

Wind Bell



Volume XVI No. 1

Winter, 1978-79

Cover: The Big Sur-Marble Cone forest fire burning at night. It encircled Tassajara, took 18 days to contain, and was the second largest fire in California history.

FOREST FIRE : AUGUST 1977



Above: Baker-roshi lights the first backfire at Tassajara. At right: Forest Service crew chief Bob Crew lights the next of the backfires, which were used on both slopes of the Tassajara canyon to keep the main fire from reaching us.

Ted Marshall was the head of Zen Center's fire crew. Here he is wearing a shirt from the U.S. Forest Service, for whom he used to work fighting forest fires during the summers.



Yellow-orange smoke created an eerie light in the valley for weeks.



After the fire.



Well before the winter rains the topsoil crumbling from the burnt and rootless hills was a warning of how severe the flooding was to be.





The bath bridge was later raised three feet to keep it from acting as a dam with branches and debris behind it.

FLOOD: JANUARY 1978

Most affected by the flood was the Tassajara-Jamesburg road. Here, instead of passing beneath the road in a culvert, the runoff formed a roaring stream and the road disappeared into the hillside.





Soon after this photograph was taken the creek ran over the steam rooms (center) and up over the bath deck and into the hot-springs plunges.

One of several spots where the Tassajara roadbed washed completely away.





After starting in the basement storage area (at right) the fire moved up a stairway and, within an hour of being discovered, had burned the Zendo, library, office, and linen room (foreground), as you see in this photograph.

CASSAJARA ZENDO FIRE: APRIL 1978

The ladder stands to the left of what used to be the Zendo entryway.



NEWS

It has been two years since we have published a Wind Bell. During this time we have been working on so many aspects of our life and practice that Zen Center has been unable to afford a full-time Wind Bell staff. Now we have a part-time staff of two, and hope to produce more issues and experiment with the way we present some of the varied aspects of Zen Center.

LOS PADRES FOREST FIRE AUGUST 1977

The major events of the last 18 months have occurred at Tassajara. In August the Big Sur-Marble Cone fire, in the Los Padres National Forest, surrounded Tassajara—the second biggest fire in the history of California. We were successful in keeping the forest fire out of the Tassajara valley, but it cost us approximately \$110,000 in fire fighting expenses and lost guest season income. As many of you know we sent a letter, with a detailed description and pictures of the forest fire, to friends and supporters. The immediate, generous financial and emotional response to the letter was very encouraging. In the following Fall and Winter we continued our regular schedule of two 3-month practice periods, but there had to be a special emphasis on work.

Although we were able to keep the fire out of Tassajara we were deluged during the Winter by rain and run-off from the burned watershed. Often large boulders carried by the chocolate-colored water rumbled down the stream sounding like freight trains. The Tassajara Creek became a river and rose over the steam rooms and the bath house deck into the plunges. The arched bridge to the baths had to be raised three feet when water and debris started to back up behind it. Only by our filling and placing 2500 sandbags and cutting about 200 trees out of the creek channel were we able to reduce the turbulence and the likelihood of trash dams. On the upper stream we removed the bridge below the gate, widened and

Flood protection for the basement food storage area.



A section of the road near Tassajara after the rains. Bringing in food and supplies in Garden Way carts and wheelbarrows.



deepened the stream bed, and built a five- to eight-foot high embankment along its lower bank. With these preparations we were just barely able to keep both the Tassajara Creek and the upper stream within their banks at high water. During the storms we had to have an all-night patrol, just as during the fire.

The fourteen mile road from Jamesburg into Tassajara completely washed out in six places. Sometimes twenty or thirty feet of the road was gone. In one place a long stretch of the road became the streambed itself. There were several large slides with trees, roots and all, that completely blocked the road for two weeks until the county road crew was able to clear them away. (We are very appreciative of the great help Monterey County has given us.) We had several fairly large landslides in Tassajara itself as well as losing a number of retaining walls—principally the wall near the bridge opposite the guest dining room porch.

The aftermath of the fire was difficult and made months of hard work necessary for us in order to continue to carry on Tassajara practice and this last summer's guest season. Despite the forest fire and flood in the Spring, the hills and mountain slopes around the valley were reborn in luminous green, and the rye grass seeded from airplanes after the fire and fresh growth of every kind came up all over. Perhaps many seeds were dormant during the drought or were only brought to life by the fire and its aftermath. A number of trees that had looked dead were later covered with green. And there were many more than the usual number of wildflowers and a fragrant brocade lined the gullies and ridges: baby-blue-eyes, lupine, monkey flower, shooting star, lotus, paint brush, scarlet sage, bleeding heart, blue flax, poppy, Johnny jump-up, snow-in-spring, brodiaea, live-forever, buttercup, Chinese lantern, wallflower, golden fields, shepherd's purse, wild sweet pea, and more; and in Tassajara's own gardens: azalea, quince, iris, crocus, hollyhock, violet, hyacinth, primrose, pansy, daisy, tulip, periwinkle, and fruit and almond trees.

TASSAJARA ZENDO FIRE

At the end of the Spring 1978 practice period there was a disastrous fire at Tassajara that burned down the Zendo, library, food storage area, and office. After successfully keeping the huge August forest fire out of Tassajara, to lose the oldest, most central, and important building at Tassajara could have been very discouraging; but everyone met it with acceptance and hard work.

The fire occurred during the Mondo (question and answer) ceremony between the students and Baker-roshi on the last day of the practice period. From the back of the Zendo a student, waiting to ask the next question, said, "There seems to be a fire back here!" Roshi looked up and saw some vague evidence of a fire. He immediately looked down for a moment just to return everyone to his or her individual composure, and then he looked up again and — the very next moment — the whole back of the Zendo entry was orange with fire. Everyone moved calmly and directly out of the Zendo, but at the end of the twenty or thirty seconds it took for everyone to leave, a few of the last people out had their hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes singed by the heat.

It was immediately apparent that the fire could not be controlled at all with extinguishers. However, the flooding rains of the Winter and Spring had washed out all the water lines from the reservoir down to Tassajara, so hoses had been run through the trees from the reservoir to maintain a waterflow during the storms. This hookup, though, left no pressure in the standpipe system which we had specifically installed years before to meet such fire emergencies. Also, our main large fire engine had broken down a few weeks before and we had immediately ordered a new one which was delivered a few days after the fire. Lacking either of these systems, the fire crew, well trained from its experience of the forest fire in the previous August, was able to get the floating pump down into the stream and hooked up in less than five minutes with strong pressure for one hose, and pretty good pressure for two hoses. But in much less than five minutes the fire had spread in an enormous rush through the floor and ceiling of the library, then on into the older Zendo-office building. The 100-year-old wood burned like dry pine needles.

The fire seems to have started in a propane gas refrigerator that was in the basement storage area that was next to the Zendo. We had had some trouble with the pilot light of the refrigerator shortly before, but it had been repaired and a refrigeration expert had come in to check it. The pilot light for the gas refrigerator was the only flame in the area. The fire burned very strongly from the draft created in the stone staircase coming up from the food storage area. The fire wall between the kitchen and library held long enough to give us time to save the kitchen.

The extreme heat prevented anyone from re-entering the Zendo to rescue anything. As a result we lost the large drum (*taiko*), the wooden drum (*mokugyo*), and large bowl bell (*keisu*), altogether worth about \$40,000. The large bronze bowl hell melted away, leaving no trace. Saddest of all, the 1700-year-old stone Gandhara Buddha shattered and cracked in the heat. Unfortunately it is impossible to get insurance for fire in a remote mountain area like Tassajara.

To save the kitchen, it took several hours and continual work inside and outside with hoses and buckets, and with people on the roof chopping away burning shingles and

Fighting the fire, bucket brigades supplied water directly from the creek.



beams. We did save the kitchen and limited the fire to the Zendo-office-library complex. Everyone worked together very hard and calmly.

While the fire was still burning a phone call came in on the field phone from our Stitchery in San Francisco, asking whether Tassajara wanted the meditation cushions replaced in black, or in blue denim which would not show the dirt as much if the students had to sit outside now that the Zendo was gone. Everyone was encouraged and amused by Alaya's promptness. As soon as the fire was safely contained we sat down to the Mexican meal that had been prepared earlier in the afternoon before the fire by Wenceslao Aguirre and Rocio Hernandez. Except for this evening meal, safely stored in the ovens, all the food storage had burned up. Late that night the town-trip truck drove to an all-night market in Monterey. The people at the market were a little surprised to sell, at that hour, \$325 worth of Cheerios, Wheaties, Grape Nuts Flakes, sugar, milk, peanut butter, and bread. This food, all we could find at that hour that required no cooking, provided the breakfast and lunch for the next day.

The morning after the fire Baker-roshi and the students finished the Mondo ceremony, and held the closing practice period ceremony.

Then came the big push. For two weeks as many as 125 students and volunteers worked ten-hour days to clean up after the fire, building a new food storage area, installing a new walk-in refrigerator, and building a fifty-foot by seventy-foot temporary Zendo in the upper garden. Luckily we were able to begin the guest season on schedule, May 1. (Photographs, showing work during the Spring interim period start on page 22.)



