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Wind Bell

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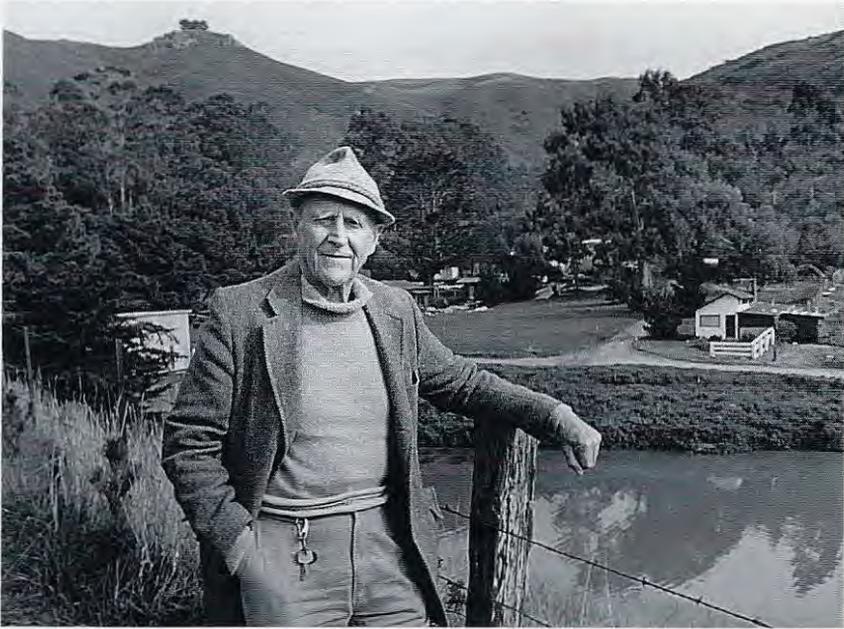
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FRONT COVER:

DARUMA by Nakahara Nantenbo (1839–1925) from the exhibition
“Zen Painting and Calligraphy” at the Asian Art Museum through October 7, 2001.
For other pieces from the exhibition, see pages 15, 31 and 41.



A Ceremony of Crossing Over for George W. Wheelwright III

ON MARCH 23, at 2 p.m. at Green Gulch Farm, we paid tribute, celebrated and remembered George W. Wheelwright III. Family and friends came from the East Coast, as well as all over the Bay Area, to attend the memorial service. Many of the family members stayed over in the guest house or Hope Cottage and appreciated waking up "on the ranch" once again.

Many preparations were made before the ceremony. The grounds were swept, the zendo cleaned, and an abundance of flowers of the field were arranged and placed throughout Green Gulch. Mr. Banducci, an old neighbor, brought tubs full of heather and iris that were placed in huge bunches in the zendo and in an overflowing wheelbarrow on the lawn.

The ceremony began with the great bell being rung 108 times. Mr. Wheelwright's sons, George and Michael Wheelwright, and his stepdaughter and sons, Constance, Turo, and Philip Richardson, walked in a procession with Abbess Linda Ruth Cutts and attendants Wendy Johnson and Susan O'Connell. George, the eldest, carried the ashes, wrapped in white silk, and the others carried a picture and a selection of George's well-worn hats that were placed on the altar.

After the incense offering, the Abbess addressed the assembly of several hundred:

George Wheelwright! We have gathered here in this old barn, this meditation hall, to honor you, to celebrate your life, and to mourn your passing. We are here. Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family, and friends are once again assembled at Green Gulch: the place you loved so fiercely that it was hard to leave. Now is the time to leave. We will help you. We will help you navigate this last passage—this crossing over. On this early spring afternoon, the hills are green, the trees are in bud, and the deer, owl, frogs, great blue heron, and mountain lion are gathered here too. With our hearts overflowing, we freely express our love and gratitude to you.

After chanting the *Sutra of Loving Kindness*, Abbess Linda Cutts posthumously gave George a precept name: Dai Shin Zen Ho, Boundless Heart-Mind, Complete Liberation; and the sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. Many people gave statements, including Abbess Blanche Hartman, Rev. Yvonne Rand, and Senior Dharma Teacher Norman Fischer, who also read a poem sent by Zentatsu Richard Baker, and Wendy Johnson. George Wheelwright IV and Michael Wheelwright gave eulogies and spoke candidly and honestly. Constance Richardson read from George's memoir, *Dead Reckoning*, and many other people spoke extemporaneously, telling stories of George Wheelwright's secret generosity and anonymous benefaction. Many grandchildren expressed how strongly they had felt their grandfather's support and love.

In closing, everyone joined in singing a few family favorites, "Little Brown Jug," "If You Knew Susie" and "A Bicycle Built for Two."

The ceremony ended with a peaceful dedication given by the Abbess.

We have offered incense, light, flowers, the *Sutra of Loving Kindness*, and our voices in word and song, that you may rest. Your family and friends are well. They are ready. We at Zen Center promise to take good care of Green Gulch, and to watch over and protect this peaceful valley for you as you asked us to long ago. May you find peace and comfort. It's time to go now. Do not linger. Go! Go! Great benefactor of the world! Go! Farewell! In formless form you have come and gone. This is how you are with us always.

A reception followed the ceremony in the pool deck area. Afterwards a small group of family members and friends went up the hill to the Hope Cottage to a plant a coast live oak and to scatter George's ashes. Home at last.

The Wheel of Dharma

A DHARMA TALK BY Abbess Linda Cutts
Sunday, March 11, 2001, at Green Gulch Farm

On March 1, our great benefactor George Wheelwright III passed away peacefully at the Marin Convalescent Center, where he had been cared for during the last five years. I want to dedicate this morning's talk to George Wheelwright, and to say a little bit about who he was, and who he was for Zen Center in particular.

EVERY DAY THROUGHOUT ZEN CENTER, after a service of bowing and chanting, there is a dedication saying, "May the wheel of Dharma and the wheel of nourishment forever turn in this temple." These two wheels turn together like the wheels of a cart. The Dharma wheel, the teaching that's brought forth through the practice, can only turn when the wheel of nourishment is also turning. Here, nourishment means food, but also all the material things necessary to create the proper causes and conditions for practice. For us, George Wheelwright was a great benefactor in helping the wheel of nourishment turn. By his great generosity he helped the wheel of Dharma turn as well.

Tomorrow, March 12, would have been Mr. Wheelwright's (and I always called him Mr. Wheelwright) birthday. He died just short of his 98th birthday. As a young man, he was very enterprising. He graduated in Fine Arts from Harvard. In the 1920s, just before the depression, he and his brother, Joseph Wheelwright, a well-known Jungian analyst, started a boys' camp in Santa Barbara. Following that, he went back to Harvard to teach physics, and dabble in astronomy. In one of his classes, there was a very bright young man, Mr. Edwin Land, who was so much smarter than his teacher that George Wheelwright proposed a partnership. Together they formed the Land-Wheelwright Laboratories, which later became Polaroid, and worked on polarization of light. Eventually their work together produced the Polaroid Land camera, which was a hit. A story I heard about how they worked together described how at one point they immersed themselves so thoroughly in their creative work in the laboratory, that they stayed there for weeks and weeks without leaving. Christmas and New Year's Day passed unnoticed, but when they finally emerged, they had achieved a breakthrough with their process of polarized material. They were quite a team. Mr. Land passed away on March 1 also, ten years ago to the day.

Mr. Wheelwright invented other things as well. During WWII, he helped create special polarized glasses for Navy pilots. Later, although he was 39, he trained as a navigator and was apparently one of the best. He invented new methods for navigating that were far more accurate than those used at the time. He got to his destinations so much faster than expected that his superiors thought he wasn't telling the truth, until he proved his innovations to be a more effective way. There are many more such stories about Mr. Wheelwright before we at Zen Center ever knew him.

Mr. Wheelwright's first marriage ended, after which he met the true love of his life, Hope Richardson Wheelwright, for whom the cottage on the hill above Green Gulch is named. Her son Turo designed the cottage, and it was dedicated to her after she died in 1965. It's Hope Memorial really, and her ashes are scattered up there on the mountain. In their new life together they decided to leave the East Coast and come to California to buy land. As they were driving along Highway 1, Hope looked down and saw these beautiful green hills and said something like, "I'd like that place right down there." Much to the owner's surprise, they came down the driveway and offered to buy it right then and there. After negotiations they purchased the land, and it became Green Gulch Ranch.

At Green Gulch Ranch, Mr. Wheelwright tried a number of things and eventually settled on raising prize bulls. He brought an enormous amount of love, interest, and ingenuity to taking care of this piece of land. He had a 1950s brand of ingenuity, like his idea of straightening the creek that runs through Green Gulch Valley! He had a lot of big ideas, big plans, big changes.

