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Watering the Seeds of Buddhism

by Thich Nhat Hanh

If we pick a flower, like a rose, and we leave it a little too long on the table, it will die. Even if it does not die yet, if we put it into a pot of water, it will not continue to bloom, it will feel tired, wilted. Because of what? Because the cells at the stem become dry, and when we put them into water, even when there is water in the pot, communication is no longer possible between the water and the flower. That is why the flower continues to be very weak, very sad.

The flower is still young, but it does not seem to be very alive. Therefore, when we see a flower like that, we have to rescue her. The way I rescue a rose is to take it out of the flower pot; I dip the flower under water; I take a pair of scissors or a knife, and I cut it in the water, because the water will come right away to the new cells where it will not be dry. After that, I put it in a flower pot with water. I'm sure that one hour later the flower will be young and fresh again.

Communication between the flower and the water is very crucial for the life of the flower. We know that. We human beings, we are exactly like flowers. Sometimes we bloom happily, very fresh; sometimes we are not so fresh. Even if we are still very young, we are still like that. So we must need someone to come and rescue us—but not exactly in the same way—we don't have to cut anything. But they should do their best so that communication with the water of life is possible for us again.

A flower would not be able to live happily without air and water. We, also, would not be able to live without love and understanding. Where do we get that love and understanding? From our family and from our society. If there is no love in our family and in our society, we will be exactly like the flower without a pot of water, without air—exactly the same. So, in order to rescue us, people in the family have to generate love and understanding—that is the only way.

People in the society have to generate love and understanding—otherwise, we will feel we are alone—we cannot go on. The practice of meditation is to find out ways to be in touch again, in order for communication to be possible again, and life to be possible again.

When the Buddha held a flower in his hands, he invited his friends and students to be in touch with the flower. The only way to be in touch with the flower is to be awake in the present moment, and to really see the flower.

This is not something very difficult to realize, but strangely enough, not many people think so. Look at the flower and breathe, and you can see the flower, you can be in touch with flower. But why are so many people unable to be in touch with the flower? Because they have so many things in their heads—their worries, their anger, their thoughts, and so many things that block them from being in touch with life. It is like the dry cells [of a stem of a wilted flower]—here. They prevent the flower from being in touch with the water. Therefore, there must be a way to save them.

We have to remember that each of us is a flower, and we have to keep our flower blooming freshly and happily. Every time we feel there is something blocking, then we have to stop and breathe, to smile, to look and see what prevents us from being in touch with the wonderful life. We may do that with the help of grownup people or with the help of younger people like us.

A rose can only be happy being a rose. If happiness is not there, it is all because communication is not there, and real contact is not there. In us, we find the seeds of everything—the seeds of awareness, of understanding, of love. Watering the seeds of Buddhahood, you water yourselves. You water the seeds in your self, and you water them in your environment. Where do I water the seeds of American Buddhism? I water them in my heart, I water them in my body, I water them in my family. Because all these seeds are there. I go back to Christianity and I water the seeds of Buddhism there, because you find the seeds of Buddhism in Christianity, and you find the seeds of Buddhism in Judaism, you find the seeds of Buddhism in the Native American culture. You don't have to go to another country to bring the seeds of Buddhism over. They are there. That is what we have tried to see yesterday.

If you want to build American Buddhism, you have all the elements within your own culture, within your self, within your family structure, within your religious institutions. If you go back to Christianity and water the seeds of Buddhism there, you renew Christianity. If you go back to Judaism and water the seeds of Buddhism there, you renew Judaism. It becomes

something new, fresh, young again, and that is for our sake. It is for the sake of the Buddhist, and it is for the sake of the non-Buddhist. But you know, between Buddhism and non-Buddhism, it is very hard to draw a line.

Sometimes we have to be careful of how we talk about Buddhism. Because Buddhism does not recognize branches. I remember that a Zen teacher in China, he did not like the way people dealt with Buddhism and the word "Buddhism". The way they talk about Buddha makes people hate the Buddha. And therefore one day he said, "Well, every time I pronounce the word 'Buddha', I have to go to the bathroom and rinse out my mouth three times." This is the way to warn me, to warn you, to warn us that using the word "Buddha" and "Buddhism" will do harm to Buddha and Buddhism.

Another person, quite a friend of the former one, said, "Well, every time I hear you pronounce the word 'Buddha', I have to go to the river and wash my ears three times." So be careful. The less you look like a Buddha the more you are truly a Buddhist.

We should be able to recognize Buddhist elements within Christianity, within Judaism, within the Native American culture, within our daily life. Without that, how can you water the seeds of American Buddhism? We have to recognize that first, in order to water. Everything that has the capacity to bring us to awareness; everything that can generate understanding, mutual acceptance and love, could be termed as seeds of Buddhism, even though Buddhist terms are not there. This is quite important. If you feel that you are a stranger to your family, a stranger to your culture, that is not because you are not born from that culture, that family, but because there are some cells that are dry and communication is no longer possible.

Dalai Lama at the Blessing Ceremony on Mt. Tamalpais on October 10, 1989. Congratulations on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. A well-deserved honor for "a simple Buddhist monk"!

Sometimes you feel you want to reject your society, your family, and you want to have nothing to do with that institution, because you don't see the beauty in that institution, and you suffer very much from that feeling of being apart from your family and from your culture. But you also know that staying out of it, you never have the opportunity to regenerate it, to change it. Therefore, the only way is to go back and to be rooted again in that atmosphere, in that environment. Acceptance is to be within: this is the only way to change.

The practice of Buddhism is the practice of healing. The Buddha has been described many times as a physician, the King of Physicians. Therefore, the practice of awareness brings about more love and understanding which is healing.

But as I see it, in America, you should have at least two centers for healing. The first center is the family. The second center is the community practice place. Buddhism in America, as I see it, will be mostly lay Buddhism. Children, like the ones we have seen, can only grow in the context of a happy family. The practice of Buddhism should bring about harmony, understanding, happiness within the family. That is for the growth of our flowers, our children. Therefore, you have to go back to your family as an institution, to reorganize it so that you have a practicing center. That is the basic practice center for your society, because society is composed of individuals and families. If you do not practice in your family, you do not use family as a unit of your practice, you cannot reach out to society and change it. That is why, to me, go back to the family, build it in a Buddhist way into a practice center. Practice Buddhism with joy; that is possible.