Zen Center decided at that time not to fund-raise to cover the costs of our losses during the fire, having just finished a large mailing after the Big Sur-Marble Cone forest fire. However, people who heard about it have contributed \$45,000 toward the \$120,000 of our immediate costs. This amount does not include rebuilding a permanent Zendo on the burned site, which will cost at least \$200,000 and will take considerable care and planning. Rebuilding on the old site, using the old stone walls, will be left until the money is available.

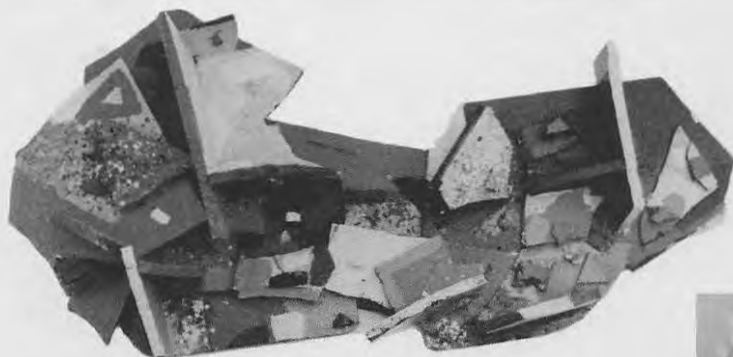
Although it does not replace the Zendo, we occasionally remind ourselves that almost every old temple in Japan has burned down many times. In fighting a fire of this kind there is none of the drama and over-powering scale of fighting a huge forest fire, or of experiencing the torrent of five or six inches a day of rain, day after day, running off a burned watershed and roaring through a narrow valley. In the end all one can say is that these things happen. It burned. We are rebuilding. We are very very grateful no one was hurt.





THE TASSAJARA BREAD BAKERY AND EDWARD AVEDISIAN

The Tassajara Bread Bakery at 1000 Cole Street (at Parnassus) in San Francisco underwent a major expansion in September of 1977 to meet greater demand for its bread, pastries and cakes. The production area was reorganized to streamline work flow and to make room for new equipment, including a walk-in freezer, refrigerator, and dough sheeter. (The production area changes in layout as well as work procedure came about after receiving the expert advice of Swami Chetanananda, Kerry Smith, and Gaetano Maida, from the Rudrananda Ashram in Indianapolis.) The expansion in the sales area was made possible by acquiring the adjacent store front: the wall was partially removed, and the interior completely designed by Edward Avedisian, a painter and sculptor from New York and a friend of Zen Center. Edward designed the interior space, including a large multi-colored painted sculpture hanging on the wall of the new front room. Altogether, the sitting area now accommodates 50 people, and it opens visually to the back area where twenty students work full-time producing the many bakery goods offered for sale there.



The twelve-foot-long sculpture by Edward Avedisian on the wall of the Bakery's new front room.



Edward Avedisian

ALAYA STORE AND STITCHERY

Edward Avedisian also designed the interior space for the new store Zen Center has opened two blocks from the Bakery, at 848 Cole Street, for the Alaya Store and Stitchery. The new store has room for display of the cushions and clothes, a fitting area and dressing rooms, additional work space, and an outdoor patio and garden in the rear. At both locations, the Bakery and the Stitchery, Zen Center students have done all of the work, learning whatever is necessary to create the work space and do the baking, sewing, and selling—ways for us to support ourselves and to work with other people.

NEW BUSINESSES

Zen Center Restaurant. In 1977 the opportunity came up for us to open a restaurant at Fort Mason, on San Francisco's north waterfront. After several months of planning and careful study, we decided to go ahead, feeling that the site presented us with an unusual and excellent chance to start the vegetarian restaurant we have long thought about opening, and that it should give us the necessary financial boost to make our operations budget completely self-supporting. The building itself is a former warehouse, extremely spacious (a main room 50 by 80 feet, 22 feet high), with four bays of windows looking west directly onto the Marina, San Francisco Bay, and the Golden Gate Bridge. We have already completed interior painting and installation of transparent glass in the water-facing windows. Construction is now under way, with all work being done by Zen Center carpenters, plumbers, painters, and electricians. The opening is planned for Spring 1979.

Cole Valley Press is a small job-printing business located on Cole Street near the Bakery and Alaya Stitchery. Last spring the two brother-owners offered to sell the business to Zen Center on very reasonable terms (we pay for it as we run it), and began in August to train students to take over the management and printing presses. Cole

Restaurant site, looking out onto the Marina, Golden Gate Bridge, and Marin hills.



Valley Press fulfills our long term intention to do our own printing and will help toward our overall financial support.

Whole Earth House Hold Store. For a number of years Zen Center has wanted to start a business that would make available good quality, ecologically sound, and economically efficient household and gardening equipment — a store that would respond to the growing but hidden economic value of the household economy. The Whole Earth Truck Store in Menlo Park closed last spring (it was established by the *Whole Earth Catalog*, and now the *Co-Evolution Quarterly*). Zen Center was asked to take over its inventory, and in May we purchased it at 60% of wholesale value, to be paid as the inventory is sold. Currently we are continuing to operate the Whole Earth Truck Store as a mail order business, and are looking for a suitable site in either Marin or San Francisco.

COOPERS & LYBRAND

Another important area of activity in Zen Center has been the work of Coopers & Lybrand and Zen Center's financial officers. In the Spring of 1976, Coopers & Lybrand, one of the largest international accounting firms, designed an accounting system for Zen Center to assist us in keeping track of our finances. Their help was made possible by an extremely generous contribution designated specifically for this purpose. The donor wanted to help us make Zen Center's finances more manageable and presentable in a format more accessible to us and to others. The donor also wanted to help free the Abbot from the many financial pressures of Zen Center.

Larry Barrett, a management consultant from Coopers & Lybrand, worked several months with the Zen Center Treasurer and the heads of the practice centers and the work centers. The resulting proposals were reviewed extensively by Baker-roshi, the Zen Center Finance Committee, and Coopers & Lybrand partners Roy Bouque and Carmine Guerro. Finally, a 138-page accounting manual set out a system of report formats, a chart of accounts with fund accounting, and purchasing and receiving procedures. With this system we can much more easily recognize limits, establish priorities, and clarify policy decisions. This is one of the most important accomplishments in Zen Center since we began trying to support ourselves.

OUTSIDE FINANCIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Several friends of Zen Center, each a financial expert in his or her own field, have agreed to meet with us occasionally to give an overview of our situation and to answer our questions. This Outside Financial Advisory Board currently consists of the following people:

Larry Barrett: *former management account consultant, Coopers & Lybrand.*

Richard Blum: *Vice-Chairman, U.R.S. Corporation, a publicly owned professional services company; Chairman of the San Francisco Mayor's Financial Advisory Committee; advisor to the White House on urban finances; and formerly Senior Vice-President, Sutro and Company.*

Carmine Guerro: *Audit partner, Coopers & Lybrand.*

Paul Hawken: *President, OMC, Inc., manufacturers; Director of Common Ground Ecology Action; founding President of Erewhon Natural Foods, Inc.; founder of Natural Food*

Associates; author of Magic of Findhorn; coordinator of Briarpatch Review; currently writing a book, Right Livelihood, and building a solar-energy-based subdivision in Redwood City, California.

Edward C. Johnson 3rd: *President, Fidelity Management and Research Corporation (Fidelity Mutual Fund Group); trustee, the Fidelity Foundation.*

Michael Phillips: *Business Manager, Glide Memorial Church and Glide Foundation; financial advisor, Briarpatch Businesses; author, The Seven Laws of Money; formerly Director of Marketing and Planning, Bank of America and Bank of California.*

Alan Rothenberg: *Executive Vice President, Citizens Savings and Loan Association; formerly Secretary of Business and Transportation, State of California; and Vice President, Flow of Funds Management, Bank of America.*

Gordon B. Sherman: *founder, Businessmen for the Public Interest, and Citizens Communications Center; formerly Chief Executive Officer, Midas Muffler Corporation.*

Alice Tepper-Marlin: *founder and President, Council on Economic Priorities.*

John Wilson: *Director of Economic Policy Research, Bank of America; formerly Associate Director of Budget Policy Research and Planning, Office of Economic Opportunities; formerly professor, Yale University and University of Connecticut; formerly President, North Star Research Institute.*



340 Page Street

340 PAGE STREET BUILDING

In early 1977 Zen Center purchased the 20-unit apartment building at 340 Page Street, in San Francisco, adjacent to the main City Center building. The purchase of the building was made possible by the gift of the down payment from the Steiner family. The building finally gives families a place to live. Eventually we want to build a connecting walkway to the Zendo and to create a protected play space for the children in the courtyard which is between the City Center building and the new residence.