Hope was beloved by the surrounding community. She taught children from nearby farming and immigrant families to read. Her three children also came to live here, and with Mr. Wheelwright's two children from his first marriage, there were a lot of siblings and different combinations of people who lived at Green Gulch Ranch during this time.

After Hope died, Mr. Wheelwright continued living at Green Gulch alone. It was a difficult time, and eventually he decided to sell the property. Mr. Wheelwright wanted this parcel of land to remain intact, as an open space for people. He could have sold it in a way where the land would have been subdivided, but he cared enough to try and find someone who would keep the land from being developed.

After making an effort to sell the land to another group, finally, through the great help of Huey Johnson of The Nature Conservancy, Dick Saunders, and Zentatsu Richard Baker, all working together with Mr. Wheelwright, the land became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and a portion of it went to Zen Center. Because of the way Zen Center was caring for Tassajara, which is part of the Los Padres National Forest, Mr. Wheelwright felt confident that we would take good care of Green Gulch.

He had an extremely open mind, truly from another era. He had a Yankee-through-the-years mind and Yankee ingenuity, but when it came to these "Zens" (he called us the Zens), he was very open and interested and became very close with many people at Zen Center.

Mr. Wheelwright sold Zen Center the land for far less than it was worth. Even so, there were years when we were having trouble making the payments, and he would say, "Oh, let's forget about that.

You can do it later." He would forgive that year's payment—how very, very generous and giving. He didn't care so much about his own wealth. Although his material side was well taken care of, it did not seem to be a big focus. In this way he was our benefactor, and he continues to be our benefactor: both with the land he provided, and also through the good will and web of relationships he established with neighbors and friends in the area.

In Mr. Wheelwright's declining years, he came back to live at Green Gulch with the Zen students. All of us who lived at Green Gulch knew him and had daily contact with him—morning tea over at Wendy's, his many stories in the dining room, walks to the field. Maybe some of you remember Mr. Wheelwright's big black poodles racing around Green Gulch, beautifully black against the green hills. Mr. Wheelwright lived in the Wheelwright Center for a number of years, but he had developed Alzheimer's disease and eventually we couldn't care for him in the way he needed. He moved to a convalescent center, and a Zen student continued to help him there for some years afterward. Even though we had less contact with him, he still lived very much in our hearts. To hear that "Mr. Wheelwright is





Green Gulch Ranch in 1965

dying," and "Mr. Wheelwright died," came as a shock. We felt his absence and how much a part of our body-mind he was.

The name "George" comes from the Greek word for "farmer." The word "wheelwright" means a maker or repairer of wheels, "wright" meaning to do, or make, or work. I think Mr. Wheelwright was a farmer, a cultivator, and a maker and repairer of many wheels—all different wheels were turning in his life. He had the ability to treat different people just the same, to hold people equally. He had encounters with great and famous people and had friends in all walks of life, in all classes of society; but he met each person with interest, curiosity, good humor, readiness, and flexibility of mind. And that's how he was with us, at Green Gulch—just as he was with everyone.

The conference center at Green Gulch is named after Mr. Wheelwright, and this name, the Wheelwright Center, is so appropriate because of the Buddhist imagery of the wheel: the Dharma wheel, the wheel of nourishment, the wheel of birth and death, "turning of the wheel," and the wheel used iconographically as a representation of Buddha before Buddha images were made. Wheel-wright: to turn the wheel right, which he did.

I hope that you will hold Mr. Wheelwright in your hearts and minds during this time and send to him all your thanks and gratitude. We would not be sitting in this old barn, or be able to enjoy this valley in this way right now if it were not for him. We rang the great bell 108 times for him upon hearing of his passing last week, which is a traditional practice, and I

thought today you may also wish to ring the bell in his memory, and for your gratitude.

Because this lecture is dedicated to Mr. Wheelwright, I would like to discuss a Zen story that involves a wheelwright in ancient China. This story is a koan, from the *Book of Serenity*, and in the commentary there is a wheelwright who elucidates the story's meaning.

This koan tells a story about Huangbo, a Chinese Zen master, who died in 850. He was the teacher of the founder of the Rinzai school of Zen that survives today.

One day, Huangbo came into the lecture hall, and he looked at all the people there, and said, "What are all you people looking for? What are you all seeking?" Nobody said anything, and so he took his staff and started swinging it around.

Everyone in the assembly froze, nobody moved, and he couldn't chase them away. He said, "You people are all dreg-slurpers! If you go on like this, how will you have today? Don't you know that in all of China, there are no teachers of Chan (Zen)?" A monk came up and said, "What about all the teachers who are guiding followers and groups in various places?"

And Huangbo said, "I don't say there is no Zen. I just said there were no teachers of Zen."

Huangbo, who is known for shouting and shaking his staff, is asking his students, "What are you looking for? What are you seeking?" And the monks are silent. He takes his staff and tries to chase everyone out with it, but they all freeze, thinking, "What is he doing? He's nuts." His chasing the monks around was like saying, "Hello, everybody? Are you there?" Perhaps these monks were thinking, "Well, I'll listen to the Dharma talk, and I'll just blend into the crowd. Nobody will bother me—I hope." Perhaps Huangbo was feeling this, and out of compassion his response was to say, "Come on guys, and gals, how are you going to have today? Where's your life? It's going by. You're all dreg-slurpers." This term, dreg-slurpers, is an interesting one. Supposedly in China at that time it was an idiomatic expression. Dregs are the sediment left from a fermentation or wine-making process. It is the throw-away stuff that settles to the bottom. It means the basest or the least desirable. When Huangbo says, "You're all dreg-slurpers," he is saying "You're just drinking leftover impure material. If you go on like this, how can you have today? How is your life, if you're just seeking after something outside yourself?"

The wheelwright appears in the commentary to Case 53 that includes another story about dreg-slurping. In this story, a wheelwright in China named Lun Pian is busy working on a wheel outside a hall where a nobleman, Ji Heng, is busy reading a book. The wheelwright is working outside the window, and he looks in and sees that his lord is reading a book of the sages. So the wheelwright, Lun Pian, puts aside his mallet and his chisel,

and asks, "May I ask what you're reading, sir?" And Ji Heng says, "I'm reading the book of the sages." Lun Pian says, "Are the sages alive?" And the lord says, "They're already dead." Lun Pian says, "Then what you're reading is the dregs of the ancients."

The nobleman is quite taken aback, and he says, "When a monarch reads a book, how can a wheelwright discuss it? If you have an explanation, all right. If not, you die." Lun Pian said, "I look upon this in the light of my own work. When I plane a wheel, if I go slowly, it is easygoing and not firm. If I go quickly, it is hard and doesn't go in. Not going slowly or quickly, I find it in my hands and accord with it in my mind. But my mouth can't express it in words. There is an art to it, but I can't teach it to my son (or daughter), and my son (or daughter) can't learn it from me. I've been at it for 70 years, grown old making wheels. The people of old, and that which they could not transmit, has died. Therefore, what you're reading, sir, is the dregs of the ancients."

The wheelwright is talking about our practice life. He says, while he is making the wheel, "If I go too quickly, it's hard, it's too fast. If I go too slowly and kind of lazily, it is not firm enough, and the wheel doesn't turn out right. Not going too fast or too slow I feel it in my hands and accord with it in my mind. The secret is in the practice, in being present. But I can't express it in words, and I can't teach it to my son or daughter. It's from my own body and mind that I understand—there's an art to it."

There is an art to living. There is an art to zazen, you might say. And you can say a million words, myriads of kotis of words, and yet you cannot give this art to anyone else. Each person has to completely understand, to know with his or her own hands, and accord in their own minds. And yet, the wheelwright didn't stop making wheels; he just kept making wheels for 70 years. You can make wheels too, you can apprentice with someone, and study with them day in and day out, making wheels or pots, or gardening, or cooking, or sitting zazen. But there are no teachers of Zen; just as there are no teachers of wheel-wright-ness, there is just the making of wheels together.

