

ZEN CENTER REPORT

CHANGE OF OFFICERS

At the end of May Dick Baker resigned as President of Zen Center, Director of Zen Mountain Center, and Editor of the *Wind Bell* in order to prepare for his extended trip to Japan this October. Gary Snyder is giving Dick his house in Kyoto to rent and Dick plans to stay there for a year to learn Japanese and to practice at Antaiji and Daitokuji. After that he will spend several months each at Eiheiiji and Sojiji, the two Soto training monasteries, and then some time at a Rinzai Zen monastery and perhaps Shingon and Tendai temples before returning to the United States. As Dick will be representing Zen Center while in Japan, and will be returning later to Zen Center, we wish to sponsor him and his family. Any contributions towards their support would be welcome.

The new President of Zen Center is Silas Hoadley, a member for four years and Treasurer the past two. Until earlier this year he was the owner of Traders of California, Importers. The new Vice President is Claude Dahlenberg, a member for eight years and a first order priest. The other Vice President and Director of the Zen Mountain Center is Peter Schneider, a student in 1961 and 1962 who returned last summer to manage the guest season at Tassajara. The new Assistant Director of Zen Mountain Center is Tim Buckley. John Steiner, who began practicing during the first practice period at Tassajara, is the new Treasurer of Zen Center, and Yvonne Rand continues as Secretary of Zen Center and Office Manager in San Francisco.



Silas Hoadley and Yvonne Rand in the Zen Center office. The building across the street is Sokoji.

SAN FRANCISCO ZENDO ENLARGED

The 8-tatami, 16-student zendo in San Francisco was slowly expanded over the past eight years by putting more and more mats and zafus (cushions) in the center of the room. Thus spaces were provided for a maximum of forty students to do zazen. Then two years ago ten tatamis were installed along the right side of the balcony in the auditorium, and last winter ten more were installed along the left side, increasing the number of places to eighty. These additions make it possible for the practicing members to have regular seats in the main zendo, which will stabilize the feeling there more and enable Roshi to know the students better. New students will be required to do zazen on the balcony for an initial period of six months.



The five student flats and Sokoji Temple. Sokoji was a synagogue before the Japanese Soto congregation bought it in the 30's.

ZEN CENTER HOUSING

In response to students' needs for better ways of living and practicing in the city, particularly those students who are returning to San Francisco from Tassajara, Zen Center has leased five adjacent flats nearby for use as student houses. In the past students had been leasing two of the flats themselves, and their efforts, especially those of Jeannie Campbell, Ron and Joyce Browning, and Evelyn Lentz, were what encouraged Zen Center to assume responsibility for those two flats and the three others. By becoming a landlord, Zen Center hopes to make housing available which is not just economical and convenient, but which will allow students to practice together as a community.

The residents, Zen Center leaders, and Suzuki Roshi meet regularly to consider what shape the community should take. For example, should only practicing members be allowed to become residents? If so, should residents who are not practicing be asked to move out even if they have become residents before the rule was made? It was regretfully decided so. Should the flats be places where anyone who wants to can find a free meal and bed? Those for leaving the doors open felt that it was against the new ethic to deny anyone room and board; those for closing the doors felt that it was too difficult to practice collectively in a place full of strangers. When the lines for the bathrooms got so long that students were missing zazen, the decision was made to limit the number of residents per apartment. Should the residents take their meals together in a common dining room? Those for eating together said that it would be easier and would help their practice; those opposed said that each student should be allowed to find his own practice in the city and that communal eating was too monastic too soon. But the issue really was whether or not the housing should be patterned somewhat after Tassajara. No one felt it should be the same—everyone agreed with Roshi that oryokis were impractical in the city. At present, the residents of each flat are eating communally.

The general manager of housing is Claude Dahlenberg, the new Vice President of Zen Center and a founder and participant in several communal living experiments, including the East-West House. All applications for rooms should be addressed to him at 1828 Bush. Students applying as permanent residents should be practicing members and be willing to join one of the communal eating groups. Students wishing to stay for limited periods can make reservations with Claude or the Zen Center Office for space in a dormitory/guest room.

NEW OFFICE AND LIBRARY

Zen Center has moved its office and library from 1881 Bush across the street to 1800 Laguna. Previously Zen Center had shared a one-room office with Katagiri Sensei, and the books had been shelved in a corner of the balcony. But the balcony was needed as an additional zendo and the influx of administrative work that began with the birth of Zen Mountain Center made it impossible to get everything done within the existing office space. Consequently, Zen Center has rented from the Japanese congregation the flat above Katagiri Sensei's apartment, and has painted and converted the rooms into offices and a library/reading room.