WHEELWRIGHT CENTER

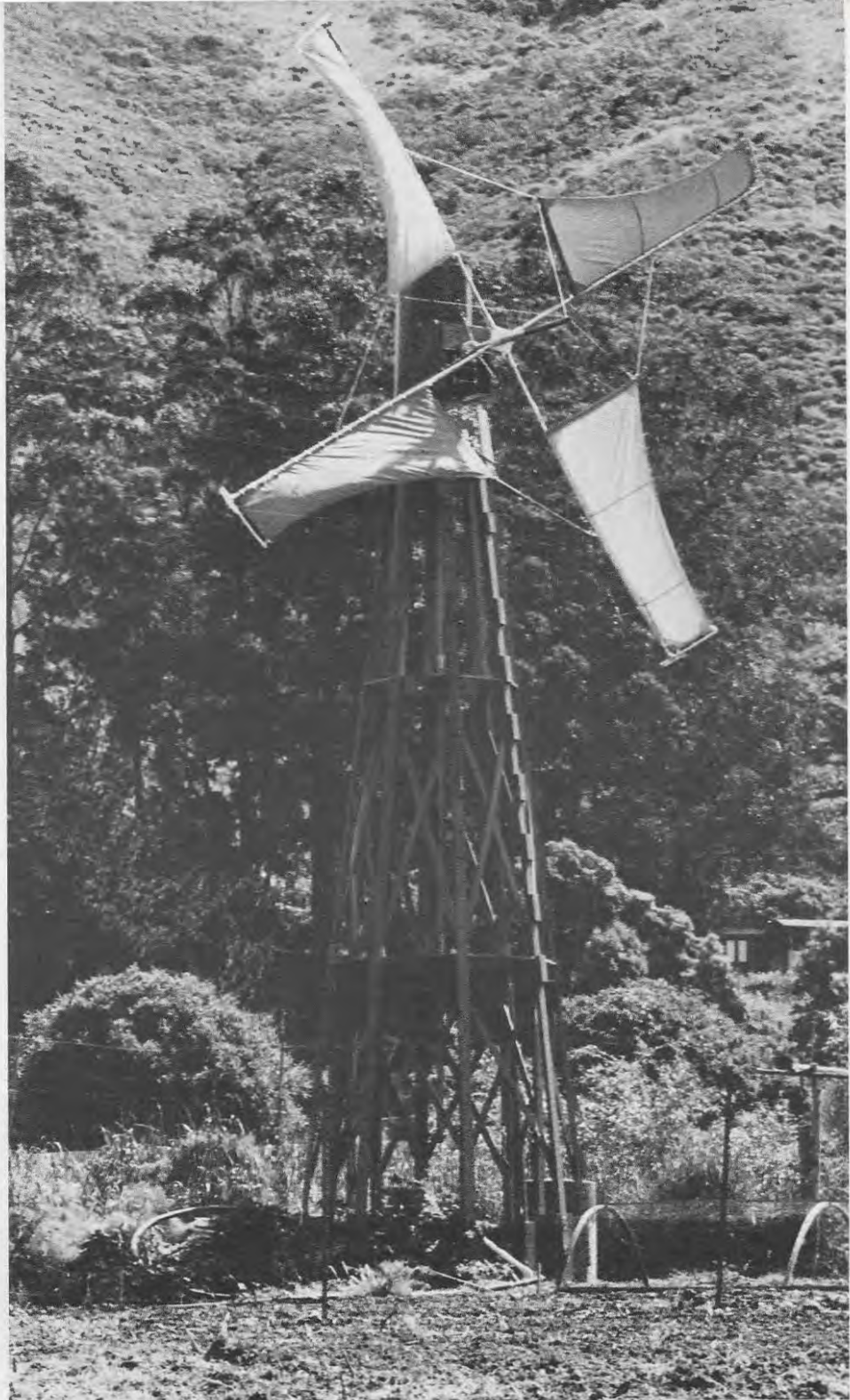
At Green Gulch Farm, we have now finished the Wheelwright Center building, our guest and meeting facility at the farm which we started in June of 1975. The main room in the Wheelwright Center has been the site for workshops in Sensory Awareness led by Charlotte Selver and Charles Brooks, and for meetings and gatherings of all sorts. Students at the farm also use the room often for meetings and classes. The room works very well for small groups as well as for larger groups, up to 35. We have many requests to use the Wheelwright Center from people outside of Zen Center who find meeting and working at the farm and in Green Gulch valley peaceful and concentrated. (Anyone interested in using the Wheelwright Center facilities may contact the Wheelwright Center Director at Green Gulch.)



The Wheelwright Center, Green Gulch Farm.

SAILWING WINDMILL

The most visible new landmark at the farm is a sailing windmill, the most advanced of a series of sailwings developed in India and America. It has large red and yellow sailcloth blades and is located just below the pond adjacent to the Zendo. Using easily available materials—the mill itself rotates on a free floating 3/4 ton axle from an old truck—it was built by students with the help of Ty Cashman, who had worked on a similar project with the New Alchemy Institute at Cape Cod. The sailwing has a double-acting pump, and with an average wind can pump up to 10,000 gallons per day. It is currently pumping water into the lines for the drip irrigation system in the fields, and eventually could be part of a larger system designed to supply water to operate the Rainbird irrigation sprinklers. The windmill is unique in that it was designed for the specific needs and possibilities of the Green Gulch valley: it pumps a large amount of water in relatively low winds. During the Winter, the only season of high winds, the sails are furled to prevent damage.



Sailwing windmill

HORSES

The animal population has increased in the past year. We have a large Percheron mare named Maude, who came to the farm with her colt Bill and who is due to foal again in June. Snip, one of the original work horses at Green Gulch, recently gave birth to a beautiful black filly named Kate. A Morgan riding horse named Cleo was given to us by Annette, Heidi, and Richard Blum. Cleo needs a friend so that we can ride in pairs, in case anyone knows of a riding horse looking for a home.

OUR COW

Green Gulch has its first cow — Moss Rose Supreme Daisy — Daisy by everyday name — who gives four gallons of milk a day, and has a calf which was born in August. She is a Jersey and is, we hope, the beginning of a small dairy herd.



Daisy



Kate

THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOUNDATION

Another major area of activity for Zen Center is the Neighborhood Foundation in San Francisco. The Foundation is a separate, non-profit foundation established by Zen Center in 1974. The activities of the Neighborhood Foundation concentrate in the immediate 20-block area with programs for children, families, and old people and which enable residents in this particular neighborhood to move towards authority in and ownership of their neighborhood, to make this low-income inner city community more liveable and productive. The three major program areas are a youth program, community development, and low-income housing.

The Community Recycling Center is the only recycling center in San Francisco located in the inner city, operating on a full-time basis from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Tuesday through Saturday. The purpose of the Community Recycling Center is conservation, education, employment, and production of income for neighborhood activities. It is located under the freeway at the corner of Haight and Octavia in a government-owned parking lot. Those of you nearby, please bring us your old newspaper, glass bottles, tin and aluminum cans, and cardboard.

The Neighborhood Foundation, in cooperation with other organizations and community groups, is sponsoring neighborhood events in the Koshland Community Park: a circus, picnics, sports competitions, etc., to bring neighborhood people together throughout the year.

Stella Beck, a professional actress and full-time Neighborhood Foundation Youth Program Coordinator, acting and body movement teacher, directed and produced a community play — Mountain Whippoorwill — an original country-soul musical, performed at Mission High School in May of last year. The play combined professional musicians, choreographers, dancers and actors with amateurs who have never been

In July 1977 a large opening celebration was held at Koshland Community Park, completing four years of work by neighborhood and city groups and the Neighborhood Foundation. The park has also been the site of a neighborhood circus planned by Stella Beck, featuring a band, food, and circus performers.





The Hayes Valley Track Meet, the first city-wide, all inclusive track meet of its kind for San Francisco youth was organized by the Neighborhood Foundation's Ben Tucker. Ben, a championship runner himself and for three years the head and founder of the Hayes Valley Track Club, conceived the idea for the meet while coaching the Nigerian national track team last year. He saw there how successful a developmental program could be which included young children of both sexes as well as teenagers and older runners. The meet, at the McAteer High School track June 3, was open to all San Franciscans from 5-18.



on stage (e.g. a legal secretary, a brick-layer) in an exciting interracial celebration of life adapted by Stella from a poem by Stephen Vincent Benet.

The Neighborhood Foundation currently has a staff of twelve people and many volunteers to handle a wide range of neighborhood programs including classes in physical fitness, art, drama, and speech, language skills, a community newspaper; the

The Neighborhood Foundation staff. From left: John Lewis, Sami Mustafa, William Shaw, David Chadwick, Renee des Tombe, Stella Beck, Virginia Baker, David Carlson, Dan Welch, Kim Kaiser, and Ben Tucker (in insert above).



purchase, rehabilitation, and conversion of three TNF buildings to tenant-owned condominiums; a community solar laundromat; youth summer employment and training program; and the training of low-income CETA workers in construction skills working on a remarkable Moorish-Venetian Victorian wood frame synagogue that TNF is working to convert into a community theatre for San Francisco (In fact the synagogue was Zen Center's old home at 1881 Bush Street.)