In Plum Village, all the children go and sit with adults in the early morning, and they are happy to do so. Because they are not forced to do so. They join us. They are children like any other children. I asked one person in Rochester if their two children could sit with us. She said, "I'm afraid not." "How long can they sit?" Their mother said, "Maybe four seconds!"

I said I would try. I invited the children to come and sit with us and I told them, "Sit here with us and enjoy your sitting. You can sit as long as you want. One minute. Two minutes. Three minutes! And every time it becomes boring, you just bow, stand up, and slowly walk out of the meditation hall." And that day, the children sat for eleven minutes! Their mother never believed it. So we have to organize our practice in a way that is joyful and pleasant for our children.

There are two kinds of practice. First is the practice to prevent. To prevent suffering, to prevent disease, to prevent unhappiness, to prevent destruction. That is the best practice. You do not need to have to have malaise in order to begin practice. In a family, we practice that. We practice happiness. We practice nourishing happiness.

I would like to share with you some of the things Vietnamese Buddhist families practice in order to maintain happiness. Because we believe that without happiness between the members of the family, nothing is possible,

Spade, etching by Mayumi Oda

including a peaceful society, including peace for the future. And therefore, the family is the basic community of practice. We call it family sangha. Sangha is a community. Family is a community. There should be harmony, there must be principles of living in harmony. In America, I believe that you will go back and build up that center of practice everywhere, with or without a teacher.

I suggest you create a practice center which is not a temple, which is not a church, but which is a center where you come to celebrate life, to be happy, and to practice healing in case we need it. We do not wait until we are very sick in order to come to the center. That would make the center a kind of mental hospital. Nobody prevents us from setting up a hospital like that in order to help people who are heavily afflicted. But we should have a center where people have joy and happiness. When they come, they practice in order to prevent the kind of destruction that can happen to their lives.

Without monks and nuns, such a center could also be operated. These are two dharma doors that I would like to propose today. Those who help us in running such a center should be happy people. We need skill, but we need happiness much more than skill! A person that is not happy cannot help us. That is very plain and simple. People are either monks, or nuns, or lay persons. If they are happy, if they live a happy life, they are qualified to help us.

This is the only qualification for us. Who transmitted that qualification? Good practice can convey to a person the capacity of sharing that happiness with other people. That kind of transmission I think is obvious. We do not need a ceremony. We do not need a certificate. We only need the awareness that such a person can be a brother to me, can be a sister to me, and can help me in the practice. Whether you call that a friend or a teacher would not make a lot of difference.

I think that the teaching of love in Buddhism is important to learn. Because love, in the context of the Buddhist teaching, has another sense from love

that we understand in other contexts. We know that love in the context of Buddhism is impossible without understanding. If you do not understand a person, you cannot love him or her. Where understanding is, love is. Love is another name for understanding. Understanding is the fruit of meditation. Stop, look, and you understand. When you understand, you cannot help but love. This is the way.

For the guidance of the establishment of these two kinds of centers of practice — family center and community center — we should learn and teach the art of loving and understanding. In Buddhism, of course, both are linked to meditation in the easy, simple definition. Meditation is to stop and look, in order to see. Out of that comes understanding, acceptance and love.

I would like to tell you the story of what happened to the Buddha when he was thirty-nine years old.

One day there was a young person who lived with his son of six or seven years old. His son had died because of disease, so he suffered very much; he had almost lost his mind. He wandered around the capital, and he called for his son, "My son, where are you? Come back to me!" He spent many days like that, calling the name of his son. Someone saw that, so he brought the unhappy father to the Jeta Monastery, in order to see the Buddha.

The Buddha was staying in a thatched hut and he went out to meet the unhappy man. He asked, "Why? Why are you so unhappy? Please tell me."

The man said, "I just lost my son, and I suffer so much."

The Buddha commented, "I know love involves worries and despair..." He made that statement. But upon that statement, the man got very angry. He stood up and he shouted at the monk Gautama, "No, you are wrong! Love never creates worry and despair! Love can only bring us happiness!" So he left the Buddha in anger. He did not allow the monk Gautama to explain further.

After the king heard about this, he went to see the Buddha. The king said, "It seems that Your Reverence said that love involves suffering and despair and worries." The Buddha said, "Yes, I did say so, but I had not finished my explanation when the man left me in anger. So if Your Majesty would like to hear more about it, I would be glad to tell you."

The king said, "To me, love is very important. Life without love is not worth living. The world would be very sterile without love. Why do you advocate that we not love?"

The Buddha said, "I don't advocate not loving. I only advocate the true kind of love. Because the true kind of love can make people happy. I agree with Your Majesty that love can make life beautiful and happy. But I would like to insist it must be true love. The kind of love that has as its nature the desire to possess, the desire to forbid, the desire to monopolize, the desire to satisfy one's own ambition, that kind of love I would not call love, because it will bring a lot of worries, despair and suffering." Then the Buddha told the king about the way to love. He talked about *maitri* and *karuna*.

"*Maitri* is loving kindness. *Maitri* is the willingness to make one person happy without any condition whatsoever. Without asking anything in return. I love him. Not because he is my countryman; I love him because he is a human being. I love him not because he is of the same religious belief. If I love him because he is of the same religious belief, I don't really love him. I love my religious belief. So *maitri* is the kind of love that has no condition whatsoever. You do not need to get something in return. You just want that person to be happy.

"In order for the person to be happy, you have to understand him or her, because a person has pains, has sufferings, has hope, has aspirations. If you do not understand the pain, anxiety, aspiration, hope of that person, it will be impossible for you to love that person. Therefore, understanding is the basis of any kind of love that can make the person happy.

"*Karuna* may be translated by compassion. Maybe there is a better word. *Karuna* is the willingness to remove a person's pain. In a person, there is a source of pain. You see that and you would like to take it out of that person, again, without any condition. Without asking for return. If you do not know exactly the nature of that pain, you cannot help to remove it. Again, understanding is the base for that kind of love.