How do you know whether you are moving too fast or too slow? By doing it. You have to feel if it is in alignment, or if it is all wobbly. The word dukkha or "suffering" in Sanskrit means a wheel that is out of round, a wheel that does not roll. This is suffering: things not rolling properly. This is samsara. So how do you know that the wheel is not round or that it's not working? With your own body and mind. And how do you tell somebody about this? Well, you can say, "watch me." You can give a few hints, but each person has to find out for his or her self. Huangbo asks, "What are you seeking?" If one is looking outside, one will forever lose today. Our understanding, in our own body and mind, is not paid attention to when we are seeking and looking for it outside and thinking that somebody else can give



The Wheelwright Center at Green Gulch Farm

it to us. Dogen says the Dharma is amply present in each person; but unless one practices, it is not manifested. Unless Dharma is realized through one's own body and mind, through practice, it is not attained. Because it is amply present already, it is an incongruity or mistake to look for it outside of ourselves; but it is one that we make over and over. Huangbo, that day, called them all dreg-slurpers, pointing out that they were just drinking this old sediment, these old words from somebody else, and attaching to them. What about your own body-mind, where the Dharma is amply present?

The lord in the story did not take the wheelwright's life, because Lun Pian knew his own life so well that he could respond just the way he did. And yet, what did he say? He could not actually explain in words. Because he couldn't say it, we are pointed back toward our self. It is like Dongshan's appreciation of his teacher: he esteemed him not so much for his teacher's great Buddhist virtue, but because his teacher never explained too much. Dongshan never got spoon-fed; he was able to find for himself, in his own hands, and according with it in his own mind. Unless we find the teachings in our hands and body and mind, it will forever be somebody else's.

Now there's one more turn to this dreg-slurping. It is an admonition from Carl Jung and since Joseph Wheelwright was a Jungian analyst, I

thought I would include this phrase: "You must drink the dregs of the complex." We have to drink our own complex, all the stuff at the bottom. We have to accept all the causes and conditions that brought us here.

We have to drink down all of what we think of as our problems, our afflictions, our negative states, all the stuff about which we think, "If I only got rid of that, then I would be perfectly enlightened." All that has to be drunk, right down to the sediment and impurities at the bottom of the barrel that nobody wants. You have to drink that. Huangbo says, "You're all dreg-slurpers," and the other side is that we actually have to drink it. We have to drink the dregs to know. It has to be digested and composted, it has to be understood, it has to be stayed with, not seeking for something other, or drinking somebody else's dregs. You have to drink your own dregs.

The Dharma is amply present in each person, but unless we practice, it's just not manifested. This is Dogen's main point in all of his teachings: that practice and realization are one thing, or enlightenment and practice are non-dual. This points you back to practicing and the conditions for practicing. It is just like the seed-sowing ceremony we had last week at Green Gulch. The seed for the chard is the chard. The chard plant and the seed are non-dual, but unless we put the seed in the ground, water it, and get it in the greenhouse and the sun, it's not going to be chard, that's all. But in this same way as the Dharma is amply present, the chard-ness is amply present. And yet without the proper causes and conditions, without the occasion, it won't manifest.

Thank you very much.

Sign at entrance to Green Gulch from Highway 1



Remembering George Wheelwright

BY Yvonne Rand

GEORGE WHEELWRIGHT was born on March 12, 1903 and passed over on March 1, 2001. He lived a long rich life of 97 years.

I knew George Wheelwright as one of San Francisco Zen Center's major donors and supporters. George, with the imagination and support of his old friend and lawyer, Dick Sanders, sold 120 acres in Green Gulch Valley to Zen Center in 1972. (At the same time he donated the remaining 600 acres of the ranch to the National Park Service.) He sold his beloved ranch for a modest sum and over the years forgave or postponed payments by Zen Center when it had periodic financial difficulties. In his later years George returned to live at Green Gulch Farm where he was a part of the community, not as a practitioner of Zen but as a good friend and as a consultant about the ongoing care of the ranch.

He taught and reminded anyone whose attention he could get about the ongoing necessity for vigilance and maintenance of the complex water and drainage systems that he had put in place. He provided us all with abundant story-telling about the beginnings of his life with his beloved second wife Hope Richardson Wheelwright and their five children at the ranch, and of their relationships with the neighboring ranchers and farmers who helped the Wheelwrights find their way with life in California and with developing and running a working ranch. He gave us all a rich sense of who and what had gone before us. One winter I interviewed George about his history with Green Gulch. We would spend a long afternoon every week going over his vast collection of photographs and memories as he relived his years at Green Gulch.

After George returned to live at Green Gulch with his last beloved dog, he passed his time walking to Tink Pervier's home at the near-by Golden Gate Dairy for afternoon tea, visiting various students over meals in the ranch dining room, telling stories over and over, filling in the collective community mind with the history of place that comes with living in one place for many years.

There are certain qualities about George that people who knew and worked with him in his lifetime describe with remarkable consistency. He had a capacity for respecting whomever he was with. And he demonstrated this capacity from an early age. Even when he was quite young and teaching physics at Harvard, he demonstrated his ability to recognize talent in another person when he told his student Edwin Land that he, Edwin Land,

had more talent with physics than he, George, did. He and Land formed a company and worked together to develop the Polaroid process. George's capacity for respect for others was not bounded by class or economics or education. He loved people, and he was able to relate to many different kinds of people. He appreciated others and expressed his appreciation freely and warmly and often. He had a great ability to fit in to many different kinds of situations. He was able to let go of how things had been and proceed to what was still unknown. He had an abiding curiosity and interest in everything.

He loved to tell stories, and he also knew how to listen. For many of us who knew George in the years following 1972, he is still visible in our mind's eye, dressed in his proper tweed jacket and walking hat, holding his cane, his two black standard poodle dogs cavorting about his legs, walking through the lower fields at the ranch toward the beach and Tink's for afternoon tea.

Even in the later years of his life George continued to demonstrate his capacity for adventure. Eduardo Montoya, who took care of George at this time, describes him as always willing to try things. If he and George would go out for a walk and come upon a "No Trespassing" sign, George would always try the gate and, if he found it unlocked, he would walk through. No sign stopped him.

At the memorial service for George at Green Gulch many, many people who had known him throughout his life spoke repeatedly of his great generosity and of his consistent capacity to see a person's potential and to support the person to develop that potential.

Many of the qualities that I experience in George Wheelwright are the qualities that those of us on the Buddhist path seek to cultivate: respect for all beings and things, appreciation for what the world brings forth, openness to the unknown, curiosity, interest without bias, an understanding of the possibilities that follow from a respect for forms and manners and courtesies, and, most of all, a deep cultivation of generosity. He never described himself as a student of Zen, but he resonated with and exemplified the personal qualities and values that the Zen Center Community aspired to cultivate. George made it possible for Green Gulch Farm Zen Center to come into being.





DAITO KOKUSHI by Shunso Shoshu (1750-1835)
From the exhibition "Zen Painting and Calligraphy"
at the Asian Art Museum through October 7, 2001

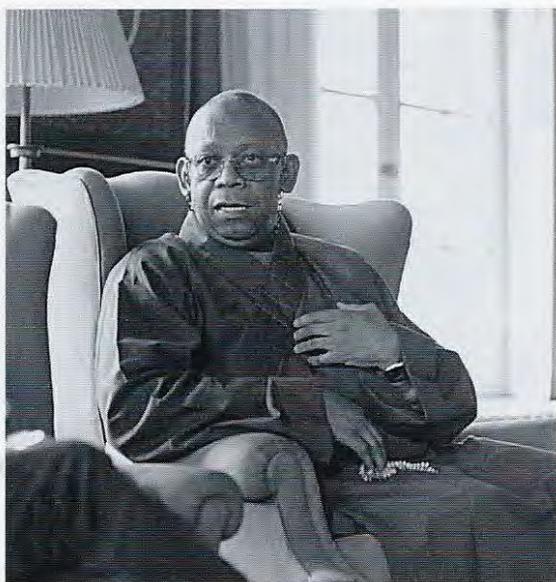
Dharma Teachers of Color in Residence at Zen Center

BY Lee Lipp

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER is helping to open for our sangha and our brother and sister sanghas in the Bay Area the rich resource of many teachers of color who, having lived and practiced in the United States for some time, are familiar with our social and cultural issues. Through the dharma teachers of color in residence program, Zen Center hopes to promote diversity within our own sangha and to be more inviting to the multicultural populace in the Bay Area. Venerable Bhante Suhita Dharma, our first teacher to participate in this program, was in residence at City Center from February 9 through February 25, 2001, engaging with us in a variety of activities.