With these physical restrictions removed, the office staff, headed by Yvonne Rand, could begin to find improved procedures for handling the ever increasing correspondence. The filing system was reorganized by Alan Whitt and form letters were created to answer recurring inquiries. John Steiner devised an efficient method for mailing the brochures. First, arrangements were made to exchange mailing lists with other organizations. Then all the new addresses were retyped and the resultant 55,000 sorted according to ZIP code numbers and affixed by some 50 volunteers coming in at different hours over a two month period.

The new office hours are from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and there is a 24-hour answering service. The library/reading room is open 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Monday and Thursday, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, and 10:00 to 12:00 a.m. Saturday, except on 4 and 9 days.

SESSHINS

From 1968 on, there will be two one-week sesshins at Zen Center each year. The first winter sesshin was held in early February and the dates for the 7th annual summer sesshin are August 19th through 24th. Anyone wishing to attend a one-week sesshin could plan to come to either of these. The sesshins at Zen Mountain Center are open only to students in residence there at the time of the sesshin.

One-day sesshins are held monthly at Zen Center and work sesshins when necessary. This year there have been work sesshins to paint the office, clean the yards of the new student houses, and work on brochure mailing. There was also a one-day sesshin at Esalen Institute in Big Sur on January 23, and then on the 24th and 25th a two-day work and zazen sesshin for the students and staff at Pacific High School in Saratoga.

THREE SOTO ARCHBISHOPS DIE

In the Soto School there are two main training monasteries, Eiheiji and Sojiji, which were founded by Dogen Zengi and his third generation successor, Keizan Zengi, respectively. Each of these monasteries is led by a Zen master whose title, in English, is archbishop; the only other archbishop is the head of the Soto School. Last winter all three archbishops died within a two-month period: Chisan Koho, the abbot of Sojiji, on November 1st; Taizen Kunazawa, the abbot of Eiheiji, on January 7th; and Rosen Takashina, the head of the whole Soto School, on January 19th, immediately after he had performed a funeral service for Taizen Kunazawa at Eiheiji.

Roshi has said that a tremendous teaching was left us in the way each of them acted during his last moments. Archbishop Koho of Sojiji, even though he hadn't stood up for two years, asked his attendants to help him get into zazen posture, and then died sitting in full-lorus. Archbishop Kunazawa of Eiheiji, on the evening of January 6th, finished a calligraphy that a branch temple of Eiheiji had asked him to do, and went to bed as usual. But at midnight he called for his attendant and asked him what time it was. "It is 12:00," the attendant said, and then observing that something seemed wrong, asked, "Shall I get you a doctor?" The Archbishop said, "No, it is not necessary. Give me some water." When the attendant brought in the full pitcher, the Archbishop took it and drank directly, shouted, 'Katsu!', and died. No one knows what he meant by this. Archbishop Takashina, whose life, Roshi said, was like a jewel rolling on a smooth surface, died in an unusual way by doing nothing special.

None of them had been ill previously, and their deaths were not anticipated, particularly one after another in such a short period. Chisan Koho was 86, Taizen Kunazawa was 94, and Rosen Takashina was 92. Formal funeral services were held for them this spring on the following dates: April 12th for Archbishop Chisan Koho, April 21st for Archbishop Taizen Kunazawa and May 4th for Archbishop Rosen Takashina. Bishop Sumi represented the Soto School in North America at the ceremonies, and Katagiri Sensei represented Zen Center and Sokoji for Suzuki Roshi.

The new archbishops have since been appointed; Taishun Sato and Shushin Iwamoto, the former assistant archbishops of Eiheiji and Sojiji, respectively. They will also share the post of the Soto School Head, alternating every two years, with Taishun Sato first. The new assistant archbishop at Sojiji is Shuitsu Kongo and at Eiheiji, Yamada Roshi, who had been the Bishop of North America and gave dokusan with Suzuki Roshi at several of the early Zen Center sesshins.

All of the new archbishops have shown great interest in Zen Center and Zen Mountain Center and have offered their help by training priests who can speak English and by encouraging the exchange of Zen students between America and Japan. While in Japan, Katagiri Sensei talked to priests and nuns who were interested in coming to America to work with Suzuki Roshi. Hopefully, two or three very good ones will be coming, the first perhaps in mid-1969.