

## REBUILDING THE TASSAJARA BATH HOUSE

The charm of the Tassajara Bath House is undeniable and undiminished, but in recent years concern has developed for the structural integrity of the building. Inspection by our engineer Geoffrey Barrett in the Spring of 1983 was conclusive — we would have to replace the roof and the interior walls of the Bath House, soon. The exterior masonry walls were sound and tubs and plunges entirely functional. But the deck and plumbing also needed replacement and the deck foundation required reinforcement. In the Fall of 1983 the deck foundation work was completed; then as a community we began to consider what we wanted in a “new” Bath House and how to go about getting it.

The rebuilding of the Bath House is a major undertaking for Zen Center, and we are currently fund-raising for the cost of the project: \$150,000. Once we have these funds, however, we can do more than replace what exists. They will allow us to extend the building and the decks, to add showers, to tile the plunges and resurface the floors, all the while preserving the openness of the baths and the intimate contact they provide with the mountain valley.

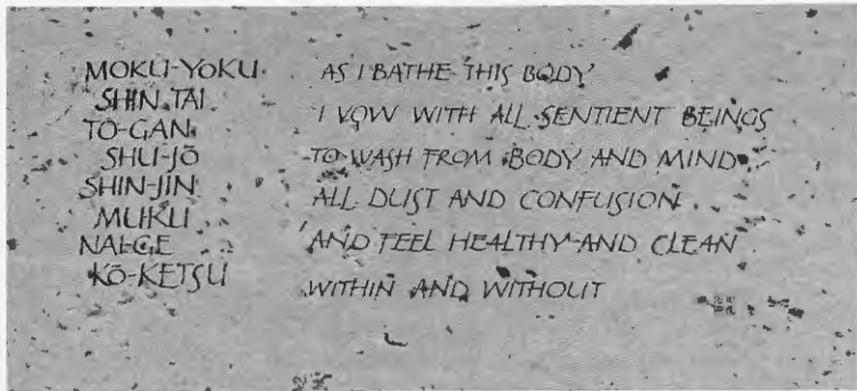
The scale of the project has been decided, but the architectural plans and working drawings are not yet finished. A crew of carpenters will be at Tassajara before the guest season this Spring to add a cedar deck and replace the roof over the plunge. Work will resume in the Fall after Guest Season and, if we keep on schedule, the "new" Bath House essentially should be ready for Guest Season 1985.

When we began this project we contacted an old friend of Tassajara, Marilyn Doyle, who has devoted much time over the last ten years meticulously researching a book on Tassajara history. (The book is complete and she is now looking for a publisher.) She generously provided us with old photographs going back to the turn of the century as well as the following detailed account of the bath's history:

The Bath House and the adjoining reservoir were built in 1906 by Charles and Helen Quilty, the owners of Tassajara, who also financed building the Tassajara road in 1888. As can be seen in old photographs, there were two small rooms upstairs for a masseuse and masseur. The steam room at that



time was a wooden shack erected over the hot springs with a tent covering the creek so people could jump into the water to cool off in privacy. The crossing to the baths was near the stone rooms during the summer months; when the water was high, a temporary bridge was hung across the creek.



In 1927-28 a group of Salinas businessmen, the Tassajara Hot Springs Company, totally remodeled the Bath House. The massage area was enlarged considerably, six private tub rooms were added to the front of the plunges and the concrete steam rooms were built.

Very few alterations were made to the Bath House until a flood in April 1958 washed out four of the private tub rooms on the east end, leaving only the two downstream rooms on the men's side. Later that year the familiar Tassajara Hot Springs legend was painted on the exposed wall by Anne Marie Brunken. In the 1960's, the Becks, then the owners, removed the windows from the front of the plunges to let in light and air, and the badly deteriorated second story was removed soon after Zen Center acquired Tassajara in 1969.

If you would like to help us finance reconstruction of the Tassajara Bath House, you may send a tax-deductible contribution to the Tassajara Bath House Fund.

The following is reprinted from: Monterey County Resources, History and Biography, 1899:

TASSAJARA HOT SPRINGS, California's Greatest Natural Wonder

California is a land of wonders. Her mineral springs alone would make her famous. First among these, and equal to any in the world, it is said, are the remarkable hot and mineral springs in Monterey County called Tassajara Hot Springs. These springs were held in high esteem by the Indian tribes, by their Spanish successors, and our people of today who have seen them say that they surpass anything of their kind. They are situated about thirty-five or forty miles south of Salinas and Monterey. The proprietor of the springs, Mr. C. W. Quilty, of San Jose, has constructed a road of fifteen miles at a cost of about \$15,000, and opened the springs to the world . . .

The drive to the Hot Springs from Salinas or Monterey cannot be surpassed. The journey up the Carmel River, by the sparkling waters which now supply

the great system of water works for Pacific Grove, Monterey, and the Del Monte, presents a change of scene at every rod of road. The road winds through the Laureles Ranch, comprising thousands of acres of gently undulating fields, studded with evergreen oaks . . .

Leaving the Laureles, the road passes through the Tularcitos Rancho. Here also one finds a succession of valleys opening one into the other for miles and crossed here and there with mountain streams, flowing, some into small lakes, others finding their way to the noble Carmel.

Southward rise the Santa Lucia Mountains, now famous for the Los Burros gold mines; eastward lies the great Salinas Valley, yellow with the light reflected from ripening grain; westward, and as though at your feet, thunders the Pacific Ocean against the roughest coast of the whole California seaboard, and northward rests the bay of Monterey, blue in the distance, and bordered with a crescent of white sandy beach stretching far north to Santa Cruz. The road now descends into the great cañon where the Tassajara Hot Springs are located.

It winds downward through great masses of granite, then through snowy limestone, and finally through immense layers of sandstone piled in regular order one on another and ranging from one to twenty feet in thickness. A neat hotel is now being built of this sandstone. Here flow the swift waters of the Arroyo Seco. On its southern bank bursting from their rocky prisons, are the Tassajara Hot Springs. They issue from the mountainside to a height of six feet, their thermal waters falling into the cold stream of the Arroyo Seco. There are about eighteen springs. Some of them spout out great quantities of hot water; from others it wells up in large bubbles, and, flowing down the rocks, leaves many vari-colored deposits of iron, sulphur, lime, magnesia, soda, etc. Some large hot springs rise in the center of the creek, warming its waters. Fifteen feet away are several cold springs of pure and agreeable-tasting water, also a large spring red with the oxide of iron. The temperature of the springs range from icy coldness to a boiling heat. These springs are a sure cure for rheumatism and for all blood, kidney and cutaneous diseases. The results are equally wonderful in dyspeptic, liver, and stomach troubles. The climate is faultless, being mild and dry, fog being unknown. New baths are being added and a fine stone hotel built. The immense water power of the Arroyo Seco will be used in lighting the hotel and grounds with electricity and running small cold storage rooms. These springs and grounds, with all the facilities of the place, water, baths, towels, etc., are open to campers at \$3.00 a week each, reduction being made to families. Boarders will be accommodated at the hotel at \$10.00 a week.