Bhante was born in Texas, then moved with his family to San Francisco at the age of two weeks. He lived in the Bay Area for many years. Bhante has followed a spiritual path through monastic traditions of a variety of religions. A monk since the age of 15, he has lived as a Christian Trappist and has been ordained in the Tibetan Buddhist and Vietnamese Zen traditions. Presently he also affiliates with the Coptic Church. As an African American teacher he has been engaged with a wide range of cultural and ethnic environments. He is remarkable in that he has delved deeply into the contemplative life as well as engaging in and bringing his practice to the social difficulties of the world. He has a degree in social work and has worked extensively with the homeless, people with AIDS, in the field of geriatrics, and with people who are in prison. Ordained as a teacher by Dr. Thich Thien-An in 1974, he served as vice abbot at the International Buddhist Meditation Center in Los Angeles in the 1980s with Ven. Karuna Dharma. He is also one of the initial members of the Zen Peacemaker Order and continues to work with that group and its founder, Bernie Tetsugen Glassman Roshi.

*Venerable Bhante
Suhita Dharma*



Bhante's schedule while in residence at Zen Center included dharma talks and informal teas for many groups, including the Hartford Street Zen Center, the Berkeley Zen Center, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the Community for Mindful Living, Parallax Press, and the Palo Alto Mid-Peninsula Meditation Center. He presented the public Saturday dharma talk at City Center to a full Buddha Hall and also gave the dharma talk and private interviews during a one-day sitting for the People of Color sangha. Bhante spoke with practice period students at Green Gulch Farm as well as to members of the Prison Meditation Network. He was the featured speaker at City Center's Buddhist Peace Fellowship chapter meeting. At the culmination of his visit, he invited the extended community to join with the People of Color sangha to chant and drum as part of an inspiring healing ceremony. Generous with his time and teaching, meeting all requests with a full "yes," Bhante joined City Center residents at meals and for lively conversations as well as making himself available for private interviews. Embodying an awakened, compassionate nature in a down-to-earth, friendly manner, he was a joyous resident and visiting teacher. The only change we would make for his next visit would be to provide him more time for his own rest, replenishment, and practice.



Volunteers who helped to make the Real to Real series a reality met at City Center with Gustav Woehler, co-star of Enlightenment Guaranteed. From left, Sibelle Scholz, David Hyry, Gustav Woehler, Michael Wenger, Robert Dodge and Margaret Bertrand.

Real to Real: Buddhism and Film

BY Michael Wenger

I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE that film is an excellent vehicle for Dharma. Over the years, it has become clear that not only have religion and Buddhism been making inroads into popular culture, but that the medium of film itself is an expression of Buddhism. Film can encourage identification with the beings and landscapes depicted and thus lead to a strong feeling of compassion. The flashing of still pictures by flickering light suggests the transience and impermanence of existence, which are basic tenets of Buddhism.

About two years ago, Bernd Bender and I began to talk about creating a Buddhist film festival. It soon evolved into a Buddhist film series. We wanted a wide audience, one that included practicing Buddhists of many schools and ethnic Buddhists as well as Western Buddhists. A year ago I met with Aislinn Scofield to enlist the aid of the Asian Art Museum. Robert Dodge came up with the logo and designs. Margaret Bertrand, Sibylle Scholz, and Dana Velden helped with everything. David Hyry supplied much-needed promotional expertise.

Of the 15 films on my first brainstorming list, only two have made the final cut: *The Burmese Harp* and *Groundhog Day*. Not that the original list was poor, but once we started asking around, many fine Buddhist films came to our attention that I had not been aware of. Some of the films are overtly Buddhist but others aren't as obvious. *Blue*, set in France, is a compelling portrait of a bodhisattva in the making, and in *Groundhog Day*, the same day lived over and over allows for not few but infinite possibilities. *Fearless* is an exploration of facing death and the inflation of partial insight.

Asian films such as *The Burmese Harp* (Burma/Japan), *King of Masks* (China), *Monkey Makes Havoc in Heaven* (China), *Way of the Lotus* (Sri Lanka), *Aje Aje Bara Aje* (Korea), and *After Life* (Japan) show how cultures that have been influenced for many years by Buddhism express this sensibility.

Other films like *Windhorse*, which was shot in Tibet, and *Himalaya (Caravan)*, shot in Nepal, are a hybrid of East and West, having Western directors and writers and Asian protagonists. This variety of settings and cultures demonstrates the breadth and power of Buddhist expression of what it is to be human.

The speakers were carefully selected to present each film. Maxine Hong Kingston, the author of *Monkey: His Fake Book*, was asked to introduce the Chinese animation film *Monkey Makes Havoc in Heaven*, and the Burmese-born Buddhist teacher Rina Sircar was matched with *The Burmese Harp*. Robert Buswell, who spent five years in a Korean monastery, was the speaker for *Aje Aje Bara Aje*. Donald Ritchie, the grand master of Japanese cinema, will close the series by talking about the recent Japanese film *After Life*.

Please come join us at the movies!

April 6	<i>Enlightenment Guaranteed</i>	Shohaku Okumura
April 20	<i>Fearless</i>	Gretel Ehrlich
May 4	<i>King of Masks</i>	Peter Coyote
May 18	<i>Aje Aje Bara Aje</i>	Robert Buswell
June 8	<i>Windhorse</i>	Yvonne Rand
June 22	<i>Blue</i>	Michael Wenger
July 13	<i>Burmese Harp</i>	Rina Sircar
July 27	<i>Himalaya (Caravan)</i>	Gaetano Maida
August 10	<i>Groundhog Day</i>	Reb Anderson
August 24	<i>Way of the Lotus</i>	Wimal Dissanayake
September 7	<i>Monkey Makes Havoc . . .</i>	Maxine Hong Kingston
September 21	<i>After Life</i>	Donald Ritchie

EXCERPT FROM
*Being Upright: Zen Meditation
and the Bodhisattva Precepts*¹

BY Reb Anderson

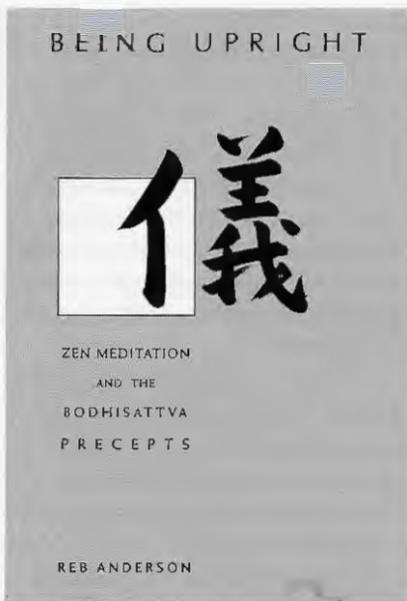
THE TEN GRAVE PRECEPTS: *The Activity of Buddha's Mind*

- A disciple of buddha does not kill.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not take what is not given.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not misuse sexuality.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not lie.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not intoxicate mind or body of self or others.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not speak of the faults of others.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not praise self at the expense of others.*
 - A disciple of buddha is not possessive of anything, especially the dharma.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not harbor ill will.*
 - A disciple of buddha does not disparage the Triple Treasure.*
- The Bodhisattva Initiation Ceremony

THE TEN GRAVE PRECEPTS indicate a way of wholesome living that arises spontaneously from the ground of our buddha nature. They are buddha's wisdom in action and are the natural expression of a compassionate heart. The practice and realization of each precept enacts the ancient Teaching of All Buddhas, namely, refraining from evil, practicing good, and purifying the mind.

Even though they read like prohibitions, the Ten Grave Precepts are not given to prevent us from acting in unwholesome ways, but rather are meant to awaken us from delusion. When our actions come from delusion, the violation of these precepts is a natural consequence. Therefore their purpose is not to control or limit living beings in any way, but to encourage the fullest flowering of life.

¹ From *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*, copyright © 2001 by Reb Anderson. Reprinted with permission of Rodmell Press, Berkeley, California.



In interpreting the meaning of one of the Ten Grave Precepts, perhaps the most helpful and readily available commentary is the other nine. For example, if in contemplating a sexual relationship you are unsure whether sexual greed is involved, consider if there is any intention to deceive others about this aspect of the relationship (lying). Inquire whether there is an urge to intoxicate, to take what is not given (stealing), to be possessive, or to express anger. In violating one of the precepts, all the others are violated, if only subtly. In fully realizing one of the precepts, the others are upheld.

Similarly, if you feel an overwhelming certainty—to the point

of self-righteousness—about the meaning of one precept, contemplating how the other nine apply may be helpful in gaining a wider perspective. Examining one precept through the lens of the others may broaden your compassionate view of that precept. Consulting the other precepts protects you from a narrow understanding and supports the realization of their complete meaning. Finally, meditating on the interdependence and mutual support of the Ten Grave Precepts shows that no individual precept has any independent, fixed meaning.