"Compassion means to suffer with. When you see someone suffer, you sit beside him or her and you suffer together. That relieves a little bit of his or her pain. But *karuna* is more than that. *Karuna* is the kind of practice that removes the suffering from the person. And you don't necessarily have to suffer. Because you have wisdom, you have understanding, you have energy, and you are capable of helping the person remove her suffering. And if you yourself suffer so much, how can you help? What energy is left for you to do the work? Therefore, *maitri* and *karuna* should come from a very strong source of understanding and love and energy.

"So, King, you have a princess and a prince. You said you have to love your prince and princess first. I agree. As a parent, you should love your children. But do you understand the anxiety, the aspiration, the suffering of Prince Jeta? If you don't, how can you say that you can love him properly? The same thing is true of Princess Varjari. If you are not able to understand what is in her heart, what her true aspiration is, what her own problem is, then you cannot love her.

"If you are capable of loving the Prince and Princess, you will be capable of loving all the young men and young women in your country. Because the young men and young women of your country, they do have their problems, their sufferings, their aspirations, and their needs. If you can love them the way that you love your Prince and your Princess, then suddenly you have countless daughters and sons. Love now does not know any limit. Love does not know any frontier. This is possible.

"As the king, you have the duty of loving all the young men in your country as your son. If you do not practice *maitri* and *karuna*, how can you do that? You would be hesitating to send your son into the battlefield, you

would feel the same with all the young men in your country." The conversation went on, but I would not like to continue because it is a little too long. I would like to say here, that after that conversation, King Prasanjit became a very close friend of the Buddha.

So it is not easy to make the statement, "I love you." That statement is difficult to make. Maybe "I have the willingness to love you" is truer. I want to love you. But am I really capable of loving you? That is quite another problem. So, as a wife, I would practice like that. I would select a moment when I could be alone with my husband in a quiet place. I would practice breathing for some time. Then I would hold his hand in mine and ask, "Dear one, do you think I love you properly? Does my love suffocate you? Do I make you unhappy because of my love? Please tell me so that I can learn the art of loving. I know that I am not perfect. Because of loving you, I might deprive you of your liberty. I might kill the deepest of your aspirations. That is not what I want to do, but because I want to know with all my heart, please tell me. Do I love you properly? What can I do in order for my love to be only nourishing and not destroying?" If I am aware and I am capable of asking such a question, then the door of happiness will be open. If I ask with all my heart.

And if I am a husband, I would do the same. "My dear one, maybe my love is only a prison for you. I want to monopolize you. I want you to be the way

We are very happy to welcome Dr. Masao Abe, the noted Dogen scholar (see his lecture Wind Bell, *Spring '88) and promoter of Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. Abe Sensei will be with us at Zen Center this coming year as a scholar in residence. This Winter he will teach a course on Dogen's* Buddha Nature *fascicle at the City Center. Abe Sensei's translations of Dogen in the* Eastern Buddhist *journal have been the "standard" translations in Study Center classes for years.*

I want, and I don't let you bloom freely like a flower. So please tell me so that my love will not feel like a prison any longer, so my love will be something nourishing." That is very important.

If you love a breeze, a gentle breeze in the summer (and who does not love a gentle breeze in the summer?) and if, at the same time, you want to possess, to monopolize, then you would like to imprison the gentle breeze all for yourself. You put the gentle breeze into a steel can, hermetically sealed, just for yourself. A cloud is beautiful floating in the blue sky. Who doesn't love such a cloud? But if you want to possess, to monopolize, you put the cloud in your steel can, hermetically sealed, and then the cloud will die, like the gentle breeze.

A person is like that. If we imprison him or her, in our prison of love, we kill him or her. That is not the way of loving. That does not come from understanding. So most of the suffering comes from the fact that we want to monopolize, we want to dictate the behavior to the ones we love. Maybe we have done exactly what other people have done, put our love into a steel can, hermetically sealed.

How can happiness exist in the family for the children to grow? Loving a child is the same. We should be able to ask a child whether our love is suffocating to him or to her. Because the child is the object of our love, we want the child to be happy. We want to remove the suffering, the pain, of the child. Therefore, understanding is indispensable. So we should also be capable of holding the hand of our child and asking the questions. Do not think that since we are a grownup person, we can decide the best way to love. Look to see whether the child is happy within his skin. To see whether the child is blooming like a flower. There we need understanding.

If we can practice loving like that in the context of our family, the family becomes the basic center of practice. With families like that, we can change the society. The community center is where we come, several families, to contact a day of mindfulness, a day of happy family living together. To get in contact with other friends who are practicing this same kind of love, of understanding. For the children to meet each other to play and to learn the way of happiness. I think both kinds of centers are crucial for our practice. The family sangha and the greater community center.

Of course, you can visualize such a center. It is not exactly a place for worship. It is a place to celebrate life. It should be possible for you to practice walking meditation, to enjoy each step. It should be a place where you can sit and enjoy sitting and breathing. There should be a park where children can practice jumping and playing. The forms of practice you will see as you go on, as the path of your understanding and love. I think these things are not difficult. Why don't we write a song for the children: "Flowers need water and air, I need love. I need understanding." The children can sing it, the adults can sing it. Because all of us need love, not just children. But the true kind of love: *maitri* and *karuna*.

Family Practice at Zen Center

by Wendy Johnson-Rudnick

Over the years many of us who are residents, members, and friends of the Zen Center community have been asking ourselves, "What is the best way to practice with our children?" One of the most challenging and exciting aspects of practicing Buddhist meditation in the modern United States is the opportunity we have to root our practice, especially for those of us who are householders and lay practitioners, in the earth of our daily lives.

About eight years ago at Green Gulch Farm we held a seminar to look at the application of Buddhist ethics to our family and daily life. For many of us this class represented a turning point in how we worked with one another and our children. A new Buddha-field was opened up and we began to explore in detail how we were raising our children and what we were able to offer to one another from the foundations of our Buddhist practice. Instead of only admonishing the children with a forceful "shhh!" during periods of zazen, we began to invite them into the zendo, into that secret and mysterious realm that claimed so much of our attention.

