



*Flame Lighting Mudra, Ceremony of Crossing Over for Vocha Fiske White.*

### VOCHA FISKE WHITE (1890-1974)

Vocha Fiske White first came to visit Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in the summer of 1970. At that time Suzuki-roshi invited her to live at the City Center, which she did beginning in the fall of that year. She lived and practiced with us for nearly four years—a constant inspiration to our practice. She had been a student of Buddhism and Zen for over twenty years, and to the end of her life had the quality of beginner's mind—each day making some very sincere effort to practice. Even after she had become too weak to go down the stairs to the Zendo, she would sit the daily periods of zazen and sesshins upstairs in the Buddha Hall or in her room.

She let go of the possessions of her previous active life (as an actress, a teacher, and a student of General Semantics) and left very little of the material world, but the things she did keep she used and cherished with great care. The books she had were well-worn and marked from her constant studying. Occasionally she gave dramatic readings in the dining room at Zen Center, dramatic presentations from memory of old Chinese poems which revealed her as an actress, moving performances that touched us with her dry humor and left us laughing quietly for a long time.