The Ten Grave Precepts and the Sangha

Anyone who is committed to practicing the precepts is in danger of becoming self-righteous or puritanical. When you're a beginner, you're more likely to become fanatical about them, because you're afraid that if you're not absolutely strict, then you'll lose sight of your commitment. If you're in this initial, self-righteous phase, then it's important to remember that by taking refuge in the sangha you're practicing as part of a community.

As part of a sangha you expose your fanaticism to more mature practitioners, who, having worked through their own self-righteousness, can help you to open up to other possible meanings of the precepts. They can show you that although your understanding is valid as one particular aspect of the truth of the precepts, there are other possibilities, including some of the thoughts of people who disagree with you. Listening to the experience of other practitioners, both senior and junior to you, will naturally soften your vantage point and help you to relax your understanding.

At the other end of the spectrum, you may fall into complacency and avoid examining your life for fear of arousing anxiety. You don't usually emerge from complacency unless some crisis presents itself. If you're complacent, then something has to wake you up, either from the inside or the outside.

Most often, you wait until an experience of pain and suffering breaks through your denial system, but a kind and generous person can also open your eyes to your life and help you to notice your pain. Then you realize that you don't want to be complacent, because life is really wonderful. This generous being makes you feel, I want to do more than just get by. I want to be generous, too. Or you might see something beautiful, and that beauty opens you to both the beauty and pain of your life.

In a sangha, the complacent people have to bump up against the fanatics, and the fanatics have to run up against the complacent people. Each group can learn from the other. The fanatics need to relax more, and the complacent people need to open up to the anxiety of the self-righteous fanatics. The more mature and balanced people in the community can help those who are leaning to either of the extremes.

If you are committed to the precepts, you need to be in dialogue with other practitioners in order to remain honest about your practice. Otherwise, you can get caught up in your own fixed ideas of what the precepts are. The precepts are never what you think they are or what I think they are. They are something that all of us arrive at together.

For instance, if you give me something, then I may assume that you want me to have it—that you have given me a gift. But if I ask you for confirmation, then you might say to me, Well, actually, I felt coerced into giving it to you. You kind of forced me to give it away. If I don't consult you, I might assume self-righteously that it was a gift and never find out that in your eyes I was breaking the precept of not stealing. If I ask you about it, and you assure me that it was a gift, then I can be more confident, not because of my personal opinion but because of your confirmation. When you begin to take other people's views into account, you move from a self-centered interpretation of the precepts to a more compassionate understanding.

The Ten Grave Precepts and Sitting Meditation

The spirit of your meditation should always be in accord with the precepts. When you're sitting in formal meditation posture, you may not be literally killing anything, but in subtle ways you might wish to annihilate certain states of mind or certain feelings. Or you might get angry at your neighbor in the meditation hall and wish him or her harm. If you're harboring thoughts of ill will toward anyone, then you're out of balance in your meditation. If you let these thoughts drop away, then you can return to a more upright attitude.

Just as you consult the other members of your sangha, you can take the Ten Grave Precepts to the cushion one by one and check to see whether your sitting meditation is in accord with each of them. For example, you can apply the precept against taking what's not given to your sitting meditation to see if you're trying to get something that has not been given to you by your life. Are you willing to work with what you have in terms of your state of body or mind, or are you hoping for more or less than what you have? If you are sitting in the spirit of taking something that's not being given to you, you are not being upright, and in a sense you are out of line with the precept of not stealing.

Similarly, if you don't work gratefully with what's happening to you, then you're slandering your experience by saying, This experience is not good enough for me to meditate upon. I want some calmer or happier state. By checking to see if your meditation is in accord with the precepts, you can use the precepts consciously as guides in how to meditate. If there's a lack of accord, then the precepts themselves will help you to find the proper way of sitting or standing or walking.

When you sit upright, being open and attentive to whatever comes, you satisfy all the precepts. As the great American mystic Henry David Thoreau writes, "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" [from *Walden*, 1854].

When you sit with the attitude of not trying to gain anything out of the sitting, you don't kill what's happening to you. You don't wish for something else; you don't use your sexual energy to manipulate your state; you don't lie; you don't use what's happening to intoxicate yourself; you don't slander what's happening; and you don't take sole credit for what's happening. You are also not possessive of whatever is happening, if it happens to be good. You don't get angry with what's happening. You don't disparage the Triple Treasure, because you are working in the way that a buddha would work. Working with the truth of what is happening, you are joining the community of those who work in this way. When you maintain this nongaining approach to sitting, you realize all the precepts.



Recent Haiku Poems

by Mitsu Suzuki

SUZUKI-SENSEI IS WELL and sends her love to friends at Zen Center. These poems were chosen from the collection of over seventy poems she has published in *Sansho*, the magazine of Eihei-ji. They were translated by Gregory Wood and Kazuaki Tanahashi.

After Sensei's poems is a haiku by Lou Hartman, describing a drive he and Sensei took together.

In the valley
temple bell's last sound resonates
a new millennium.

*Hazadera no
kane tsuki owari
sinseiki.*

Writing haiku now
proof of life
pine needles everywhere.

*Haiku ima
seikatsu no
sikimatsuba.*

Summer morning
Qigon practice on the river bank
Fuji enters my view.

*Asa no teibō
kikō no shiya ni
natsu no Fuji.*

Traveling clothes to the Pure Land
sewn
the day spring arises.

*Jōdo e no
tabigi wo nue ri
haru tatsu hi.*

Backpack basket
filled with altar flowers
a monk in spring.

*Shoikago ni
kuge ippai no
haru no sō.*

Boiling herbs day after day
for my sick daughter
autumn deepens.

*Ko ni tsukuru
hibi no sen'yaku
aki fukamu.*

Birth and death
not possessing one thing
gentle autumn.

*Ichimotsu mo
mota nu shōji ya
aki urara.*

"Sitting is a buddha's act."
Voice of the roshi
penetrates my body.

*Za wa butsugyō
rōshi no okoe
mi ni shimi nu.*

Repairing my tabi socks
one day is filled
an eighty-year-old's path.

*Tabi tsugi te
yasoji no hitohe
tari ni kerī.*

Temple kitchen
around the steaming tofu pot
shrine carpenters.

*Yudōfu ya
kuri ni tsudoi shi
miyadaiku.*

Late abbot's memorial
tiny camellia petals
scatter to the ground.

*Senjū no
ki ya sazanka no
chiri shikiru.*

The year's first brushwork
again I write
"beginner's mind."

*Hatsusuzuri
kotoshi mo shoshin to
kakini keru.*



*This picture of Suzuki-sensei
(Okusan) was taken in spring 2001*

A Drive from Jamesburg to San Francisco

by Lou Hartman

*Not one word passed between us;
just true intimacy
stretching for a hundred and fifty miles.*

EXCERPTS FROM
*To Shine One Corner of the World:
Moments with Shunryu Suzuki*¹

EDITED BY David Chadwick

DAVID CHADWICK WRITES in the introduction to his book:

“Suzuki’s main teaching was silent—the way he picked up a teacup or met someone walking on a path or in a hallway, or how he joined with his students in work, meals, and meditation. But when the occasion arose to speak, he made an impression. This book is a record of such impressions, each brief exchange stored away in the mind of an individual who carried it along for thirty years or more. Their glimpses of Suzuki Roshi show that his way was not systematic or formulaic. He emphasized that the ungraspable spirit of Buddhism is what continues, while the expression of that spirit always changes. The teachings of Buddha, he said, were for particular moments, people, and situations and were relative and imperfect.”

The following are excerpted from *To Shine One Corner of the World*:

On a visit to the East Coast, Suzuki Roshi arrived at the meeting place of the Cambridge Buddhist Society to find everyone scrubbing down the interior in anticipation of his visit. They were surprised to see him, because he had written that he would arrive the following day.

He tied back the sleeves of his robe and insisted on joining the preparations “for the grand day of my arrival.” [TOLD BY ELSIE MITCHELL]

Once while driving Suzuki Roshi back to San Francisco from Los Altos, I asked him if there was much hope for that handful of middle-aged, suburban housewives to accomplish anything as Zen students. After all, I thought,

¹ Copyright © 2001 by David Chadwick. Reprinted, with permission, from *To Shine One Corner of the World: Moments with Shunryu Suzuki* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001).

