," But one thing comes to mind: I would like white practitioners not to think of our absence as normal. If the question, "Why aren't there more people of color here?" was more than just a passing thought, that would probably end up being enough. I've got other ideas.

Oga: I'm thinking, how can I respond without offending, or putting both of you off? I work here as the office manager; I go to staff meetings, I manage the office, I answer all the phone calls, I send out literature, I open the door when people knock. We don't go out to recruit, ever, ever. We are just here, and people come to us.

Sala: But for me, there are other things than whether or not people are recruited. It's that, once I'm here, there are things that happen here that can make me feel excluded. For example, in our dharma talks, all of the references aren't to the ancestors. Some of the stories are about people who live in this country. And with one exception, I have never heard a story that included somebody other than European-Americans. That's the subtle way that an Asian religion is being transferred by European-Americans. And if these European-Americans are interested at all in me staying, and maybe somebody who's vaguely like me, then one of the things they could do to make me feel welcome is bothering to learn stories about African-Americans. That would be my answer—once in a while to tell a story. Actually, I cried and I didn't know how much I'd missed it when Reb told a story and mentioned a man named George Washington Carver. He never once said that he was an African-American, which I loved, because that wasn't the point of the story, and yet certainly every African-American—and maybe there were only two of us sitting in the room—knew that the story was about an African-American.

Oga: I would like to tell about this one incident that happened to me. It was before a one-day sitting, and I was assigned to be chiden [clean the altars] with another fellow, a man. I was fairly new to the community here. I didn't know him, so the Ino tried to describe him. "Oh, he comes regularly, he lives outside the building, he's a very nice man, when you see him you'll recognize him." She was going on and on trying to help me identify this man, and finally I figured out who it was and said, "Oh, the black man," and she said, "Well I don't like to identify people by the color of their skin." And I thought, well, she's trying to be very sensitive to the race issue. But sometimes good-intentioned people try so hard that they kind of flip themselves over. Good intentions must be backed up with understanding.

Hilda: That color blindness is a key piece of the racism that I experience in the Zen community.

Oga: A situation I don't like is when people assume Asians to be a homogeneous group, when in fact we are an incredibly diverse group of people. As a Korean who grew up here in America, I have very little in common with, say, a recent Laotian refugee immigrant. I can let myself get all worked up when people stereotype me, but I also have the option to tell them about the diversity when the opportunity is right.

Lewis: I just wanted to briefly address the outreach or recruiting issue. One of the things, right from the beginning, that attracted me about Buddhism was the non-missionary, non-proselytizing stance. But what I'm beginning to think more and more is that when privilege gets factored in to the discussion, just opening the doors isn't enough.

Kim: What is the point of recruitment though?

Lewis: I'm not advocating any strategy, but my suspicion is that a lot of effort went into making Zen Center a place that was comfortable for whites in a way that Sokoji wasn't. So I want to see some of that effort made for everyone else.

Another thing that gets me is calling this American Buddhism. It seems kind of premature, in a way that when I hear it I feel excluded. To me America or the US is really a multicultural society and anything that really merits the designation US or American, it's got to be multicultural. As long as so many Americans ain't here, it's not American yet. It is, of course, because it isn't Japanese any more. But still, not yet. Without some people looking at these things, blacks and other people of color won't feel so welcome.

Oga: But if, lets say, a Zen community says, okay, let's try to create a community where African-Americans can feel comfortable. If one of the people who are in the establishment here said that, it could be most presumptuous. The initiative must come from those who feel uncomfortable so that it doesn't become another case of whites patronizing non-whites.

Hilda: Well, I would see it as a very empowering thing, because hopefully the person who is in the dominant group would see that there's something in it for their own growth, to have a multicultural community.

When white Zen practitioners question, why aren't there more people of color here? I think that it could be tremendously useful at that moment to stop, observe that question, and ask themselves, how do I have people of color in my life?

Letting Go, Falling to Rest
Hospice Work and Zen Practice

by Merrill Collett

> We need, in love, to practice only this:
> letting each other go.
>
> —*Rainer Maria Rilke, "Requiem for a Friend"*
> *(translated by Stephen Mitchell)*

In the course of my career as a journalist, most of the corpses I've seen have been badly damaged by car wrecks or gun shots, leading me to believe that death is ugly. But when I started doing volunteer work at the Zen Hospice Project I learned that death could be beautiful.