THE SHUNRYU SUZUKI STUDY CENTER

Zen Study Center continues to offer courses for beginning and advanced students at the City Center, Green Gulch, and Berkeley. Among the courses given recently are several studying in depth the

Abhidharmakosa and the work of Dogen Zenji, Thomas Cleary's seminar on the reading and translating of Chinese Buddhist texts, Philip Whalen's and Diane de Prima's classes studying literature and poetry, and specialized study of farming and carpentry at Green Gulch. Kazuaki Tanahashi-sensei taught courses in calligraphy, classical Japanese, and Buddhist art, as well as working on special translation projects. Nakamura-sensei and Suzuki-sensei continue to teach formal tea ceremony, and Nakamura-sensei teaches Noh chanting at both San Francisco and Green Gulch. Charlotte Selver and Charles Brooks conducted several Sensory Awareness workshops at Green Gulch last spring, and in late May will again offer their Zen Mountain Center benefit workshop at Tassajara. Guest teachers have included Dainin Katagiri-roshi, Dr. Masao Abe, Lama Govinda, Professor P. S. Jaini, Professor Lewis Lancaster, and Professor Robert Thurman.



Suzuki-sensei

WHEELWRIGHT PRESS

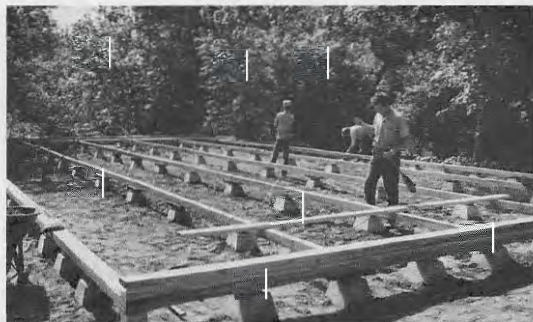
Zen Center's Wheelwright Press has just published its first major work, Edward Conze's *Buddhist Studies 1934-1972*, a collection of previously published essays bound in one volume in order to make Dr. Conze's work more available. Dr. Conze is the world's foremost scholar and translator of the Great Perfection of Wisdom literature, which includes the Heart Sutra and Diamond Sutra which we chant regularly at Zen Center. The limited, hardbound edition of *Buddhist Studies 1934-1972* is available for \$15.00 through the Zen Center Bookstore.



The Tassajara Director using the temporary office.

REBUILDING

April 16 - April 20: foundation piers and beams laid in the upper garden for the new, temporary Zendo. Several tons of rich garden soil, and the plants, were moved to another Tassajara location.





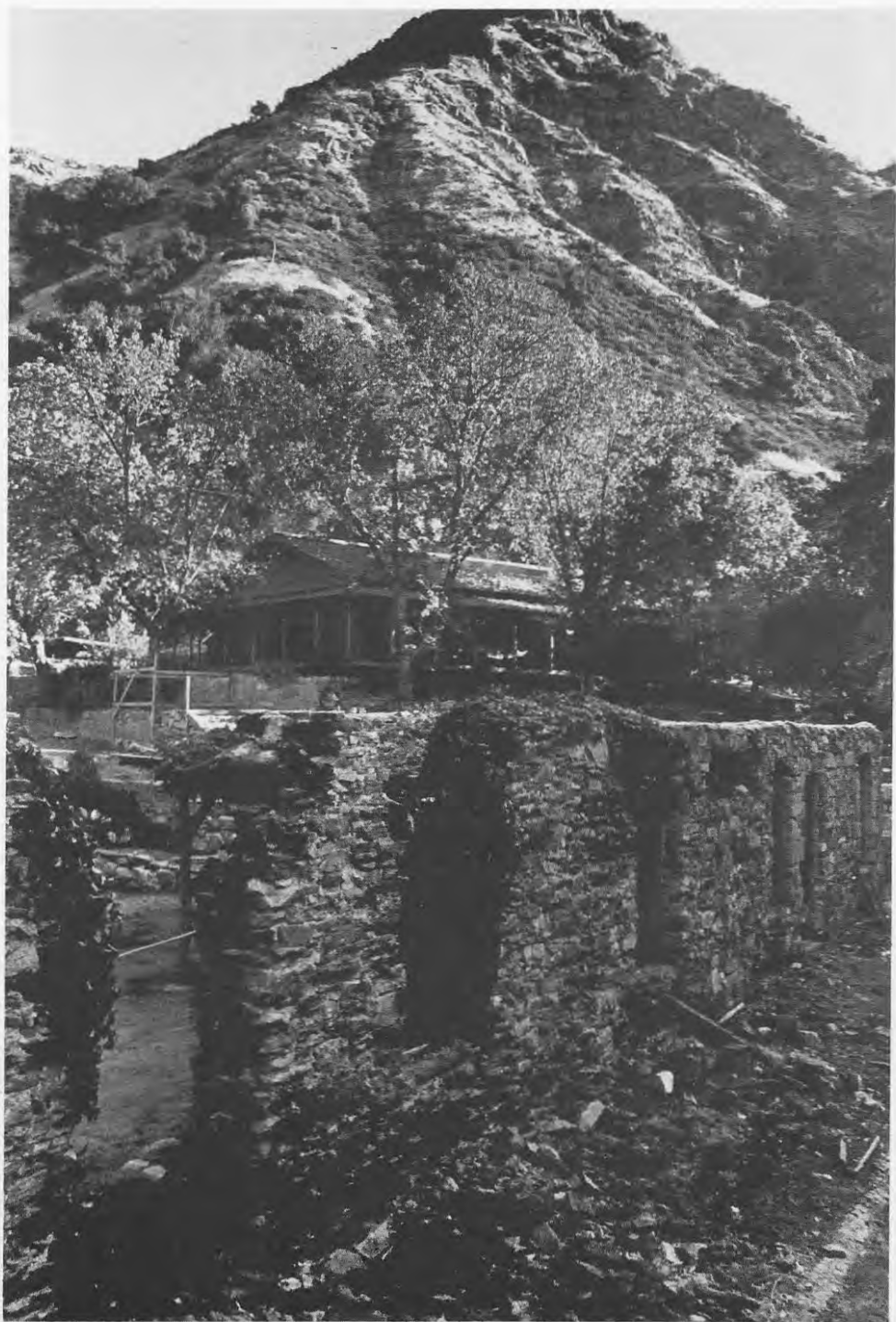
Work meetings. During the Spring interim period there were often more than 100 students and friends who came to help with the work. As well as cleanup from the fire, there were the usual guest season preparations. And still recovering from the flood, sandbags were moved, mud and rock slides cleared, and the road repaired. In addition to the new Zendo, construction projects included repair of the kitchen roof and beams, building a new walk-in refrigerator, tarring of the roof of the Stone Rooms, enlarging the temporary bridge by the gatehouse, building a new linen room, and installing ceilings in the new guest cabin.

April 21 and April 22: raising the wall frames.



April 24: finishing the frame and installing the exterior walkway supports.





The new temporary Zendo was completed during the first month of the summer guest season. The still standing walls of the old building will eventually be incorporated into the design of a permanent Zendo on the old site.



HYMNUS AD PATREM SINENSIS

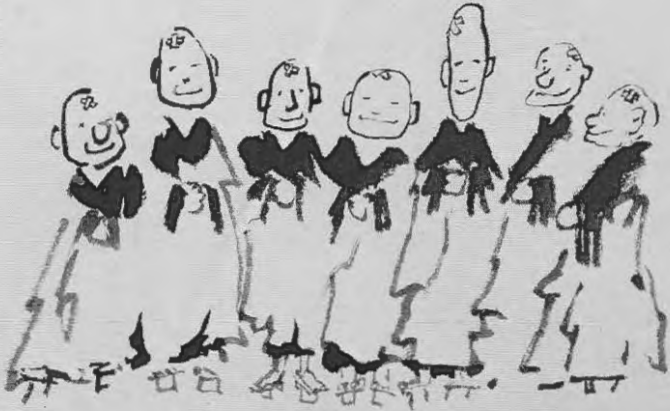
I praise those ancient Chinamen
Who left me a few words,
Usually a pointless joke or a silly question
A line of poetry drunkenly scrawled on the margin
of a quick splashed picture - bug, leaf,
Cariacature of Teacher -
On paper held together now by little more than ink
& their own strength brushed momentarily over it

Their world and several others since
Gone to hell in a handbasket, they knew it -
Cheered as it whizzed by -
& conked out among the busted spring rain cherryblossom winejars
Happy to have saved us all.

31:VIII:58

by Philip Whalen, who wrote &
decorated this copy on
21 September, 1965, at
San Francisco.