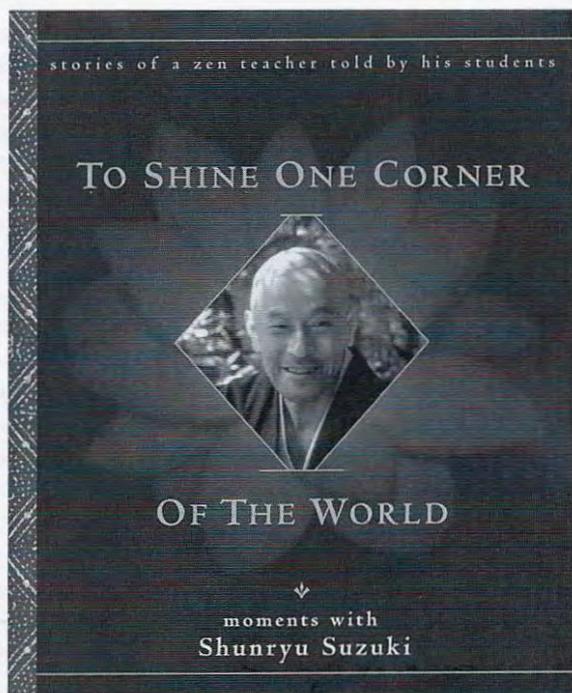
they only sat together once a week, unlike we students, who sat daily at Zen Center.

He told me their understanding was "actually pretty good," and he noted, "They don't seem to suffer from arrogance." [TOLD BY BOB HALPERN.]

Zen Center was a magnet for sixties counterculture arrivals to the San Francisco Bay area. An older woman asked Suzuki Roshi if he felt any pressure and difficulty with the various ragged, longhaired students who came off the streets seeking enlightenment. "I am very grateful for them," he said. "I will do all I can for them." [TOLD BY ROWENA PATTEE.]

As I was telling Suzuki Roshi what a disaster my life had become, he began to chuckle. I found myself laughing along with him. There was a pause. I asked him what I should do.

"Sit zazen," he replied. "Life without zazen is like winding your clock without setting it. It runs perfectly well, but it doesn't tell time." [TOLD BY SYDNEY WALTER.]



Medicine and Disease Heal Each Other

BY Michael Dai Ryu Wenger

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS NOT FOR EVERYONE. If you try a dose and find it's not useful, please return yourself to your body and mind. Even if it's useful, return yourself to your body and mind.

1

Issan Dorsey, a modern American Zen teacher, said, "To be sick is to be alive." Given, "To be sick is to be alive," think of the alternatives. Sometimes in the midst of fear, pain, and uncertainty you can experience the wonder of life. And sometimes not. Don't deny your experience or your opportunity.

2

Yunmen, a tenth-century Chinese Zen master, said, "Medicine and disease heal each other. The whole universe is medicine. What is the self?" Yunmen was a very famous, oft-quoted teacher. He said, "Medicine and disease heal each other." You're probably wondering "What is medicine? What is disease? And what is healing?" Sometimes poisons are medicine, quite literally (e.g., chemotherapy). And a disease can heal. So be open to the possibilities. Each thing may be a cure. Don't hold back. Each moment there is the potential to heal. "What is the self?" Who are you? What is sickness? What do you identify with? What self is there to preserve? What you are now is what you are now. And what are you now? Feel what you're feeling. Be who you are.

3

Rick Fields, a journalist and Tibetan Buddhist, talking about cancer said, "I don't have a life threatening disease. I have a disease threatening life." Who is threatening whom, and who is threatened? Do you feel threatened? Are you threatening? Don't threaten yourself. Find your true home. STAND UP and live what you love. Each moment find your place. In our life we meet many things. Open to them.

4

The healer and Zen teacher Darlene Cohen says, "Sometimes it hurts too much and there is nothing to be done." At those times, take refuge and comfort in nothing to be done.



BLIND MEN ON A LOG BRIDGE
by Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768)
From the exhibition "Zen Painting and Calligraphy"
at the Asian Art Museum through October 7, 2001

5

This points to the simple to say and sometimes hard to experience teachings of the five perfections: the perfect place, the perfect time, the perfect teaching, the perfect student, the perfect teacher.

The perfect place is right here, diseased or euphoric. Where else is there? What else is there to work with? Nothing. This is where you are.

The perfect time is now, ready or not. What else do you have? When could be better? Don't look at your watch!

The perfect teaching is what you're facing now. The greatest teaching is not something that you read in a book and that you vicariously savor. It is what is right before you. This is it.

The perfect student is you. Your life experience has led you here. No one is better prepared to be you, facing what you're facing. Being who you are.

The perfect teacher is the one who is with you right now. Who is on your side, whose support do you feel? The external teacher is invaluable. Still it is you who are responsible. When you accept that you are totally responsible, you can really appreciate all the help you can get.

6

MAY ALL THE BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS BLESS YOU!

In some ways, your job is clearer than it's ever been. Return to your body and mind and meet this very moment! Disease and medicine are all in a life's work.

May All Beings Be Happy!



Cruising the Li River

The Road to Dong Shan

BY Andy Ferguson

TENSHIN REB ANDERSON AND I emerged flattened and relaxed from a barber shop/massage parlor into the comfortable evening street scene of China's Jiujiang City. Two Chinese masseuses had just performed a symphony on our tour-tired bodies. The final movement was what in Chinese is called "sai bei," the back walk, where the young women carefully treaded up and down our spines, using their heels to best advantage.

"Well Reb," I said, "maybe (just maybe) that wasn't the best massage you'll ever get in your whole life. But it's the best you'll ever get for a buck and a quarter!"

"That's for sure." Tenshin agreed. "The shop was a little bit funky, but completely wholesome."

From our first jet-lagged days in Shanghai, our Zen tour group had proceeded through striking natural and historic landscapes that awed

even the jaded and world-weary travelers in the group. Each day's adventures, sparsely described in this article, wove a tapestry of Chinese religious, artistic, and natural scenic culture. But it wasn't simply the sightseeing that was appealing. Equally important was the chance to walk together among the ordinary lives of Chinese people, including Chinese Buddhists. This peaceful walking and talking, befriending and laughing, gave the tour special meaning.

From the lustrous Jade Buddha of Shanghai, we had flown to Guilin and sailed down the Li River, viewing mountains that soared as if from a traditional Chinese landscape painting. Then an evening of laughter as the group underwent a mass foot and leg massage by students at a traditional medicine college. In Guangzhou (Canton), we got down to Zen business. We arrived at fifteen-hundred-year-old Liu Rong and Guang Xiao temples, the latter said to be where Bodhidharma

Reb Anderson at the spot where Huineng is said to have pounded rice.





Literally on the road to Dong Shan, via pickup truck on a rough road

came ashore in China when he arrived from India. Receiving special permission, we entered Guang Xiao's eight-hundred-year-old Buddha Hall and circumambulated its great Buddha statues. We bowed to golden Shakyamuni, as well as a towering figure of Kwan Yin Bodhisattva. Outside was the ordination platform where the Sixth Ancestor received tonsure as a Buddhist priest in the seventh century.

The next day found us at the Sixth Ancestor's own dharma seat, Nanhua Temple, near Shaoguan City. That grand monastery houses wonderful stories, vistas, and relics—and not just from China's Zen tradition. A unique sign hangs over the kitchen. China's eleventh-century poet and statesman Su Dongpo brushed the sign's calligraphy of the words "Chai Tang" (kitchen). The beautiful characters were created not using normal writing brushes, but with the scrub brushes normally used to clean the monastery's kitchen and woks. But by far the most fascinating and moving sight in the monastery was the "true body" of the Sixth Ancestor himself. His lacquered remains, having survived the Cultural Revolution, sit upright facing the entrance of the ancestral hall at the rear of the monastery. Each day, thousands of Chinese pilgrims and other visitors come to pay their respects to this most important teacher of China's Zen tradition.

The following day in Nanchang City, the group entered Youmin Temple, a main dharma seat of great Zen master Ma. Arriving at the Buddha hall as evening services were under way, we followed Tenshin to join the



Puli Temple at Dong Shan

temple's monks and lay members in their circumambulating, chanting, and bowing. Big dharma wheels with hundreds of small buddhas, each emitting light, swirled before the grand statues of Amida, Shakyamuni, and the Medicine buddhas. A middle-aged Chinese woman moved among our group to show us how to participate in the service. After many chants and prostrations, the service concluded. When we thanked the woman for her help, she smiled happily and nodded, saying, "It was meant to be. It was meant to be."

In this manner our days proceeded. Grand temples and mountains followed upon each other. Our visits included a stop at East Woods Monastery, the home of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. We visited a nunnery headed by a delightful abbess whose daughter lived in America. We also stopped at the only active Tantric Buddhist temple in China that is open to the public. And then there was Mt. Lu, with waterfalls described by the Tang dynasty poet Li Bo as "the Milky Way falling to earth." Visits to the spectacular mountaintop monasteries of the Fourth and Fifth Zen Ancestors held special meaning. At the latter, Wuzu Shan, we paid homage to the spot where the Sixth Ancestor ground rice as a kitchen attendant.