I remember the first group of six-year-old resident boys living at Green Gulch who watched in awed silence as they were led into the zendo during Sunday morning zazen. These same boys had been spending many hours ambushing adult residents with big stick-weapons. They obviously wanted our attention. So when they were invited to take a direct look at the main practice of our community they were duly impressed, especially by the formal use of the *kyosaku*, or long wooden stick, which we carried and used in those days to encourage wakefulness in the zendo. "I saw Layla in there,"

breathlessly reported one of our children, "she was carrying a big stick and walking real slow. Then Bruce bent down and she hit him, blam! blam! and then he *bowed*!" By beginning to be more open and revealing of our own practice, we encouraged our children to begin to respond and question us more. For the first time we began to publicly view them as an enhancement, rather than as a hindrance, to practice.

By 1984, when Thich Nhat Hanh came to Green Gulch to lead a retreat for peacemakers, we were pleased and quite moved to observe how fully he relied on children to participate in all aspects of Zen practice: eating silently, enjoying the bell of mindfulness, practicing walking meditation and sitting meditation, and listening to the stories of Buddha's teaching. All these activities were openly taken up by the children. Prior to this time, some of us had developed practices which we did at home with our children: burial services for deceased pets, offering incense before going to sleep, chanting a meal *gatha* before eating, and other observances arising from the teaching by the Buddha. We also had our yearly ceremony of Buddha's birthday which featured children in a primary way.

Yet what was special about the retreat with Nhat Hanh was the absolute invitation to children to come into the zendo and meditate with their parents and with the wider *sangha*. The children were very responsive and eager, and they sat beautifully for as long as they could, after which time they quietly left the zendo to go play or sleep. We noticed how the older children enjoyed helping the newcomers and younger children. It was very refreshing to hear their questions and comments: "What do you do if you feel sleepy?" and, "I wanted to move a lot, but whenever I moved it hurt more, so I tried holding still. I did it for 10 minutes!"

Following this retreat we became bolder at Green Gulch. We invited our kids to design a flag to raise during zazen and one-day sittings to help them remember to be quiet during longer retreats. They drew a giant, orange Buddha in the middle of a pink, rip-stop nylon field with tiny drawings reminding them to be quiet. One panel had a monkish looking chap carrying a huge ghetto-blaster radio near the zendo with a red line across the drawing. When the flag was raised, often by the kids themselves, they played away from the zendo. At other times they began to join us more: for the Full Moon Ceremony, for brief times during weekend zazen, for chanting in evening service. We also observed that their sense of connection to those less fortunate than they were became stronger. For the last two years, the children of Green Gulch have raised money by making wreaths to sell to help support kids that aren't as lucky as they are.

In April, 1988, we started to host Family Days of mindfulness, co-sponsored by our local main chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. We were keen to offer a day of enjoying meditation and earth-work to the wider *sangha*, and to include young people. On just such a day at Green Gulch more than sixty people joined us, including a sizeable group of young teenagers who had grown up near or within Zen Center. These eighteen-year-olds had formed a group to study what they wanted to do as they neared the age to join the military. What sort of service did they believe in? During this day

they discussed this issue with parents and friends, and during this day we found how special it was to sit, work, walk, eat and talk together in mindfulness.

Since this first day of mindfulness, Green Gulch has hosted another three such days, one at pumpkin harvest time, one in early winter to plant trees together, and one this June on the summer solstice. Two such days have also been hosted by the City Center at 300 Page Street. Unlike formal one-day sittings, the Family Practice Days feature shorter periods of meditation (six minutes rather than forty minutes), longer sessions of walking meditation, a Dharma discussion which the children participate in, making cookies and art projects, and a closing tea ceremony in the zendo, usually softened by crawling babies, lots of singing, and twelve-year-old tea servers who offer tea to the Buddha and to the families who gather to practice mindfulness together. Such days do take a fair amount of organization, but they are a source of joy and inspiration to us.

We hope you will be encouraged to join us or to start such a practice day where you live. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact: Wendy Johnson at Green Gulch Farm, 383-3134; or Lee Klinger-Lesser, for the Marin Buddhist Peace Fellowship, at 389-9729; Judy Gilbert, for the East Bay, at 547-0756; or Michael Wenger, for San Francisco Zen Center at 863-3136 .

Family Practice Day at Green Gulch Farm

Karma, Dharma and Diapers

by Lee Klinger-Lesser

The vivid image of a two-year-old boy I once took care of, sitting quietly at a table with his shoulders hunched up to his ears, remains with me after more than ten years. This was a posture I had seen frequently on his mother when she was nervous or tense. Her son was simply adopting it through observation. Alice Miller writes in her book *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware, Society's Betrayal of the Child*, "Whatever we put into a child's soul we naturally will find there, but if we become conscious of what we are doing, we then have the chance to free ourselves from the constrictions of our past." (New American Library, 1986, p. 154). Children learn from everything we do and don't do, from everything we say and don't say.

Each month, when I see the full moon in the sky, I find the words from the Full Moon Ceremony returning to me: "All my ancient twisted karma, from beginningless greed, hate and delusion, borne through body, speech and mind, I now fully avow." Now, instead of being in the zendo I am in the midst of my home, realizing that my own karma is constantly informing the lives of my children, as theirs does mine. The more conscious I can be, the less I will interfere with the unfolding of my children in accordance with their own natures, and we will be able to meet true nature to true nature, as I vowed to do with my husband when we married each other.

It is distressing to me how deeply we ignore and undervalue the quality of family life in general in our society, and that we have continued this neglect in the cultivation of our spiritual practice. I can think of no other areas in which the impact of our own mindfulness is as profound as it is in the raising of children.

After practicing Zen from 1978 to 1983 in the formal, monastic setting of Green Gulch and Tassajara, I find that my family is now my Practice Center. One of the challenges of family as Practice Center is the lack of established forms. I have to be responsible for how I practice in a way that is distinctly different from following strict schedules and shared formal practices.

Elements that I have found important to family practice are: personal practices for myself; shared family practices and rituals; and being with other families who are exploring how to practice together. I meet at least once a month with a Buddhist teacher to help me explore my own personal needs in practice and to help me create a context for practice at home. Being with other families interested in practice has been encouraging and stimulating.