Headquartered in an elegant Victorian located kitty-corner from the Zen Center on Page Street, the Zen Hospice Project recruits and trains volunteers to care for patients in a 28-bed AIDS and cancer ward in the city-owned Laguna Honda Hospital and in a four-bed unit on the second floor of the hospice headquarters itself. This smaller unit is where I work five hours a week, doing everything from taking temperatures to taking out the trash, from wiping bottoms to washing dead bodies. It is, as they say, a complete practice.

I became a hospice caregiver after family obligations forced me to abandon my plans to go to Tassajara for practice period, and I volunteered for hos-

pice work as an alternative. The discovery that death could be beautiful came soon after I finished the training program. I arrived for my shift and was told at the door that a new patient, a man I didn't know, had died, so I went upstairs to meet him. Lying on a bed in a bay window, he was bathed in a pool of soft morning light, his fine features and smooth skin marked only by two dainty, purple lesions of Kaposi's Sarcoma, a once rare form of cancer now common in AIDS victims. Completing the fragile, saintly tableau, someone had crossed his hands over a long-stemmed lavender rose. Seeing that all the miraculous forces animating both the man and the flower had gone elsewhere, I was awed by the empty, terrible beauty of the scene. Later, with the deaths of patients who had become friends, death would not always seem so attractive. It hurts to let go. But it hurts more to hold on.

In teaching non-attachment, Buddhism encourages us to make death the mirror for life. Looking at life from the perspective of death, embracing our transience, we stop striving to make our moments more enjoyable and start savoring existence itself; it's a fruit of the practice. America's death-denying culture cuts us off from the liberating practice of contemplating our own mortality, but with the growth of the hospice movement, American Buddhists have a rich opportunity to deepen their lives.

In my case, although hospice work was my second choice after Tassajara, I see it now as my best choice. In eight months, I've undergone a simple but profound change in outlook. For example, if the day ends with a beautiful sunset and I have a back ache, I now tend to pay more attention to the sunset than the back ache! It's all a matter of not wasting my time. That's what the dying have taught me; that's why I owe them so much.

What follows are excerpts from the journal I've kept as a volunteer at the Zen Hospice Project.

November 11 First training class. Just inside the door hangs the familiar picture of Suzuki Roshi quizzically arching one eyebrow. When I pass by, he seems to give me a wink!

November 12 This work has its own language. There is the "dying process" and then there is the last stage—"active dying." Dr. Bob Brody describes it. Consciousness declines to the point of coma, and breathing becomes irregular: first shallow, then deep, then shallow, then deep. Strength slips away; the patient can't clear secretions, and his coughs produce a rattle in the chest—the infamous "death rattle." Blood pressure declines. The skin becomes cold. The patient turns mottled and bluish.

One of my fellow volunteers witnessed active dying personally when he saw his lover "bleed out." Blood exuded from all orifices, including his penis, the volunteer says. His lover died peacefully in his arms.

November 14 Step-by-painful-step, John and Stephen, two patients, come down to talk with us. They are lovely men, and it pains me to see their lives ravaged. I leave training deeply depressed. At home, in bed, I dream of snow. The next morning, during zazen, I fall against the wall in tears. No self-pity. Just good, cleansing tears.

November 29 When I arrive at the hospice for my first shift, I am handed a terse little list of duties:

-trash out
-waste baskets
-laundry
-diaper cart
-compost bucket
-water pitchers

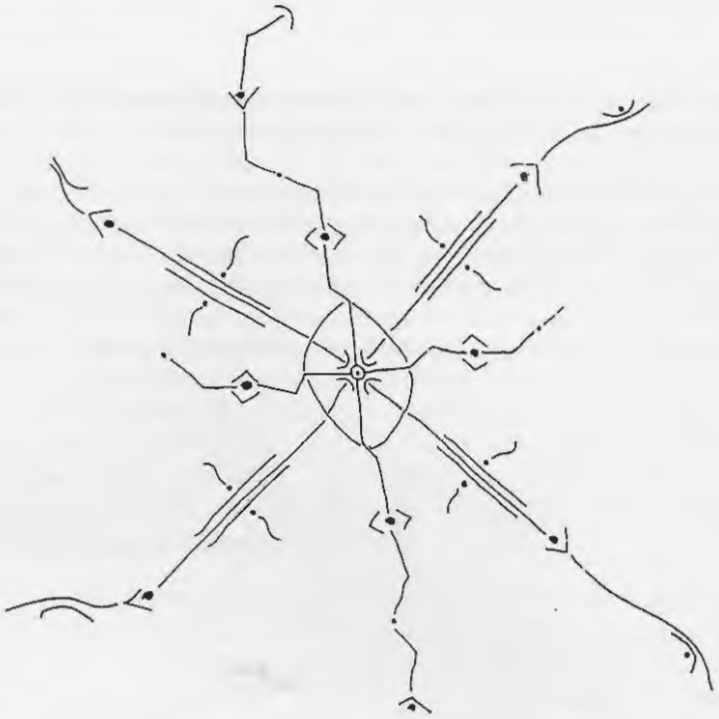
Apparently hospice work is like everything else: mostly maintenance.

December 9 Stephen has died and is gone. Harriet called me at home, but it's still a shock to arrive and find his bed empty. Just last week I had given him a bath. Slowly walking his stick-thin body to the bathroom, my arms around this dear, sweet man whom all of us loved, a man who never failed to find strength enough to come out his AIDS-induced confusion to thank us for any minor kindness, holding this man close, hugging him, it occurred to me that the two of us, him gay and me straight, were doing an intimate little dance that our fathers could not have done. I felt grateful, and deeply reconciled.

December 16 Stephen is gone but Leah has arrived, and boy do we know it. A former clothier of some success now in her late 70s and dying of lung cancer, Leah specializes in letting us know the ways in which we aren't doing the job to her standards. Every now and then she'll remind us of our inadequacies by saying things like, "Maybe I'll go to the Mayo Clinic." She rattles me, the new volunteer, but Harriet, who heads up the staff, is tickled pink to have a woman of gumption around. Harriet gets such genuine amusement out of Leah's performances that even Leah has to smile.

February 7 We have David now, and he's very demanding. Tall, gangly, gaunt, often moody, manipulative and highly theatrical, he favors black clothes and dramatic gestures. Our work is so pressing and practical—changing diapers, making meals, administering pain pills—we don't have much time for his flamboyance, but we do take his talk of suicide seriously. David does not handle pain well. Today, as I help him ease his aching body into the bathtub, he is full of fear and remorse. "I had another life," he says. "It wasn't like this."

February 14 Leah's husband is ill so I sit with her, reading a book while holding her hand. Enfolded in gray winter light, the room is as quiet as a



cathedral. After awhile she asks me what I'm reading. When I tell her it's a book of meditations she turns away with a look of disgust, saying, "So you're one of those, too, huh?" I love this woman.

February 18 This morning, in the zendo, as I am hitting the bells for service I am overcome by an inexplicable anguish. When I get home there is a message from the hospice: Leah died peacefully at 6:40 A.M., almost exactly the moment I was doing the bells.

Leah

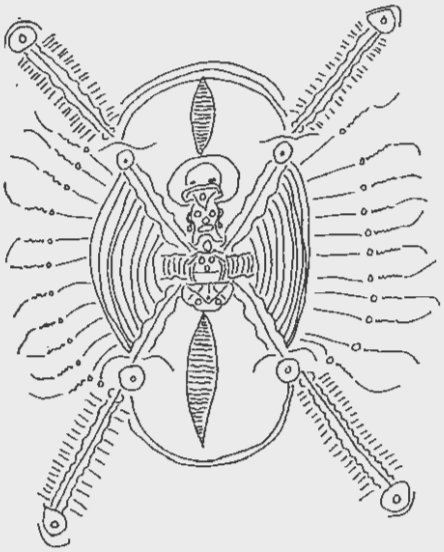
The room is washed in winter light
And she is lost within it
Searching in the texture of her life
For the pattern of her pain
Angry at the Breath that makes her breathe,
The Heart that beats her heart,
Glaring with falcon eyes that seem to say you'll never know

I will.
I will.