One day, as we lurched along on our tour bus, Mary Zeng, our local guide, switched off her cell phone and glanced at our other guide, Eric Lu. They spoke briefly and then Eric turned to me and relayed the news. The road to Dong Shan was closed for construction. The authorities said there

was no way we could get through to the temple at this time. Dong Shan was our final and most important temple stop, the dharma seat of Dongshan Liangjie (Tozan Ryokai).

What followed was unusual and startling. The director of the Jiangxi Provincial Travel Service, the company in charge of our local tour, placed a call to Dong Shan's 105-year-old abbot Miao Zong, who resides in Beijing. Out of concern for our group, he called the local government (local Communist Party Chairman) and asked for help on our behalf. We parked our tour bus at the Public Security Bureau and then boarded special four-wheel drive trucks for a jarring trip over a highway under construction. Many hours later than we had planned, we arrived at the parking area at the base of Dong Mountain, deafened by the welcoming roar of firecrackers set off by the temple monks. Local Communist Party officials had orchestrated and ensured our arrival there!

Dong Shan's Puli ("Universal Benefit") Temple rests in a small mountain valley among rice paddies and bamboo forests. The ten-minute walk up the mountain from the parking area crosses over the thousand-year-old "Peng Ju Qiao" ("Encounter It Bridge") that crosses the spot in Dong Creek where Dongshan Liangjie looked into the water, saw his reflection, and woke up. Our group moved mostly in awed silence past this and other wonderful sights that met us at Dong Shan. Despite the difficulties of a long day, the historic significance of our visit to this simple and richly historic place weighed heavily on us.

At the temple's dharma hall, Tenshin Anderson prostrated himself before the dharma seat of our school's founder, performing his deep bow 108 times in behalf of our entire group. On an ancient terrace behind the hall, we held a brief service at Dongshan Liangjie's stupa, reciting the refuges in Chinese. Now the difficulties of the long day richly enhanced our sincere emotions. Perhaps we were the first group of American Zen students to reach this spot. Three years prior, I'd been told that I was the first American to arrive there, and I know of only a few other Americans that have made the journey since that time. Tenshin Anderson is, to my knowledge, the first American dharma heir of the Soto Zen School to return to Dong Shan and the aptly named "Wisdom Spring," the spring that comes forth from the ground before the Dharma Hall there.

Andy Ferguson, a San Francisco Zen Center member, leads tours to ancient Zen temples and other historic spots in China. You can reach Andy at 707-338-2100 or at Fergy@woo.com.



SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD AT RINSO-IN

This spring, Abbess Zenkei Blanche Hartman led a small group of Zen Center students in a practice period at Rinso-in, Suzuki-roshi's temple in Japan, where his son Hoitsu Suzuki is now abbot. The trip also afforded an opportunity to visit with Mitsu Suzuki (Suzuki-roshi's widow and the author of the haiku on pages 24-26) and participate in the temple's annual bazaar.



BARBARA WENIGER

Harrison "Hal" Papps (1945–2001)

Hal was a Zen character—full of idiosyncrasies and an unswerving commitment to the Buddha way. He pursued the dharma with Bodhidharma-like intensity, with an occasional pause for chocolate or ginger ale. His humility and quiet sincerity enriched the practice of many students. With fondness and respect we hold his memory.

— Paul Haller

Precepts as Original Nature

*A LECTURE BY Shunryu Suzuki
Saturday, June 12, 1971*

DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE? Are you a member of a church or a particular group? Perhaps you do not belong to any group in its strict sense, but some of you may "belong to" Zen Center. Although I say you are Zen Center students and you say you are Zen Center students, I don't know. I am not so sure who you are. But as long as you are here, to me you are Zen Center students. That's all. I accept students from various religions. Some of you may be Christian, some may be Rinzai students, or some may have another teacher. But still I accept everyone. How is it possible for me to accept students from various religions as Zen Center students without any discrimination? In order to explain that, I have to explain why we keep the Buddhist precepts. When I say "Buddhist precepts" some of you will be uncomfortable. You will think Buddhists have some particular precepts, but our precepts are not like that.

I don't intend to explain precepts in a traditional way, but in a way you can understand. The precepts are something everyone has as their own nature. They are not something that was decided by Buddha. Precepts make Buddha, Buddha. Because of precepts he became Buddha—precepts are first and Buddha appeared next. Before Buddha appeared there were precepts. In this sense, there were precepts before Bodhidharma came to China. Before everyone comes into this world there are precepts. Everyone has precepts in the true sense.

Why should we say "Buddhist" precepts or "Christian" precepts or commandments? According to our different ways of life, there are various interpretations of our true nature, but originally it is just human nature. According to human nature, we have various precepts and according to the conditions in which we live, we have various precepts—that's all. When we transmit the precepts, we put emphasis on this point, not on each of the 250 precepts, but on the original universal point which is available to everyone and which everyone can accept. Instead of putting emphasis on individual precepts, one by one, we put more emphasis on our original human nature or buddha nature.

To realize what our human nature is beyond various ways of life is our intention in transmitting precepts. The understanding of each precept is related to this origin of precepts. The explanation of each precept is how it originated. Why we have sixteen precepts and how we can accept the precepts as our original nature is how we study the precepts. If you study

the precepts just through your head, you will compare one precept to the other. But it may be difficult to accept just one precept as the source of all precepts. It is not possible to understand and accept the precepts through your mind only, so physical practice should go along with intellectual practice. If you come to the point where you observe the precepts one by one, then you will see the true meaning of the precepts. Before you face that problem, the one precept is there and you are studying all the precepts.

If you face each problem you have, then just studying the precepts doesn't work, and you must make some decision which way you will go. Maybe there is a dark way and a promising way. You can see some light ahead of you so you should make some choice. Then right there are the actual precepts. These kinds of precepts can be found when you face a real problem. That is actually how you observe precepts, how precepts make sense and how precepts help you. Precepts always show you some way before you try to go. When you drive somewhere, you follow the signs. If you are not going to take a trip, signs won't make any difference. But when you decide to drive a car from San Francisco to Los Angeles what you do is follow the signs and then the signs make sense.

Your actual way of life comes first. To go on a trip and to accept what may happen to you is the most important thing. In this sense whether you are Buddhist or Christian doesn't matter. Each one of us has our own problem, and that is not a Christian problem or a Buddhist problem. If you compare Christian precepts to Buddhist precepts you create a difficulty. But if you are concentrated on your actual life, moment after moment, and are sincere and honest, then there is no difference between Christian and Buddhist precepts.

A sign is just a sign—it shows which way to go. If your way of life is concentrated on that point, there is no need to decide whether this is Christian or Buddhist—it doesn't matter. What Christian people think is right is right for Buddhists too. If there are two ways then something is wrong with the precepts. There is only one way for you to go. But there is always the question of right or wrong, good or bad. Mostly for us this is a problem of good or bad. But this is quite simple, too. No one finds it so difficult to see which is good and which is bad. Because of your egoistic desire you want to make an excuse when you take the wrong course. At that time you may say, "Buddha said" or "Christ said" to make some excuse for taking the wrong course. When you say "Buddhism" or "Christianity" mostly you are making some excuse. But the way is very simple and the best way is just to see the sign.

If you really want to know what precepts are, you should concentrate on what you do. You shouldn't even think about precepts. Then naturally you will find your own way. If you take a trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles every day, then you don't have to think so much about the way

you get to Los Angeles. The only thing to think about is how to get to Los Angeles without having an accident. That is the point—not the precepts, but to be concentrated in each moment, in driving from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

When Oka Sotan-roshi was a young boy, his teacher Token Mitetsu-roshi told him to go buy bean curd for the monastery's meal. On the way to the store, he saw posters advertising an acrobatic theater, and he looked at the pictures for a long time without realizing how much time was passing. Then he heard the bell of his temple, signaling mealtime. He was supposed to have been back with the bean curd to finish cooking the meal, so he dashed to the store. "Give me tofu!" he said to the man at the store. As soon as the man gave it to him, he dashed back toward the temple, but on the way he realized he had left his hat in the store. So he ran back again. "Give me! Give me! Give me!" And the man said, "What?" "Give me!" He didn't say he meant his hat because his mind was so busy that the word "hat" wouldn't come out. "Give me! Give me! Give me!" "What? What? What?" And at last he could say, "My hat!" And the man answered, "Oh, your hat is on your head! What is the matter with you?" Again he dashed back to his temple, with his hat. That was the story.