Gradually we are building a "family sangha" through being together during "Family Days of Mindfulness," sponsored by the Marin chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, during meditation retreats that include chil-

dren, through shared writing and conversations. This past spring Thich Nhat Hanh offered a retreat specifically for young people. Fifty-two families came from around the country: one hundred and four people in all. The young people who participated ranged in age from four-and-a-half to nineteen years old (there were also three infants). For children to be with other children who are practicing mindfulness and meditation makes the whole process more accessible, fun and real! Using our thoughtfulness and creativity to develop practices that are welcoming and age-appropriate to our children is important, especially when it is done with joy.

In my own home, our most basic practice is breathing together. Becoming quiet and aware of breathing is possible for each of us at any moment. We work with this in different ways. During the recent retreat for young people with Thich Nhat Hanh, we learned a song that is linked to breathing with each line accompanying an inhalation or exhalation: "In, Out, Deep, Slow, Calm, Ease, Smile, Release, Present Moment, Wonderful Moment." We sang this song throughout the retreat, during sitting and walking meditation, and when we gathered together for other events. It has now become a part of our family life. The tune itself is soft and calming. When I am aware of being agitated or irritated, I can sing this song as a form of meditation that brings me back to myself in the midst of any activity.

One evening, as I was preparing dinner, my twenty-month-old daughter was being her familiar inquisitive self. She went from discovering a glass of water, and emptying it onto the floor, to exploring the contents of the compost bucket, to pulling on the dog's tail. At the same time my six-year-old son was pleading with me to help him make some paper airplanes and complaining about being hungry. I began to notice the distinct signs of irritability rising in me, my shoulders tensing, my stomach tight, breathing shallow, movements sharper, a desire to yell. It seemed like an opportune time to stop and sing. After singing "In, Out..." five or six times, I found I was smiling. And I was content and grateful to be where I was. Jason watched with quiet curiosity, as he saw me transform my state of mind. Several weeks later I overheard Jason trying to help Carol quiet down and perhaps go to sleep in her room. He was singing "In, Out..."

I taught this song to two mothers with whom I participate in a mother's group. Neither of them practices Zen or Buddhist meditation. They told me that the song has become a part of their lives. One who has a four-year-old daughter told me that her daughter asks her to sing the song when she is out of control, crying or deeply upset. One night when her mother wouldn't let her have a snack, five minutes before their dinner, she began to cry. Her crying built out of control. Still sobbing at the table, she pleaded, "Mommy, sing the song!" Her mother did and gradually she became calm. This had become a tool which helped them both to seek comfort, even in the midst of conflict with each other so that emotional distress moved to conscious breathing, to calm, and even to connection with each other.

My other friend's family has adopted the song to calm their six-month-old baby. Her four-year-old daughter and her husband both sing the song to the baby and the baby stops crying. Singing this song does not guarantee that

the baby will stop crying. It can however provide us with the opportunity to maintain our own calmness no matter what happens.

Another tool we use in our family for connecting us with our breath and returning to the present moment was inspired by our experience two years ago in a meditation retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh. It was our first introduction to a "Bell of Mindfulness." After the retreat we bought a bell for our home. It lives on the altar in Jason's room where anyone can get it at any time and bring it to sound it anywhere in the house. Just as we experienced during the retreat, whenever the bell is sounded, we all stop whatever we are doing and breathe three times. Then we continue mindfully with what we were doing. Our bell has been sounded to greet new guests, on the way to the bathroom, in the midst of bustling dinner preparations, during meals, in the heat of arguments, and directly after angry outbursts.

Once, when I was afraid that Jason and my then infant daughter might have whooping cough (we were waiting for test results), Jason and I were working together in the kitchen when he did something I had asked him not to do. I roared at him with the full force of my preoccupation. A few minutes later I heard the sound of the bell. As I breathed with the tears that instantly arose in me, I heard a clear, little voice say, "Mommy, I rang the bell so you wouldn't be so angry."

I find there is so much for me to learn and practice with in relation to the anger and frustration that arises in me with my children and immediate family members during even the most trivial of interactions. During one of his talks at the young people's retreat, Thich Nhat Hanh spoke of anger, saying it needs a friend and the friend is mindfulness. Families

Family Practice Day at Green Gulch Farm

provide wonderful opportunities to practice the cultivation of this friendship. It is important to me that Jason knows that sometimes I am mindful and sometimes I'm not, that I can come back to my true self, and that he can help me. I think he understands this about himself, too. Having the bell, a tangible practice we share, I believe is empowering for Jason, especially in the face of what can be overpowering adult emotions and judgments.

I know that as Jason gets older our rituals will change, and this too is part of our practice. Most likely the altars we have all around our home will stay. In each of our bedrooms, in our bathrooms, and in our kitchen, they are invitations to be aware. For the past one-and-a-half years, at night before bed, Jason and I have offered incense on his altar. Jason's altar is a place where he puts things that are special to him. He has two Jizo figures standing side by side on top of a purple silk sandbag that I made for him after I made one for a friend of mine who was dying; a clay face that a friend made as a portrait of Jason; a big conch shell; some favorite rocks; a photograph of a lion that Jason took at the zoo; photographs of Jason with his grandfather in a frame with a special letter from his grandpa; a scarf that belonged to my mother, whom Jason never knew; a piece of shedded snake skin, and a variety of everchanging items.

Jason lights the match and gives it to me to light the candles. He doesn't feel comfortable enough yet with the fire in his hand to do it himself, so he goes instead to turn off the lights. He offers a stick of incense; then he sounds the Bell of Mindfulness, sits down on my lap and we sit and breathe together for three breaths in front of his candlelight altar. Sometimes we sit there for ten or fifteen breaths. When Jason is ready he snuffs out the candles; we turn on the lights, get into bed and read a story.

The other day in the car, as my husband Marc and I were talking about a Day of Mindfulness, Jason blurted out, "I hate meditation!" After a slight pause I said, "But we sit meditation every night in front of your altar and you seem to like that." With tolerance for my ignorance he replied, "No, I don't mean that. I like that. I mean real meditation like they do at Green Gulch for forty minutes."