March 21 David works us hard with his moods and complaints, but his unceasing effort to experience himself fully in the last days of his life commands our total respect. David pulls himself up the hundred-foot pole hand-over-hand. He's putting out a personal newsletter, holding late-night

salons with his friends and every now and then tottering down the hallway to visit other patients. Any day now he'll start a religion!

April 18 We're busy assisting four demanding men dying of AIDS and bursting with needs. Victor, Armando and Michael are all interesting but David's transformation is stunning. His relentless self-searching has found expression in art. The walls of his room are covered with wavy, pastel drawings of crosses, flowers, humanoid figures, abstract designs. He sits at his window for hours, a sketch pad on his knees, his eyes illumined by interior light.



April 25 Michael is having a very hard time. Already so thin I can put my fingers around his limbs at any point, he hasn't eaten for two days. The little bit he managed to get down today went right through his bowels. But somewhere in that bag of skin and bones there's still room for generosity. When Armando, who occupies the other wing of the room, has a chill, Michael instantly offers his heater, reminding me how much more I can do. These saints — have they no mercy?

May 9 Armando has died. I gratefully remember the time he confessed to me that he'd thought life was all about money, but dying had taught him otherwise. Thank you Armando. Standing by his empty bed, I recite the Heart Sutra and then do nine bows.

Perhaps because of Armando's death, David is needy today. He tries to draw me in with complaints but I'm not buying. So for a couple of hours he hides out in his strange, psychically driven drawings. Finally he asks my opinion. I rather like what he's working on; there is something both familiar

and yet weirdly intriguing about the bulbous "Mr. Tomato Man," the tooth-shaped, faintly Asian "Chang" and the many-earred "Mr. Mousey." We talk about colors, about symbolism, about the names that he's given his characters. I suggest that he do a comic strip but he says he doesn't have the energy. Then it hits me: David is much weaker now; he won't last long. When my shift is over, I turn back from the door to have a look at him. He blesses me with a deep smile that says he is ready to die. I am not ready to let him.

June 13 I don't feel like writing, but I feel that I have to. The climate in the hospice has radically shifted from summer to winter. The four charmers are gone—first Armando, then Victor, then David, then Michael. The new crew is introspective, withdrawn. Time and people pass, leaving so little. The past, says William Mathews, is "the little we remember." I can't remember all the names of those who've died in the hospice. It troubles me. If I can't remember them, were they here? Was I?

June 28 Louis, a very private man whose tragic life touched us all, dies abruptly. We are shocked. I get the word during dinner and immediately go to the hospice. Two other volunteers have also drifted in. We sit with him in the twilight, his small body floating in the bed's vast space. A young woman, a new volunteer, comes in crying and desperately throws herself down. I go to the kitchen and help prepare meals for patients. Others are on the phone, passing the word, passing the word.

My kitchen chores done, I light some candles and go back and spend time alone with Louis, holding his hand. Although he has only been dead for two hours his skin is already cold. When I place a kiss on his forehead, my lips make a smacking sound in the stillness. Returning to Zen Center I sit in the dark courtyard wanting to cry—or something. Finally I go over and hug a rock bench as if it were Louis, or the earth, or myself. When I let go, I fall into rest.

August 2 Eight months after his death, Stephen's parents have sent us a card on his birthday saying how much they miss him, letting us know we are still a part of their lives. This work is such a privilege. How is it that in letting go we get so much?

I've taken a night shift now, and walking home from the hospice under a luminescent full moon, I think of these lines by the poet Tu Fu:

No one knows your thoughts, master,
And night is empty around us, silent.

(translated by David Hinton)

Taste the Truth

by Shunbo
Blanche Hartman

(a lecture given during Rohatsu Sesshin on the day of Buddha's Enlightenment)

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 Tathagata's words.

That's an interesting chant we do at the beginning of lecture and when we open the sutra. It might be misinterpreted to imagine that we're saying that this unsurpassed, penetrating, and perfect dharma is going to be offered to you from someone sitting up here, or from some words written on the pages of a book. Having it to see and listen to, from outside yourself, you vow to taste the truth of somebody else's words. When I first heard it, that's how I regarded it, but now I understand it differently.