EVERY
FOUR
AND
NINE
DAY



THE
MONKS
SHAVE

ZEN SHINJI 1977-8

STUDY
HALL



ZEN SHINJI 1977-8

Brush and ink drawings by Stanley White

OWNTRIPPER



WITH THE MAIL

ZEN SHINJI
1977-8

I DID
NOT
ANNOUNCE



THAT
THIS
IS NOT A

SILENT WORK PERIOD

ZEN
SHINJI
1977-8

SANDOKAI LECTURE V

6/6/70

The following lecture is fifth in a series of lectures on the Sandokai which Suzuki-roshi gave at Tassajara in the summer of 1970. The Sandokai is a dharma poem by eighth century Zen Master Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien (Sekitō Kisen). This lecture covers the following lines of the poem:

<i>Shiki moto shitsuzō o kotonishi</i>	色 本 殊 質 康
<i>Shō moto raku o koto nisu</i>	聲 元 異 樂 苦
<i>An wa jōchū no koto ni kanai</i>	暗 合 上 中 言
<i>Mei wa sei daku no ku o wakatsu</i>	明 明 清 濁 句

A tentative English translation of this passage might be:

*Things have various natures, various forms;
There is good taste and bad taste, good sound and bad sound,
good feeling and bad feeling;
In Darkness, superior and inferior cannot be distinguished;
In Brightness the duality of pure and impure is apparent.*

Shiki moto shitsuzō o kotonishi: *shiki* 色 means "form and color." It has two meanings. In the Heart Sutra we have this character *shiki*—*shiki soku ze ku*, form is emptiness. *Shitsuzō*: *shitsu* 質 means quality or nature, such as human nature or Buddha nature, good nature or ill nature. *Zō* 衆 means figure. So things have various natures, various figures, various forms; this is "*Shiki moto shitsuzō o kotonishi*." In the next line, *shō* 聲 means voice or sound, the object of the ears. *Raku* 樂 means something which you care for. *Ku* 苦 is something which creates a bitter feeling, or suffering. Suffering is too big a word; anyway, some bad feeling. Here it is talking about just form and voice, but the same is true for taste, or smell, or physical feeling. There is good taste and bad taste, good sound and bad sound, good feeling and bad feeling, agreeable idea and disagreeable idea. There are many things. And we suffer from them. When you hear something good you will enjoy it, but when you hear something bad you will be annoyed, or you will be disturbed by it. For usual person it happens in that way, but if you understand reality completely you will not be bothered by things. And the next phrase gives the reason: *an wa jōchū no koto ni kanai*.

We understand in two ways. One way is, as I told you in the last lecture, to understand things in darkness *an* 暗. And the other understanding is to observe things in terms of good or bad. And we know that there is no good or bad in things themselves. It is people who discriminate things as good or bad. By discriminating things, we create good or bad.



Suzuki-roshi, Summer 1971.

If we know that, we will not suffer so much—"Oh, that is what I am doing"—things in themselves have no good or bad nature. To understand in this way is to understand things in utter darkness. Then you are not involved in dualistic understanding of good or bad. So we have *An wa jōchū no koto ni kanai*. "In the dark superior or inferior cannot be distinguished." This word *jō* 上 is "superior" and *chū* 中 is "middle," but actually it means superior and inferior. When we say *jō*, superior, it is more natural to say *ge* 下 inferior, but as this is a kind of poem it is better style to say *jōchū* rather than to say *jōge*. *Jōge* has a feeling of too much discrimination.

Koto 言 is "words." This *ku* 句 is also "words or phrases." In utter darkness, good words and bad words will not disturb you. This *kanai* 合, means to include, or to fit together. *Mei wa sei daku no ku o wakatsu*. *Mei* 明 is brightness. In brightness only the duality of pure or impure is apparent. *Sei* 清 is pure and *daku* 濁 is impure. There are pure words and muddy words. In brightness we have dualistic words, the duality of pure and impure. Here, *wakatsu* 明 is the same character as *mei*, but as a verb it means to make clear or to become apparent. So, in brightness dualistic words become apparent. In this way we should understand things.

Positive way and negative way, we say. Positive way is to acknowledge things in terms of good or bad, beautiful or ugly, good student or bad student. If you make good effort you will be a good student. To acknowledge a student's effort is positive way. Negative way is, whatever you say you will get thirty blows. We do not accept anything. That is negative way. Positive way and negative way—sometimes one and sometimes the other. We must have some way of treating things.

Even though we are mad at someone, it does not mean we do not acknowledge him.

Because a teacher knows a student so well, sometimes the teacher will be angry with him. The teacher knows that the student is very good, but sometimes the student will be very lazy. Then the teacher will hit him. Sometimes we will praise or encourage him, but it does not mean we are using different methods or attitudes. The understanding is the same but the way of treating or expression is different. For someone who sees things only in a negative way, who is always pessimistic, we should encourage him. But if he is too good or too bright, then the teacher will always scold him. That is our way. Our understanding is not different, but usually we are very much attached to the bright side of things or the dark side of things.

Do you know this famous koan? A monk asked a master, "It is very hot. Is it possible to feel better?" and the master said, "Why don't you go somewhere where there is no cold weather or hot weather? Why don't you go there?" The disciple said, "Is there somewhere where there is no cold or no hot?" The master said, "When it is cold you should be a cold Buddha. When it is hot you should be a hot Buddha." That was his answer. You think there is somewhere so that if you practice zazen, you will attain a stage where there is no cold or no hot, no pleasure or no suffering. You may think so. So you ask, "If we practice zazen is it possible to have that kind of attainment?" But the true teacher will say, "When you suffer you should suffer. When you feel good you should feel good." You should be a suffering Buddha, sometimes. Sometimes you should be a crying Buddha. Or you should be a very happy Buddha.

At the same time this happiness in its true sense is not exactly the same happiness people usually have. There is some difference, a little difference, a difference that makes a real difference. He knows. Because we know both sides of reality we have that kind of composure. He will not be disturbed by something bad, and he will not be ecstatic about things. He will have a joy, a true joy, which will always be with him. Although the basic tone of life is the same. And on it there is some good or bad feeling. That is the feeling enlightened people may have. It means, when it is hot, or when you are sad, you should be completely involved in sadness without care about something happy. When you are happy you should just enjoy the happiness. We can do so, it is because we are always prepared for everything.

Even though circumstances change all of a sudden, and you don't know what will happen, still, when we are ready for things which may happen tomorrow, then we can enjoy today completely.

Actually how you can do it is not by studying a lecture like this, but by your practice. These are Sekito's words, but later, in Tozan's time (Tozan was the fourth generation after Sekito) people were very much interested in talking about the bright side and dark side and middle way, and they stuck to this kind of game. They lost the point of how to obtain this kind of freedom from things.

So later, Dogen Zenji did not use these kinds of words so much. Dogen Zenji rather put emphasis on how to get out of these words, how to appreciate things moment after moment. That is more Dogen's way. So he put emphasis on koan like "When it is cold you should be a cold Buddha; when it is hot you should be a hot Buddha." That's all. To be completely involved in what you are doing is Dogen's way, without thinking about various things. And this kind of attainment will be obtained by actual practice, not by those words.

Words will help your understanding of things. When you are very dualistic, when you are getting into confusion, they can help you. But sometimes you will be

interested in talking about these things, and you will lose our way. We should be interested in actual zazen, not in these words. We should practice actual zazen. So Dogen Zenji's way is to find the meaning in each being—a grain of rice, or a cup of water. You may say a cup of water or a grain of rice is something which you see in brightness. But when you respect, when you pay full respect to the grain of rice, I mean when you actually respect it as you respect Buddha himself, then you will understand a grain of rice is absolute. When you live completely involved in the dualistic world then, at that time you have the absolute world in its true sense. When you practice zazen without seeking for enlightenment or anything, then there is true enlightenment. That is Dogen Zenji's way.

QUESTIONS

Student A: When something happens and I feel pain from it, part of me feels it and part of me is trying to understand it at the same time. And I don't know whether that trying to understand it is because I'm afraid of letting go and just feeling the pain, or whether that's wise understanding.

Roshi: You have that problem because you are involved in a problem for yourself. As long as you are involved in personal problems, whatever understanding you may have, that understanding is only on the bright side. You have no chance to realize the other side—darkness, the absolute. When we talk about this I am talking as if I am enlightened person and you are listening to it as if you are enlightened person. In other words, all of us are Bodhisattvas and as Bodhisattvas we are discussing this kind of problem. But when you apply this kind of talking just for intellectual understanding or just for your problem only, you have no chance to understand the other side of it. That is why you have that problem. If you are really practicing Bodhisattva way, whichever side it may be, it is o.k. When you criticize yourself, it is o.k.; when you do what you want to do that is also o.k. You are not doing two different things. According to the situation you are doing something good always, but the reason why you don't have the confidence in your activity or in your life is because you are involved in selfish or personal practice.

Student B: When I am fully awake I have, maybe, a little control over my desires, but in the *morning*

Roshi: That is what I am saying. In the morning you have trouble, I know that. So that is why I say, "Get up!"

Student B: How do you do that?

Roshi: Just do it. Or else someone will go and hit you!

Student B: I *just* got up a couple of times—jumped out of bed. But it was such a big thing!

Roshi: Yes. Big thing. So if you can get up pretty well I think your practice is almost o.k. That is a very good chance to practice our way. Just get up. O.K.? That is a most important thing.

LONESOME TRAIL

by Harry K. Roberts

Harry K. Roberts has benefited from the best of two cultures. Part Indian by birth, he grew up and was trained, in a traditional manner, as a 'man' (pegerk) among the Yurok Indians of the lower Klamath River in coastal northwestern California. Subsequently he studied botany, working as an agronomist and horticulturalist, as well as becoming an expert pattern and tool maker. His background combines to bring him extra-ordinarily broad acumen in rural technologies and craft skills, as well as a profound understanding of the potentials of human life on this planet. Zen Center is very fortunate in having Harry as an advisor and teacher at Green Gulch.