I trust that someday Jason will know that sitting in front of his altar breathing quietly three times is also real meditation. And I trust that the experience of happily sitting together will remain with him, as will the transforming power of being in touch with breathing moment by moment. It has been a refreshing lesson for me to experience the influence of stopping in the midst of what I am doing and simply following three breaths. I can become more present. My own practice does not have to be sitting forty minutes of meditation. I have to find what is conducive to the realities of our family life. It is an ongoing exploration.

What we are trying to do in our family is give our children practices, rituals and experiences that they can own, incorporating our values into our lives and letting our children grow up tasting them. In my husband's and my experiences practicing at Zen Center, we saw little offered to children that they could own for themselves. We both come from Jewish heritage, but not

from Jewish practice. It has been a rich process for us to use our experiences practicing Zen to help us become more open to the wealth of Jewish family ritual and tradition.

Each week, we observe the Sabbath; it is our weekly Family Day of Mindfulness, beginning with a service at sunset on Friday night and ending with a service when the first three stars appear on Saturday night. Adding new rituals to our family life is a slow process. We spent one year just lighting the candles on Friday night and eating a nice meal together before we were ready to give up shopping, television, working or going places on Saturday. Our intention is to do what nourishes us as a family. Celebrating the Sabbath has become a gift for us. It is an opportunity to go beyond the pressures of constant juggling and being squeezed by time, to be together in the spaciousness and simplicity of the structure of the Sabbath. It is like bringing a touch of monastic life into our family life each week, a rich and fertile blend.

It is also a time shared with other generations. Every Friday night we sit down at the table: Carol, twenty months old; Jason, six years old; Marc, thirty-seven years old; myself, thirty-eight years old; and my father, eighty years old. The table is set with my mother's wedding silverware, a lace tablecloth made by her mother, gold-rimmed holiday glasses from my father's mother. As we start to light the candles, Carol knows what is coming and begins to sing with soft bird-like sounds, a blessing of its own to our being together.

I remember a rabbi once describing the lighting of the candles of Friday nights as a marking of the ending of one moment and the beginning of another. In Buddhist practice we speak of impermanence, interdependence and non-attachment. In our family we are borrowing from the wisdom, history and traditions of both Judaism and Buddhism; seeing how they come alive through our daily lives of innumerable beginnings, endings, and present moments. How does the reality of impermanence affect how I live?

As part of my own bedtime ritual I have begun to do three full bows in front of the altars of each of my children. I see them sleeping and quiet. I breathe with them. With the detachment of not needing to interact with them, our connection is refreshed for me. I see them with more quiet eyes. Perhaps I see them more clearly. Sometimes as I watch them sleep I allow the question to arise in me, "If my children were to die, what would I regret the most...?" Continuing to breathe, I open to what arises in me and work to give it room to influence my actions.

Our children are with us so briefly. They change so quickly. What we do now helps to mold them and their future families, and *their* future families. To be conscious and mindful in what we do requires intention and effort. To give our own true mind to the many intricacies and complexities of family relationships is a Buddha field to practice in. If we can be happy and peaceful within our families, it can't help but impact our wider world. If we neglect the opportunities to practice with our families, that too can't help but impact our wider world.

Earthquake Report

On Tuesday, October 17, at 5:04 P.M., a powerful earthquake shook the Bay area. Many people have called to inquire about how Zen Center fared during the quake. We are happy to report that no one at Zen Center was hurt, and that our practice places at Green Gulch Farm, the City Center, and Tassajara suffered only minor damage. We are grateful for this good fortune, and for your concern. At the same time, we are saddened by the great losses suffered by so many of our neighbors.

Because the recent quake was in the Santa Cruz mountains and measured only 7.1 on the Richter scale, it damaged only the most unstable structures in the San Francisco Bay Area. The great quake of 1906 measured more than 8.0 on the Richter scale. Geologists tell us that another such shock in our area is inevitable, perhaps within the next thirty years. We must continue to strengthen, or replace, the buildings which fail to meet earthquake safety standards.

For several years, we have been working on long-term plans for the renovation and replacement of major buildings at Tassajara and at Green Gulch Farm. One of our primary focuses has been earthquake safety. This summer we began the complete reconstruction of the oldest and largest building at Tassajara, the Stone Room complex, which is used for guests and visitors. We have been told by our engineers that, had we not begun this work when we did, the Stone Rooms would certainly have collapsed in the recent quake.

As many people are aware, the meditation and lecture hall at Green Gulch Farm was originally the barn when Green Gulch was a working cattle ranch. As part of our planning process, we recently undertook a preliminary study of the structure of the zendo. Our study caused enough concern about the structural integrity of the building that we decided to close it to large public gatherings as of September 24. Although the zendo suffered very minor damage in the recent earthquake, it is still vulnerable to future quakes.

This work is very expensive. The Stone Rooms alone will cost $200,000 to complete. Preliminary estimates for the repair of the meditation hall at Green Gulch range from $150,000 to $250,000. Other buildings will also have to be strengthened.

The "quake of '89" will also affect Zen Center's finances in other ways. Our business properties have sustained some minor damage. Along with many of our neighbors in the Bay Area community, we have suffered a disruption in our businesses, and our self-support revenues will fall below what we had hoped for. It may be a long time before business returns to normal levels, particularly at Greens, our restaurant at Fort Mason.

All in all, we have been very lucky and we have a lot of work to do. We appreciate your concern and ask for your continued support.

Wall of Tassajara Stone Room

Emerging Shadows

by Kazuaki Tanahashi

My family and I were in India for eleven months from August 1988. This is a report on my painting process while we were in Varanasi, the city near where the Buddha first taught. Now we are back in Berkeley, California.

To bring forth what might be conceived only in India and to use Indian tools and materials was my hope as I contemplated doing art work on this subcontinent. Working in this way might require that I give up much of my usual way of seeing, as well as the techniques and style of painting that had become familiar to me while living in Japan and the United States.