"This unsurpassed, penetrating and perfect dharma is rarely met with." But why do we rarely encounter it? It is always right where we are. It is always here to see and listen to in every moment. How then can we honor our vow to "taste the truth of the Tathagata's words"? All we can do is settle down and pay attention and carefully observe what there is to see and listen to, and perhaps we will meet it directly, with no obscuration. There is always that opportunity. We can't make it happen, but we can always be prepared for it to happen—that we will see and hear this unsurpassed, penetrating, and perfect truth of our life as it is, if we listen and observe carefully.

And so from time to time we may gather together to support each other in this effort of settling down right where we are, assured by the knowledge

that the truth is right here waiting for us in every moment. We can clearly observe that the busy-ness of our mind, the cherished delusions that we may cling to, the view of self that is so precious to us, may obstruct our seeing and hearing the truth that is always right here in our life as it is.

So each time we sit down on our cushion, we should settle our self carefully, arrange body and mind carefully with the full intention of sitting here forever. We should always sit down as if we will not move from this spot, just as the Buddha did more than 2500 years ago. Each time we sit it should be with the vow to "taste the truth of the Tathagata's words." "I will settle myself on this spot, and even if Mara should beset me with armies which inflict pain and which frighten me, I will not be moved from this spot. Even if Mara should tempt me with distractions, all kinds of temptations, fantasies, fascinating old stories, I will not be moved from this spot. Even if Mara should say, 'Who are you to claim that spot?' I will not be moved from this spot. I will call on the earth to support me right here, to stay with this vow to taste the truth that is always in front of me—with me, around me, above, below and all around—the truth of my life as it is."

This is the vow made by a person such as we more than 2500 years ago. Not some superhuman, out-of-the-ordinary person—a person such as we, beset by observing suffering in the world, determined to find a path to liberation from suffering, having studied all of the teachings of all of the holy people of his day. Still he had to sit down and see for himself. Like one who knows by tasting water whether it is warm or cold, we have to see for ourselves the truth of the Tathagata's words.

And so we come together in sesshin to gather the mind on this spot. A teacher has said, "We sit to settle the self on the self and let the flower of the life force bloom." This life force which blooms—here like this, there like that—the life force which blooms on each spot is not different; but the blossom which occurs on each spot is uniquely you. This blossom is not the same from place to place, from being to being, or from time to time. It is constantly changing. Even this particular bloom on this particular spot is constantly changing. It is not the same now as a moment ago. As with everything without exception, it arises and passes away moment after moment, and this limited human person with whom we identify is constantly changing as it arises and passes away. There is a verse on the *han* (wooden instrument) which calls us to zazen which says, "Carefully listen everyone. Great is the matter of birth and death. No forever, constantly changing. Awake! Awake! each one. Don't waste this life." And so we gather together in sesshin to taste the truth of the Tathagata's words.

When we sit we should sit with great care, arranging our posture with careful attention. If I pay careful attention to my back—my upper back where sometimes I have a good deal of pain and tension—if I pay careful attention

to posture, checking forward and back, there is maybe no more than one degree of arc difference (excuse me, I'm a mathematician) between where my back is tense holding up the weight of my torso and where my back is soft because the weight is balanced completely through the spine and the hips onto the zafu and down into the ground. It's not a big adjustment, but it makes a great deal of difference in how settled I can be, whether I can actually settle on this spot and stay here forever. It's that kind of attention and carefulness that we need to make in constantly observing breath and posture to support our intention of staying on this spot forever to taste the truth of the Tathagata's words.

When I picked up the *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* that I happened to have in my study I found to my surprise that it's somebody else's copy, and in the front she has written a quotation which I want to share with you. It says, "Just do zazen innocently without any aiming. This is the best zazen." This person began sitting in Jerusalem with a disciple of Soen Nakagawa Roshi and sat sesshins with Soen Roshi, so this may be a quotation from him or it may be a quotation she found somewhere in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* and put in the front; I don't know, but I like it. "Just sit zazen innocently without any aiming. This is the best zazen."