The following piece is from a forthcoming collection of his stories, poems and commentaries, Where the Sky Thins Out, edited by Thomas Buckley.

The trail was lonesome. I had only gone a little way up it before I realized what was wrong, and that I had to go back and start up the trail again. I had been thinking selfish thoughts and that was why I hadn't thought for the trail, how it felt.



Harry Roberts



So I started over again, and I sang to the trail to tell it that it was not forgotten, and how I would come along and keep it company. I kicked the rocks and sticks from the path, and I broke off the branches that were growing over it. Then the trail became bright and cheerful and showed itself to me where it was all overgrown and one could not see it easily. Now, the birds would come back to the trail and sit on the bushes to sing to it. The ground birds would come back and scratch the leaves and twigs off of it and make it a bright, shiny trail again. The squirrels would gather their nuts into neat piles from where they had rolled down the trail. One would walk along a happy, singing trail; and this is the way it should be.

I had never been on this trail before, so I didn't quite know where it went. I only knew that it went up the creek and that up the creek would be quiet country where no people had been to leave bad thoughts. And that I was troubled in my thinking and should go where I could talk with the spirit of creation and find myself again. This is what I saw:

The trail started out on the creek flats where the small stream entered the river valley. Here there were wide gravel and sand bars covered with salmon berries and alders and vine maples. But soon it entered the canyon where the creek bars supported broadleaf maples whose great arching branches and trunks were covered with thick moss hanging down for many feet in soft green curtains. Hummocks of giant sword fern reached nearly over my head, and occasional patches of soft, golden-green sunlight filtered through the canopy and lighted the ground. Below: a deep carpet of moss with patches of blue grouse flower and soft curving sprays of the pink, star-like flowers of Indian lettuce.

Further on, the canyon narrowed until the trail was mostly on the marge of the creek itself, and I had often to scabble across the faces of rocky cliffs or wade up the creekbed. Here, dense forest came right down to the creek which tumbled over the gnarled roots of redwoods and firs. The forest floor was deep with the needles of these trees. There were no green things, though glowing pink pine drops and pure white ghost plants grew in the forest mould. No sunlight penetrated. There were no cobwebs or insects, and there was no animal life; no food for ground animals to eat, though I knew that high above in the tops of the firs, tree mice spent their entire lives, never coming down to the ground. I could occasionally hear the passage of a flock of birds in the treetops, but mostly there was no sound, nothing but the silent throb of the earth itself.

Here, walking through the massive stillness of the forest, you must look upon yourself as you are. Here is the ghost of humanity that only a strong man can look upon without fear, and here is one place where there is nothing to stand between you and the truth of creation. This is a land where the spirits speak, and where one's own spirit is washed free of the contamination of petty thoughts and desires.

Farther and farther the trail led on until finally the creek canyon opened out into a little flat with soft, grassy meadows bordered with alders. There were flowers and birds and insects all through the meadows, and the creek had deep, quiet pools of clear blue water with lovely, shining trout swimming. It was here that I felt it was, that which I had taken the lonesome trail to find. So I made my camp by the stream and I bathed in a pool, then sat by my fire and smoked my pipe, feeling clean because of my passage through the forest and my bath in the clear pool.

I sat by my fire all night and smoked my pipe and cast my tobacco dust on the fire and felt the soft breath of the sky over my body. In the morning I went up to a ridgetop and greeted the rising sun, then gathered wood for a sweating-fire and herbs from the mountaintop to incense my fire. And I returned to my camp and made my medicine and became peaceful again.

All day I lay in the meadow and thought of the beauty and purity of creation. That night I kept my fire and smoked my pipe, cast tobacco dust on the fire and listened to hear the spirit of creation within me. As the deep of the night came upon me I began my chant, and I sang until all of the darkness of the world came about me and enfolded me and my body was lost, my spirit coming forth clean and free. Then I could sing the song of the dawn of creation, and I could know again the lost language of the *wo-gey* and sing their songs in the presence of creation. My spirit walked forth into the spirit land and became pure. In the morning my spirit returned to my body and I woke up.

The morning was bright and clear and I was hungry, for I hadn't eaten in three days. I knelt beside the stream and put my hand down under the edge of the bank and hummed the song of the fish-talk. Trout swam into my hand, and in this way I caught enough fish for my eating.

Then it was that I could go back to the places where there were people, for I had come back into creation and was renewed. I was no longer bothering about the small, selfish things that the world of people values and strives and fights for, so it did not matter what it was that had disturbed me and made me go to make my prayer. For how can one put importance on childish desires when one has walked in beauty in the face of creation?

This is the way it is for a man.

*The fawn lies quiet
in the grass;
The lily
does not sing*

WHERE OR WHEN

*the sidewalk joins the concrete wall around the vacant lot
Wire thread stalks of timothy hay spring up
from the minutest cracks in cement
No space for them so jammed against the wall
They can't make a shadow
We used to say fox tails
furry green plumes all soft and tickle seed
Hairs watered by fog and smallest rains
Crack all San Francisco into crumbs of gravelly
minerals and sand that feed these grassy feathers
primitive oats or wheat
The city running to a weed patch right on time.*

17:V:76

Philip Whalen

SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM BOTHERS ME

*Warm sun and chilly air
Water is low and the creek is clear
Shooting-stars, wild cyclamen bloom
And wild larkspur
Will I accidentally drop a jade ring in the creek
(Don Allen said, "The Japanese live like Florentines")
Stellar jays ratchety shouts
Dead leaf rattle across rock
All the new leaves yellowy green
All the new stones glaring light and airplanes
Shall I drop my gold crown into the pool
Have I derailed my train of thought
A rock with an elephant's forehead!
Silver turquoise ring dropped into monk's
kimono sleeve
What can we answer

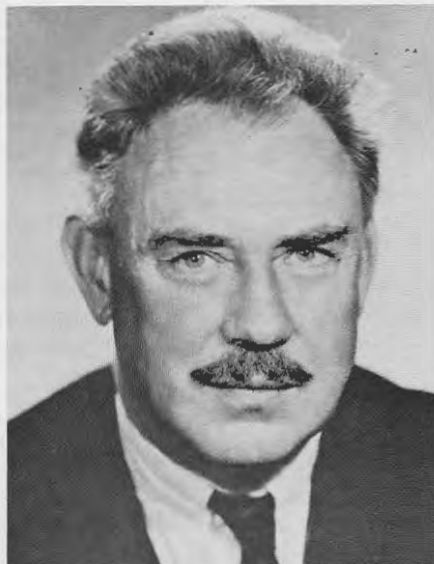
Yellow tin chimneys
White crowned sparrows
Everythin a-tilt*

26:III:76

Philip Whalen

STANLEY PRESTON YOUNG
(1906-1975)

Stanley Preston Young was critic, publisher, novelist, playwright, and poet. And he was a good and dear friend to Zen Center over the years. We are fortunate to have enjoyed his great wit and wisdom and support.



*The dream that is dreaming us
Alters our plans, is neither good nor bad
But is a dance of whimsical configurations
Choreographed once and once only in time's file of footprints.
Servers of purpose we perform as drifters and vagabonds .
Never certain of the dream and its fateful direction,
Living thus we should learn out of pity
All voyagers lost.
Know that the praying mantis assumes an attitude
Whose end is not praying,
Our prayers demand responses.
It is the act of praying that gives the meaning.
After great loss the wind is still.
Let us sit in long silence.*

Stanley Preston Young
February 1975

A few last words about Stanley's last poem which was found after his death in the pocket of a dressing gown, roughly pencilled on a scrap of rumpled paper. He had written it when he knew he had only a few weeks to live. He had spoken to no one about writing it. It took us some time to decipher the feeble late-night scrawl and that is how one version has the word "whimsical" in it and another (particularly Rick Levine's beautiful piece of calligraphy) has the word "universal" instead of whimsical. It probably does not matter!

In the winter just before Stanley's death we were in Florida—he, Renee and I—and we were all re-reading with great pleasure van der Post's *The Heart of the Hunter* and *The Lost World of the Kalihari*. You will remember those illuminating books about the "first people," the African Bushmen, and in particular their ancient myths going back to the very earliest times when man and animal could still communicate with one another and even before that.

The praying mantis was the "god" of these First People. Stanley was particularly caught by stories of this odd deity who *seemed* to man to be in an attitude of prayer but who was in reality "listening to something we could not hear"; the voice of the "first spirit;" a listening which Bushmen held to be the most urgent of earth man's tasks. Mantis remembered this voice of the first spirit because at the very beginning of things, at the time of the Great Flood, he had been carried over the dark waters by a bee. The bee, worn out with its heavy load and desperate to find a place to rest it in the endless watery waste had at last seen a great white blossom half open above the flood. Making a supreme effort the bee managed to lay the mantis in the heart of this magic flower and to place the "seed of the first spirit" inside it where it would be safe from the turbulent waters. This mysterious early adventure is the reason why the praying mantis is a god to the Bushmen.