So captivating was homespun raw silk, non-glossy and slightly brown, that after seeing it I could imagine no other material to paint on. There were a few large bottles of Indian ink in town. My dream of using the old-style paints used for miniature painting crashed as I learned that there was nothing of that sort available in Varanasi. I did not have enough technical knowledge and patience, for example, to make yellow paint from a sick cow's urine, so I ended up with imported water colors. I wish I could say that the brush made of a bundle of peacock feathers was used on all my paintings, but in fact it was used on only one of them. I mostly depended upon Western-style sable brushes purchased in Varanasi, but a white whisk made of a wild cow's tail, intended for use in religious rites, served me as a brush. I also used a toothbrush and a Tibetan coin as painting tools.

What is most striking to me among Indian concepts, or rather states of mind, has to do with enormously long spans of time. Whereas futurists tend to discuss matters of ten or a hundred years ahead, people here seem to think in terms of Samsara-lives and lives before and after this lifetime, a sense of which I wanted to experience in the process of creating this series.

I usually paint by swiftly sweeping a large brush, dipped in pitch dark ink, just once across a piece, or pieces, of white paper. In this way a lot of bristle movements appear on the picture, allowing such "accidental" effects as splashes and drips. However, I felt expression of movement might get in the way in the "Samsara" series, where some sense of timelessness is intended. There must be very little motion when we view things with a scale of hundreds or thousands of years. So I decided to divide each picture into two parts—black and white—by a simple boundary line, either straight or curved.

In September and October 1988, I frequently visited the Ganges and made sketches of the water. At dawn when I was sitting on the terrace of Tulsi Ghat watching people worship and bathe in the sacred river, one poem came to me. (This might give you the impression that I was always an early riser. In fact I went there before sunrise only once with one of my house mates of that time, Manon Lafleur from Canada, who was doing sketches at the ghat almost every day at dawn). The poem is in the waka form, a traditional Japanese thirty-one syllable verse. It may be translated as:

Day just breaking
Ganges riverbank
floating, swirling
marigolds

In October and November about thirty *waka* poems fell on me. One late afternoon I hired a small boat and took my three-year-old son from the highly populated west bank of Varanasi across the low winter water to the other shore where there was not a single soul abiding—just washed-away bones scattered on the water edges.

Surrounded by vultures
dot by dot
shadows emerge
sand dunes
on shore

The vultures sitting in a half circle, distant yet surrounding us, were completely still. I felt as if they were waiting for the death of somebody. It could have been myself or the boy. Or it could have been the extinction of the human race. This was a strange sensation, which seemed to give me a glimpse of unimaginable time.

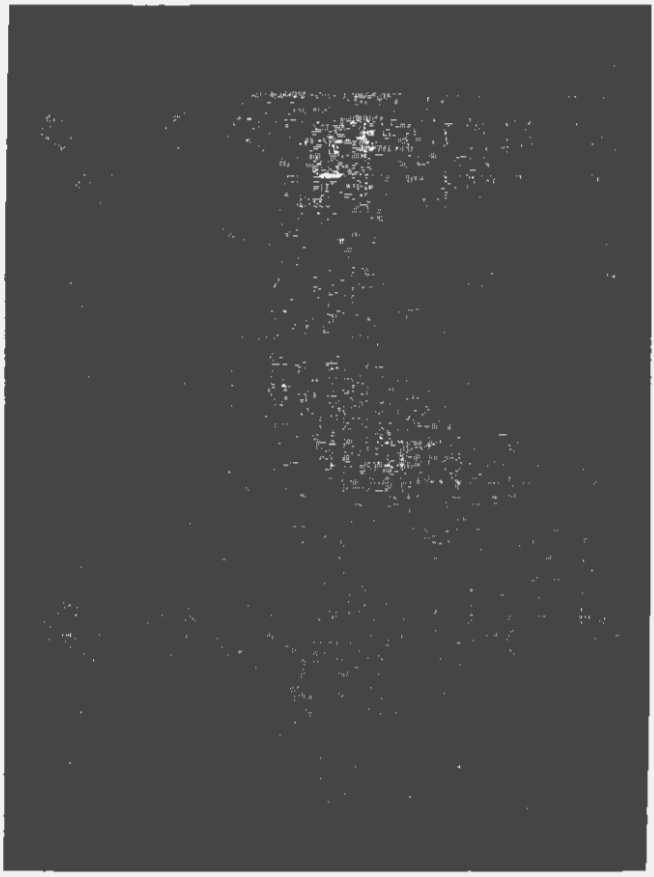
I completed studies for seventeen paintings in December. Each of them was going to consist of a black and a white space as well as a poem calligraphed in color. At this point I knew precisely how the space was going to be divided and the calligraphy placed in each 32" x 37" picture. Making preparatory designs and studies was quite new for me, a one-stroke brush monochromist. I used color for the first time in thirty years. My youthful practices of oil painting, copying ancient Chinese calligraphic masterpieces, and writing poems in Japanese all came together.

In January, 1989, I started creating final pieces. I wanted all the black to be solid- a place where all things would merge and segments of time would dissolve. This would be the darkness where no logic or dualistic thinking would reach.

While filling a large section of silk with a number of rough brush strokes, I became fascinated by the interaction of the black ink and the extremely sensitive Bengali textile. It occurred to me that I should stop filling the space and leave the brush marks as they were, instead of making the black portion entirely flat and still. Long, thin lines running in various directions would represent stars in the night sky; a number of dots stamped with small brushes would suggest millions of stupas; and overlapping spirals would be portions of continuous cycles of rebirths. On the paintings each block of darkness came out differently, often with white openings seen through the black lines. Some blocks of darkness were almost white with slight suggestions of shadows created by a few brush strokes.

Although I started out with studies that tried to represent ultimate darkness, during the process of creating the final pieces I found myself thrown into the realm of incomplete, contradicting, ambivalent shadows. I am not

sure if these shadows, each having a unique texture, represent the timelessness which I first intended to express. But this process of my work has made me wonder if it's all right to say that there are many versions of timelessness and that we all have various images of nonduality.