The precepts are something like his hat. The precepts are always "on his head," like his hat. If he always has his hat, then there's nothing to



GIBBON by Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768)
from "Zen Painting and Calligraphy" at the
Asian Art Museum through October 7, 2001

This photo was taken after John King's shuso ceremony at Tassajara at the end of the Fall 2000 practice period. John is holding a fan and standing to Abbess Blanche Hartman's right. Abbess Hartman led the practice period.



think about. That is actually how we should keep our precepts. So we put an emphasis on the actual practice of zazen or shikantaza, on how to be concentrated on what we do moment after moment. Shikantaza

is to live in each moment. So you can apply shikantaza in your everyday life. The point is to be concentrated on what you do in its true sense, without seeking for anything inside or outside, to do something as though you are with everything. When you ignore your actual activity, thinking about something else, that is not real practice.

Real teaching is not outside of you; it is not inside of you. If you miss the practice in your everyday life, you will regret it. If you are doing your best, that is the only way to be yourself and to be with everyone. When you are with everyone, you are keeping the precepts without knowing you have your hat on your head. Even though you don't notice it, your hat is there. If you become you yourself, and if your practice includes everything, moment after moment the precepts are with you. That may be more impor-



tant than a verbal transmission of precepts. If I try to explain the written precepts, it takes time. But how you keep them, in short, is to live in each moment, to be sincere with yourself always, without looking around. If you come here you must be you, that's all. If that is so, why is it necessary to say you are a Christian or a Buddhist?

It looks like I am trying to put you into some form, like zazen practice, but actually that is not so. I put an emphasis on the form of practice because that is the only way to have real concentration. If you ignore just one instruction we may give you, there is no real concentration. If your back is not straight, it is impossible to have good, deep breathing. Good breathing means smooth, deep breathing. It should be calm and it should be strong. When you have good posture, breathing can be very smooth and

deep. It should reach to the bottom of your tummy. Actually breathing does not reach to the bottom of your tummy—it may come to the bottom of your lungs; it doesn't reach any lower. But the feeling should be like that.

When a calligrapher or a Japanese sumi ink artist works, even though he is not in the perfect posture of zazen, he applies that posture in his work. For these artists, one stroke or one line expresses many things, in the same way as our practice includes everything. That may be the difference between art in general and Zen art. Full concentration is put on one dot, on one line. If you see the way they do it, you will understand it. Mostly they hold the brush in the right hand, but the left hand is working harder than the right—you may say the artist is working the left hand with a brush in the right hand. In the same way, the artist's whole body is working on one line. If you paint just by using one hand, you cannot work properly. In some way your left hand should help your right hand, and your whole body should make your brush or your hand work freely to express something. If your brush includes all of your effort, and if you have become completely one with everything, you can work in a true sense.

That is why we put emphasis on our posture. If someone cannot sit, still he should keep his back straight and he should find out how to be concentrated on his activity. There must be some way to be concentrated on what you do. While you are sitting, without dreaming of anything, if you can express yourself fully in zazen, that is actual practice that includes everything. If you have that practice, Buddha is with you, Bodhidharma is with you, and every sage should be with you. At that time, who is Christ, who is Buddha, who is Bodhidharma, who is Dogen? Who are they? It is you yourself.

How is it possible for Buddha to exist forever? The only way is for Buddha to exist with us. How is it possible for various sages to exist in our human history? Actual history is with you, and there is no need to think about it, because you have it. When you think about the sage, he is with you in some form. When you do not think about the sage, he still is with you. This point should not be forgotten. You may think that only when you have his image with you is he there. His real being is always with you, even when you do not think about him. That is the actual truth. You think he is not always there. That is a very shallow, materialistic understanding. It is not sincere enough. You put the sage in some book and put the book in a bookcase. If you do not put them in a bookcase, they are always with you. No one can deny this.

If you understand the various sages in that way, can you be just a Buddhist? Or just a Christian? You cannot. You say, "I am Christian," but actually you are not only Christian but also Buddhist. That is very true. When you become you yourself, when you do not put the sages in a bookcase, how is it possible to say, "I am Christian" or "I am Buddhist"? Maybe

the next question will be, "Then why do you wear a Buddhist robe and why do you sew Buddhist robes?" That will be the next question, but I don't have time to talk about that right now.

Even though you laugh at what Oka-roshi did when he was just a boy, he was a very good priest. When he got back to his temple, they had to wait maybe another thirty minutes before they ate, so he must have been scolded. Even though he was scolded, he was a good boy. There is no need to wonder about that point. You cannot say he was not observing the precepts. He faithfully observed the precepts, and he always put his hat on his head. But sometimes he forgot he was wearing his hat, that's all.

Did you understand? I am very happy to see people here from various religions. It is okay with me, and you don't have to feel that Zen Center is a special building for Soto priests. You don't have to feel that way. Here we are doing our best to live with people in its true sense. That's all.

Thank you very much.

This photo was taken after a Jukai (lay ordination) ceremony at City Center on July 7, 2001. From left, standing: Jacqueline Ruben, Gloria Lee, Carol Paul, David Bomberger, Idilio Cenicerros, Susan Spencer, Darlene Cohen, Jeff Mann, Bob Jarmusz, Paul Grantham, Phillipe Boorstein, Michael Wenger, Alan Drake, Susan Rice, Teah Strozer, David Zimmerman, Josefina Hernandez, Sibylle Schoz, Carol Bomberger. Seated: Abbess Blanche Hartman, Vicki Austin, Kathie Welch, Christine de Guzman.



JUDY BUNCE

Maylie Scott

BY Mel Weitsman



MAYLIE first appeared at the old zendo on Dwight Way around 1971. At the time, she was working at the youth guidance center (Juvenile Hall) as a psychiatric social worker or therapist. She had a husband, Peter, and three fine children, Cassie, John and Mika. Maylie came from a humble New England background. But her father became director of humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, and as a child she played with the children of some of the most prominent political families. Later she traveled with Peter, who had diplomatic roles in several countries. But she had a natural sophistication, completely unimpressed with social status, rank, background or wealth.

She took to zazen like a duck to water. Over time, she became one of the most prominent members of the sangha and participated in the growth and shaping of the center. She served as president, and even in that role could be seen washing dishes and cleaning up after everybody. No task was too lowly or too much work for her, and she always did it with a cheerful smile. She made a vow to sit every day. She was the person one could always count on.

Given her background and her long marriage to Peter, a well-known social critic, plus her own social conscience and Buddhist practice, a strong social consciousness emerged, which played a decisive role in her life. Social action and societal reform, together with zazen, became her practice. No matter how much time she spent on cold rainy nights next to the railroad tracks protesting at the Concord Navy Base or at the federal building, putting her body on the line wherever she felt called, she never neglected her daily practice. She helped initiate the BASE program which combines practice with social action. She worked closely with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and was the at forefront of the prison outreach project. She participated with other groups wherever she felt that she could be of help.

She was ordained as a priest January 3, 1988 together with Fran Tribe who died in 1997. Maylie received Dharma Transmission on September 15, 1998. After she was ordained she was invited to lead some retreats in and around Arcata, California. It's a long trip. But she was willing to make the effort to go up once or twice a month. Over a period of years, a dedicated sangha grew and solidified to the point where she seriously considered moving at their request. She decided that she would. Together they found a house, Maylie moved in and that was that. She went with my blessing even though at the time she was Tanto or head practice leader with Alan Senauke. The members of BZC were reluctant to see her go, especially the women, to whom she represented a mature woman practitioner and a role model, as well as a woman who could understand their needs.

The Arcata sangha was delighted to have her there. Everyone pitched in and transformed the garage into a beautiful zendo. When visitors came, she would take them for walks in the redwoods or around the great rock at Trinidad, topping it off with dinner at the fish restaurant at the beach.

Even in the far North, she got involved in social action, encouraging others to participate. Saving the redwoods was one of her passions.

Just at the point when things were coming together so nicely, the totally unexpected fact of impermanence intervened, throwing us all into shock. It all happened so fast, and to an apparently healthy woman. It's hard to get used to. Someone asks "why?" There are various ways to answer. It became known that her mother had cancer in her fifties. It was cured. That's one possible cause. Other than that, nobody knows.

After her death, we had a ceremony that evening and the next day. Her body was cremated on Monday, May 14, and her ashes were divided. A memorial service was held at Berkeley Zen Center, followed by one at Green Gulch Farm on July 22. In Arcata, the public memorial service is planned for September 9.

Maylie died as she lived, with composure, acceptance, openness, non-attachment, and kindness and benevolence to all. She set a wonderful example of a Bodhisattva in both living and dying.

She goes with our tears and our blessings.

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

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

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