One day when a mantis was discovered in its listening pose in the grass, van der Post, then a little boy, saw his Bushmen nurse drop to her knees before it, fold her hands in supplication and in reverent tones put to it a mysterious question "Please, how low is the sea?" To the child's amazement the mantis turned to look straight ahead and with its long front feet held limply in front suddenly moved them to point downward to the earth. Then the old nurse, still on her knees, whispered softly, "Please, how high is the sea?" (Quite a Zen sort of question!) The mantis lifted its head, looked up and pointed its long front feet at the cloudless blue sky above.

The little boy could make no sense of his nurse's reverent questions nor of the insect's formal response, but when later he tried the same formula—totally without success!—and was caught poking the mantis with a grass blade to spur it on, he got severely punished for his behavior. Said the old woman in explanation, "We never tease the mantis. We never ask anything of the mantis for fun. We never ask unless we ask from the heart."

Years later van der Post, through his intuitive wisdom, realized that the mantis was worshipped because in myth it had heard and still remembered the voice of the First Spirit. Mantis was a part of the pre-time "dream that is dreaming us." He had participated in a moment of awesome significance—long before man—when life first rose above the "unconscious" by which it was surrounded and by whose mighty formless tide it could well have been overwhelmed.

Nancy Wilson Ross
(Mrs. Stanley Preston Young)
Old Westbury, New York, October 27, 1977



EPITAPH FOR A CONCORD BOY

*Now there is none of the living who can remember
How quietly the sun came into the village of Concord,
Nor one who will know of the sun in the eyes of the dead boy
There on the village green, where he fell.*

*He did not fall because he hated the Redcoats,
Indeed, he would have known little of them
Had not that grim, quick man, his father,
Hurried him dutifully toward the crackle of musketry.*

*His father had routed him out and stuck a gun in his hand
And then said something about the 'country's deliverance',
Until the boy went, rubbing the dreams from his eyes
And stood on the green with the others, facing the soldiers.*

*When the Redcoat leader had shouted, 'Disperse, ye rebels,'
The boy would have gone back to his bed willingly,
But as no one else went, he stayed, watching the elegant enemy,
He was never aware the volley of war had been sounded.*

*Shot through the heart he took less time to die
Than the rabbits he had himself killed, many a day,
Though when his tight hand clutched at his own blood
It was as if he had never met death, entirely.*

*Once, for a split second, he wondered
Why he could not raise his strong legs from the grass,
And why the slow granite of his father's face
Was melting above him, for it never had.*

*He would have spoken now to his father, but the words were not there,
Plainly the thoughts for his tongue were bound in his plow-taut hands,
In the fields out of Concord he had said what he could with them,
And now when his heart grew dark, he was left with no other words.*

Stanley Preston Young
1954



GOSPEL NOBLE TRUTHS

*Born in this world
You got to suffer
Everything changes
You got no soul*

*Try to be gay
Ignorant happy
You get the blues
You eat the jellyroll*

*There is one Way
You take the high road
In your big Wheel
8 steps you fly*

*Look at the View
Right to horizon
Talk to the sky
Act like you talk*

*Work like the sun
Shine in your heaven
See what you done
Come down & walk*

*Sit you sit down
Breathe when you breathe
Lie down you lie down
Walk where you walk*

*Talk when you talk
Cry when you cry
Lie down you lie down
Die when you die*

*Look when you look
Hear what you hear
Taste what you taste here
Smell what you smell*

*Touch what you touch
Think what you think
Let go Let it go Slow
Earth Heaven & Hell*

*Die when you die
Die when you die
Lie down you lie down
Die when you die*

Allen Ginsberg
October 17, 1975



After seeing this photograph of the Buddha shattered in the Tassajava Zendo fire, Robert Duncan wrote the poem which appears on the opposite page.

FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE SPIRIT

the secret of a smile

*has passt into the mind-store
into time and mind-change.*

*Into the center of what we mind this in-
formation we return to see
in the inward gaze, the rising into the mouth
of this secret*

reserve returned and mind-ful

*has passt into the hand-work the eye has rejoiced in
this smile has passt this way
this working of the wood went,*

*the hidden fire within rising thruout into a smiling,
a sealing in the surface interworking of the tree's life
and another*

*mind-life so that we see the wood
and we see the willing of the image
brought out into it,*

*so that the image perfects itself in our
seeing and we would not let it go from us. The art!
the art we address*

*has passt into the mind-store, into the realms of our musing,
into our adoring. Sealing, the smile
rests before us*

*and the mind would entirely go over to this state,
this image of an Eternal Mind*

*more true to us now it seems this Eternal Presence
than the passages, the changes, the burning thru and over
Life is*

in us, our living in using our stuff up

*has passt into the alembic, the devouring chemistries,
into the workings of air, into the works
of wet and flood, the rotting and tearing away,
into the fire, the charring, the eroding, the earth
elements*

*work now the secret of what the
smile is,*

the presence of the fire's work,

the wearing away in the smile,

that seal too there

the mind acknowledging

taking in deep

the burn.

Robert Duncan
May 1978



Gandhara Buddha, Tassajara Zendo, October 1977.

FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND CONCENTRATION

Sit Down, Sit Still, Sit Long

Lecture by Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Every sesshin I am again impressed by the power, by the winning combination of foreground and background concentration. By foreground concentration I mean the ability to concentrate on a specific object of concentration, for example your breath or your posture, in much the same way as a watchmaker concentrates on his work.

One point for the beginner to watch is that the specific concentration of the watchmaker or chess or *go* player is often accompanied by a stopping of the breath for stillness or a deathlike clarity as if stopping the breath would momentarily stop the objects of the world. And it may be so. Stopping the breath can bring on a kind of clarity, and in fact in mature zazen your breath may slow down evenly until it is nearly stopped. But the beginner, like the watchmaker, may stop the breath unconsciously, equating stillness and concentration or confusing stopping the world with stopping yourself. As a result he or she may be flooded with another world of hallucinatory or confusing images, a kind of *mappo*, induced unnecessarily by stopping the flow of breath to the brain.

This is most likely to happen when you breathe with your chest, with the upper part of your body. But when you find the deep even breathing from the lower part of your body, from your gut or hara, the breathing that is most characteristic of zazen, then you will not unconsciously stop your breath in your upper chest when you concentrate.

By background concentration I mean the resolution that is always present in the background of what we are doing no matter what is going on in the foreground. Although you may not be able to sit still or sustain concentration on your breath, at the same time, your decision, to sit and to continue your practice is unwavering.

Studying mind and body you will find out that the form of your thinking is a kind of vowing, recognitions that you stick to as real and permanent. To try to see vowing as the nature of your thinking will give you insight into how your mind works and how you have built a world-view and an identity. For example, as a child you may have eaten a lot or a little because of your particular metabolism, and then have been told that you are a "big eater" or that you eat "like a bird". And then years later, long after your metabolism has changed, you are likely to retain the idea that by nature you are a big eater or eat like a bird. This is a kind of vowing. Our world-view, our identity, our mental and physical baggage is formed by acceptances like this — suppositions, super positions, that we usually carry with us all of our life.

To see yourself it is necessary to undo or see through the accumulation of observations that for all practical purposes have become vows, that have made up your mind. Insight is only the beginning. I think Western psychology has put too much emphasis on the catharsis of insight as if recognition and its occasional cleansing were permanent change. It is very hard to change the unconscious vows of your

lifetime. The only way or at least the most effective way is to fight vows with vows. We must use the habits of our mind to realize the nature of our mind. The experience of Buddhism is that practice, repetition, the active holding of conscious vows is the primary means of radical and real personality change and growth. Vowing must be conscious and sustained, repeated over and over again in the background of everything we are doing, in the midst of the activity of our unconscious vows of many decades, until you look through your personality, your now transparent personality, at the world. This may give you a taste of the term *sunyata*: emptiness, or boundarilessness. It is an inner sense, a wildness we are talking of, as a wild animal depends on itself in an actually uncharted world, a world only nominally predictable.

Your new vows must not further encumber you. But please do not be confused by the mental division of things into opposites like freedom and restriction as if opposites excluded or were opposed to each other. Freedom proceeds through limitations, through the restrictions and definitions of form, of life itself. We are not talking about God or aether or some mysterious other. Freedom is the realization of the activity, clarity, and preciseness of form in our non-repeating universe. Our new vows should reduce desire to the most fundamental desire, our most fundamental thought, the intention of life itself. We say the thought of enlightenment, *Bodhicitta*. This you must find on your own. Life is not separate from intention. A flower is not separate from a particular change or growth. This is not a gaining idea or goal in the comparative sense of "I want to be the biggest, most beautiful, and best located flower."

In Zen the emphasis is first on background concentration, the vows that renew the fundamental direction of your life. Foreground concentration then becomes the expression, work, satisfaction, and fine tuning of background concentration. It is like loving your child. You may be angry or discouraged with your child, but your anger or displeasure remain expressions of your love and concern for him or her. The awareness of Buddha, the one who is awake, is not a dry, dispassionate philosophical mechanical alertness, but a wet concerned warm-hearted compassionate awareness. An awareness, a seeing that also hears, that actively listens to the activity, the cries of the world.