It reminds me of a story someone recently told about Kobun Chino Roshi, a teacher whom I greatly admire. I consider him a Zen master. He is also a master of *Kyudo*, the way of the bow—Japanese archery. And I know a smidgen about Kyudo because my son spent ten years in Japan studying it and he studies it still today, more than twenty years now. I know at least that in archery as in zazen the training is in the form: the careful attention to body, breath and mind; first sitting and gathering the mind, then standing carefully, putting the bow in position, placing an arrow on it, placing the hand just so, raising the bow, lowering the bow as the string is drawn. In all of this, the attention is on the form of body, breath and mind. There is no concern about hitting the target. Again and again perfecting this form, perfecting the form of standing with the bow fully drawn and breathing and allowing it to release of its own with the understanding that if body, breath, mind, bow, arrow, target are all in perfect harmony, the arrow will find its mark.

So here's the story: Kobun was at Esalen with his archery teacher, who was demonstrating Zen archery. He demonstrated a shot at a target and then he handed the bow and an arrow to Kobun and invited him to demonstrate his skill. (I don't know how many of you are familiar with the location of Esalen; it's high on a cliff over the Pacific Ocean down at Big Sur.) So Kobun took an arrow and the bow and with complete concentration and attention and care he drew the bow and released the arrow into the ocean! When it hit the water he said, "Bull's eye!"

"Just do zazen innocently without any aiming. This is the best zazen."

This zazen we do is not for the purpose of making us a better person or improving our personality, though I think all of us harbor such an opinion. Surely I'll be a better person if I just sit long and hard. Surely I will get rid of this or that or the other personality trait of mine that I find so obnoxious or that other people find so obnoxious. If I follow the precepts surely I will become a better person. But this same teacher who hit a bull's eye in the ocean said the precepts are not about improving your personality—it's not like that. The precepts, he said, are about manifesting Buddha-life in the world. Zazen is about manifesting Buddha-life in the world.

And he said that when a person realizes that it's completely his responsibility, completely her responsibility, to manifest Buddha-life in the world,

The zendo altar at City Center with jack-o-lantern

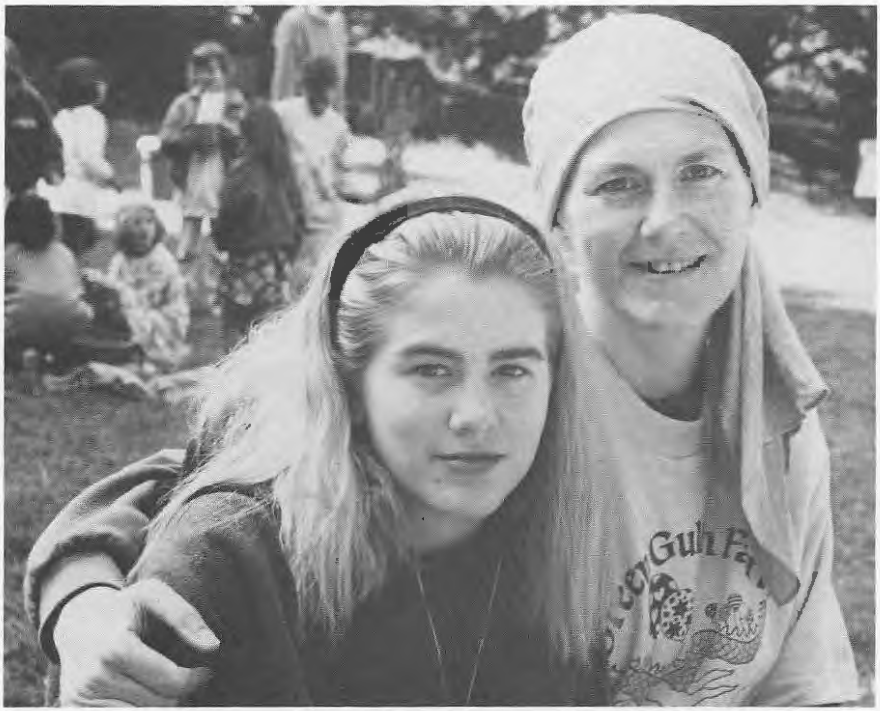
naturally such a person sits down for awhile. It's not an intended action, it's a natural action. This vast, perfect, compassionate, wise, kind Buddha-life, this ideal Buddha-life that we envision, is manifested in the world by ordinary limited beings like us; this unlimited Buddha-mind can *only* manifest in this phenomenal world through ordinary limited beings like us. So if we want this Buddha-life manifested in the world, it's completely our responsibility to manifest it right now, right here where we are. Other beings are completely responsible for their actions and the consequences of those actions, whatever they may be. The actions of other beings, however they may affect us, are no excuse for our actions. Our actions are completely our responsibility. We are completely responsible for the actions of this body, this mind, this mouth, and we will experience the consequences of the actions of this body, this mind, this mouth. How we respond to the circumstances of our life is entirely up to us.