Zazen can be considered as having three parts — to sit down, to sit still, and to sit long. To sit down is just to be able to sit down and start zazen. It is not so easy to cut through the currents of your day and sit down to meditate even for a moment. Many things lead to your unavoidable daily activities — eating, sleeping, working, and so forth — but very little leads to meditation except sometimes suffering or discomfort, or the occasional memory of the deep mystery of our life. And for most of us suffering and discomfort come and go and we forget them as quickly as possible. So to be able to sit down outside the usual currents of your life is to be able to answer a call from the background, from the whole of your life, from your recognition of the scale and suffering of human life, from your decision to give space and expression to your wide life.

Not so many of us do this unless it is forced on us by circumstances obviously outside our control. But we can do it within our usual circumstances by the simple act of sitting zazen, even just to sit down for a moment. You can find many reasons why you do not have 30 or 40 or even 20 minutes to sit. There are many things you must do and they will come up with a special clarity and an unreal urgency just when you want to sit or as you are sitting. This clarity is one of the reasons we sit. We also sit to question the urgency. But sometimes the urgency is real, and the responsibilities are

probably real. However you always have the time to sit down at least for one or two minutes. Everyone does. Even if there is a car waiting outside for you, you can still sit down for one minute. If you say you do not have time for even one minute then you have not recognized the value of sitting as part of your life, or you are resisting change or awareness in your life. When you do sit down you often find that you do have more than a minute; but the point is not to trick yourself into sitting longer. It is to develop the detachment and awareness that allows you to act on that vow from your wider life, to act on what Suzuki-roshi called your inmost request.

Trying to sit still is more obviously the experience of zazen, to be able to sit without moving inside or out, completely at rest mentally and physically. At first you concentrate on your breathing, on your exhales, finally bringing your mind and body, heart lungs stomach hands mouth eyes legs arms pain pleasure thought and attitudes together into one thought, one intention, one non-thinking, one concentration penetrating ambivalence into an intimacy with our extended being. Our internal divisions will dissolve in the purity of this still sitting.

It takes time and yet sitting also creates time because you sleep less — dreaming has come into your conscious meditation and finally been subsumed into your daily life as part of each act no longer divorced from an unconscious life (the content of most thinking is censored dreaming). Sitting creates time because your thinking begins to correspond with the possible, and you begin to act with precision and without ambivalence through the possible to what you have not yet thought of. When you live without ambivalence most of your sicknesses disappear. But we should be careful not to fill up this new fresh time with more responsibilities in a way which again prevents us from sitting.

To sit long helps us physically to sit well. After every one day sitting and seven day sesshin you will notice a marked improvement in your ability to sit still, but we can learn to sit well physically from short periods of sitting. What sitting long encounters, intensifies, and even exacerbates and confronts us with is the topography of our mental and emotional life, our moral attitudes, confusion, and resistance. Suzuki-roshi used to say kids can never leave a still pond alone. Impatience and discomfort cease to be physical and become emotional and moral aspects of your habits and character. Trying to sit still for a long period of time deeply interrupts and questions, so that we can see very clearly the currents, assumptions, habits, and hopes of life.

Culture, Buddhism are mysteries given to us by our ancestors that we may know our own mystery, know what we take for granted, almost like we take air for granted and then pollute, and miss the point of even breathing. Buddhism, culture, our body and mind are instruments that we play, instructions that we learn to speak. The secret is that you have to trust, you have to abandon yourself to your instrument. But to begin we need an image, a concept, a vision, an object. So we have created Zen so that you can trust something. If you do not trust zazen you can not let go into your practice. At some point you have to existentially, conclusively trust zazen. So Zen and zazen, given their existence, are as unprogrammed as possible, as close as a concept of form can be to you so that trusting zazen, even for the beginning student, is virtually identical with trusting yourself. As insight and decision or will are necessary to sit down, faith or trust, willingness is necessary to sit still. We have to learn to leave a still pond alone.

Eventually this developing faith and trust in yourself will allow you to sit still and be able to look at, see, and accept the particular person you are. In this way our

mental and emotional life become as stable and precise as the physical world. Time and space are your own objects of expression. Insight becomes the ability to act on your own life. And then with repeated and long sitting the topography of our habits and mental, moral, and emotional life can become the topic of our foreground concentration. When you make your life your own, the lives of others become accessible to you and so the stories from our lineage of Zen teachers can finally become pointed and pivotal aspects of the topography of your own life. And the characteristics, problems, and fundamental nature of our particular life become our own koan. We call this the genjo koan.

The process or technique of this practice I call turning a question or a statement. You take something from your life or from Buddhism, a sutra or a koan, that has become a wall, something you cannot penetrate, perhaps like "This very mind is Buddha!" or "How do I accept my friend?" or "What is this world in front of my face?" or "Why do we practice if we are already enlightened?" or "What could the Prajna Paramita Sutra possibly mean by, 'without thought coverings', or 'unsupported anywhere, without a basis'." Then with the knowledge that there is a solution even if it is only the nature of mind or thinking itself, you proceed to repeat, ask, and turn the statement or question, each word of it, over and over, certainly every time you remember it, until the statement or question is identical with every situation you are in, with every object in front of you, and equal to your own strength. You continue until your life is not separate from this turning, until you are being turned. This is foreground concentration becoming background concentration again, becoming all-ground concentration.

Tozan was asked, "What is Buddha?" He answered, "Three pounds of flax." This is the perfectly stable world of all-ground concentration.

Pao Che was asked, "The nature of the wind is constant and reaches everywhere. Why are you fanning yourself?" He responded, "You have understood the constancy of the wind, but you do not yet understand that it reaches everywhere." The monk asked, "What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?" Pao Che went on fanning himself. This monk asked very refined or sophisticated questions, questions that we can see, or at least Pao Che could see that the monk had been turning for a long time until only the kernel remained. The chaff and husk of extraneous aspects or questions he could answer himself are gone. With this kernel bright and present in his mind he took a good opportunity to ask, "Why if we are already enlightened do we need to practice?" Dogen said, "The wind of Buddhism ripens the gold of the earth and the sweet milk of the long river."

You may use T.S. Eliot's line, "The stillness of the Chinese vase, still moving perpetually in stillness."

After not having seen his teacher for some time, Basho, the famous haiku poet, was asked, "What have you understood?" Basho answered, "After the rain the moss is so clean!" You can imagine how bright green it must have been. But Butcho, his teacher, asked immediately, "What about before the moss?" As Mumon-roshi points out, Butcho never would have accepted some easy to say and to-think-you-understand generalization like emptiness, or a state where nothing is to be found. Basho responded, "Frog jump-in, watersound."

These became the last two lines of his most famous haiku. He completed it that evening with his friends:

Old pond
Frog jump-in
Watersound.

Butcho wrote a calligraphy in acknowledgement that said: "An attainment of enlightenment through utter concentration, and an utter concentration for the sake of enlightenment."

Layman P'ang said that Zen practice was, "Difficult, difficult like trying to spread sesame seeds on each leaf of a tree!" You will find it that difficult. But then his wife said, "Easy, easy like touching my toe to the ground. The Patriarch's mind on the tip of every grassblade."

Ejo was enlightened during a lecture when he heard Dogen say, "A single hair pierces myriad holes." All run through with one skewer!

The poet Yang Wan Li wrote:

Standing by the stream waiting for the moon to rise;
But knowing how impatient I am, the moon takes its time.
Tired of waiting, I return to my study and close the door.
The moon leaps over a thousand peaks.

ABSOLUTE
REALITY, *namely,*
how much can I do right now
about life in this place? I
am it, all of this living
AND *this place and what*
I'm doing is called

TRANSFORMATION
IRRADIATION
BASE METAL BECOMES
GOLD

-PHILIP WHALEN

SCHEDULE

	SAN FRANCISCO	GREEN GULCH FARM
ZAZEN & SERVICE	Monday through Friday: 5:00-7:10 a.m. 5:30-6:30 p.m. 8:30-9:10 p.m. Saturday: 5:00-7:10 a.m. 9:10-9:50 a.m.	Sunday through Friday: 4:30-6:30 a.m. 5:40-6:30 p.m. (except Friday) Saturday: 6:20-7:30 a.m. Sunday: 8:50-9:30 a.m.
LECTURE	10:00 a.m. Saturday	10:00 a.m. Sunday
SESSHINS	One-day sittings during the first weekend of each month except June and Oct. Seven-day sesshins in June and Oct. (Please phone to confirm)	Weekend sittings the third weekend of each month except Feb. and Sept. Seven-day sesshins begin the third Sat. of Feb. and Sept. (Please phone to confirm)
WORK	Regular residents' schedule	Open to non-residents Sun. p.m. Other times by arrangement.
ZAZEN INSTRUCTION	8:30 a.m. Saturday	8:30 a.m. Sunday
ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER	Fall Practice Period: September 15 to December 15 Spring Practice Period: January 15 to April 15 Guest & Summer Practice: May 1 to Labor Day	

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