Whatever past conditioning we bring to this moment, it is our responsibility to drop it. We must drop it again and again, in order to see this moment with fresh eyes, completely present where we are, not entangled in some ancient twisted karma of the past. We have that opportunity fresh again each moment, the opportunity to drop our clinging to all of our ancient twisted karma and meet this present circumstance anew. This opportunity cannot be given to us by someone else, because we already have it, have always had it. And so we come together to sit sesshin, to sit on this spot, settle ourselves here, drop what we can and live with what we can't.

Sometimes the painful, agonizing thought arises, "If only I could live my life over again, and do it differently." But we can't do that. Once I read a story by Ouspensky, a teacher of Gurdjieff. A man meets a sorcerer who gives him the opportunity to live his life all over again knowing what he knows now. So he begins his life over again and even with the knowledge that he has accumulated, he again makes all the same choices as before. We cannot go back. We are here now, as we are, made up of all the causes and conditions and circumstances that brought us to this moment. But in each moment we have the fresh opportunity to meet our life directly as it is, in the here-and-now. This opportunity arises with each moment again and again. So we sit on this spot ready to meet each moment as it arises, dropping body and mind right now. There is no other time to drop body and mind but right now. There is no other opportunity to drop body and mind but right now. As Dogen Zenji says in Fukanzazengi, "If you wish to practice Suchness, you should practice Suchness without delay." It happens in this moment or not at all.

And so we gather together in sesshin to encourage each other, to be supported by each other, to sit together, each one on this spot, to taste directly for ourselves the truth of the Tathagata's words.

Suzy Clymer (1949–1993)



Suzy Clymer, a quiet and sustaining presence at Zen Center since 1976, has lived and practiced with us at City Center, Tassajara, Jamesburg, and most recently, Green Gulch Farm. Suzy died on September 13 at Green Gulch after a seven-year struggle with cancer. She spent her last days surrounded by her family and many friends in the Zen Center community. She is shown in this recent photo with her daughter Robin.

A friend, Martha deBarros wrote: "I think of your natural and enormous courage, your ability to balance the will to live with the acceptance of death. You have known for years that to wait until the time of death to prepare for it, is too late. You lived close to and stoically aware of its inevitability and you fought for life not so much for yourself, but for Robin.

"Thank you dear Suzy for your short life and its long reach. For welcoming so many of us into your dying and death. You told me you wanted the center of the Tassajara quilt that you worked on until you could sew no more to be a picture of the sunrise at Tassajara with the zendo in view and the path lamps still glowing. We will do as you wish."

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SCHEDULES

SAN FRANCISCO

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
5:25–7:05 A.M. Zazen & Service
5:40–6:30 P.M. Zazen & Service

SATURDAY MORNING
6:30–7:40 A.M. Zazen & Service
7:40 Temple Cleaning
7:55 Zendo Breakfast
8:45 Zazen Instruction
9:25–10:05 Zazen
10:15 Lecture & Discussion
12:15 Lunch

SUNDAY
No schedule

GREEN GULCH FARM

SATURDAY THROUGH THURSDAY
5:00–7:00 A.M. Two Zazens & Service

FRIDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY*
5:15–6:05 P.M. Zazen & Service

FRIDAY
6:30 A.M. Zazen & Service

SUNDAY MORNING
5:00–7:00 A.M. Two Zazens & Service
8:30 Zazen Instruction
9:25 Zazen
10:15 Lecture
11:30 Discussion
12:45 Lunch

* Schedule may change through the year. Please call (415) 383–3134 to confirm.

ONE DAY SITTINGS: once monthly; SEVEN DAY SITTINGS: twice yearly; THREE AND FIVE DAY SITTINGS: offered periodically. Each year there are residential practice periods of two–three months' duration at Green Gulch, City Center and Zen Mountain Center. For more information, please call or write to Zen Center at 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 863–3136.

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