Samsara 14
Sarnath

Where the Buddha
first taught temple walls stood
fell down, were buried—
the foundations

Mihotoke ga
oshie some ni shi
abo ni tachi
kuzure umore shi
tera no kabe ato

Samsara 15
Bodhi Tree

From an offspring of the tree
transmitted by Ashoka's
princess daughter
to Ceylon—
a fallen leaf

aikuou no
oujo ga tsutau
seiron no
ki no sue no ki no
ochiba hitohira

The *Samsara* series was exhibited at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; Frankfurter Ring, Frankfurt, West Germany, and Galerie Fenster, Eindhoven, Holland.

Practice Period at Rinso-in

Practice Period at Rinso-in

by Alan Senauke

Last May, ten of us travelled to Japan for the first annual practice period with Suzuki Roshi's son, Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi, at Rinso-in. This was Shunryu Suzuki's former temple in Yaizu, a fishing town on the Pacific between Tokyo and Nagoya. Zengyu Paul Discoe was our leader. There were also Jim Jordan and Eduardo Montoya from Green Gulch; Ken Berman, Albert Kutchins, Bill Steele, and myself from Berkeley; Reggie Pawle and Mark Wilner from San Francisco; and Greg Shaefer from Minnesota: a diverse group of men, launching ourselves into the whirlwind of Japan and practice.

Our flight was filled with excitement and curiosity about the month to come. We pulled at Zengyu Discoe for answers to a thousand half-formed questions. After landing, we needed six vehicles and seven hours to travel from Narita to Yaizu. Unknowingly, we had arrived at the start of Golden Week, and every train out of Tokyo was packed. Albert and Ken made it onto one, while the rest were stopped at the door. Frantically they asked, "Where do we get off?" Paul shouted, "Wait for us at Shizuoka!" Through the mob of students they pleaded, "But, how will we know?..." Doors closed and the bullet train rolled south.

Twenty-eight hours from home, we arrived at Rinso-in. The temple's richness and aging beauty drew wonder out of exhaustion. The central hall was busy with people preparing for Sunday's crafts bazaar. Hojosan (Hoitsu Roshi) and Okusan (his wife, Chitose) led us to a quiet room for our first cup of tea.

That night we spent in the *shuryo*, a hall off the zendo where we met informally, and where we set up shelves for our belongings. Soon we moved our futons into the zendo, where we slept side by side, serenaded nightly with virtuosic snoring.

By day we had our first clear view of Rinso-in. The temple sits at the foot of a large mountain, cultivated with orange groves and carefully manicured tea fields. Rinso-in itself consists of several buildings linked by covered passageways. The family (Hoitsu, Chitose, and their children Narumi, Kayoko, and Shungo) live in one wing, monks and visitors in the other, with a large central building between. The architecture dates back 550 years, rebuilt many times over generations. Uphill and down lay crowded cemeteries. Taking care of the dead is important work, providing much of the temple's income.

The zendo is a small, dark room with two five-mat *tans*, and seats in front for Abbot and Godo. The last training period at Rinso-in was in the 19th century. Daily zazen is not the usual temple practice, nor is it Hojosan's way. But since it was our plan, carpenters from the community worked hard to prepare the zendo for us.

We sat down with Paul and Hojosan to rough out a basic daily schedule. Two periods of zazen in the morning were followed by service. Then the Tenzo (me) cooked breakfast, while others did *soji* (temple cleaning). After breakfast in the zendo, we would meet to plan the day and discuss any pressing issues, then work until lunch.

The afternoon schedule varied greatly. Some days we might study or work, other days Hojosan brought in a pottery or calligraphy teacher, or led us on an impromptu expedition. With Hojosan any moment may be an occasion for fun, but also an opportunity to grasp the Dharma.

Zazen in the late afternoon was followed by dinner in the *shuryo*. We bathed in the guests' bath, sat zazen and turned in about nine.

Those early days were incredibly busy. We had to set up zendo forms for meals and service, establish work rotations, and simply find our way around. Everything was unfamiliar and challenging. Even shopping at the small "suppamaketto" down the hill was an adventure.

Paul's idea was to do things as a group, Japanese-style. We found it difficult, though, to set aside our deep habit of individualism.

He kept urging us to "have faith," but many of us ran smack into our own desires. This great wonderland, Japan, was just a mile or so down the road, full of things to do and consume, and we immediately wanted to be taking it all in.

But somehow, through work and practice, through the skillful, joyful means of Hojosan, we accomplished a kind of unity. We saw that simply by being at Rinso-in, what we wanted was likely to come right up the rugged road. Seeing us caught by our desires, Hojosan gently suggested the most important thing for us in Japan was just our experience with people.

In a month's span there are more people and more stories than I could possibly relate. There was Sato-san, optician and master potter who changed our first crude efforts at pottery into gleaming bowls. There was the monk Ryokan, who visited the Suzukis, talking until late at night, waking to sit with us at five A.M. The community was proud we had come to Yaizu. They brought us vegetables, fruit, fresh fish, and some foods I can't yet identify. They offered smiles of recognition when we went to town.

My own great fortune was to have Okusan's teaching in the kitchen. She is a wonderful cook, but very strict, admonishing us to scrape every grain from the rice cooker. With limited English she tried to explain *mottainai*, a word that covers wastefulness, impiousness, and unworthiness in three short syllables. Okusan was also very patient, curious, and fun to be with. Most of us were not used to the exclusive company of men. Her generous presence reminded us of our soft side.

When things were going awry in our kitchen, she would just pitch in. When western smells drifted into the family's quarters, she would ask if there was enough for them to try. By the month's end western and eastern foods were daily passing back and forth, culminating in a sushi feast and spaghetti dinner our last two nights.

Hojosan enjoyed it all, thriving on activity and direct pointing to the way. If I asked him about *gomasio* (sesame salt), he would sit down and grind until I got it. He was generous with his time, talents, and possessions. He was always willing to reveal himself. When something amused him, he might roll on the floor like a Daruma. When asked impossible questions, he would scrunch up his face and scratch his head. Even watching him walk was a teaching, his chest thrown back, arms swinging, open to everything like a child.

Just one memory that stays with me is of our trip from Eiheiji. Hojosan discovered our rented van had a public address system and microphone. As the miles unrolled, he serenaded us with Japanese and American pop songs, crooning and beguiling us until we could stand no more laughter. Then he handed over the microphone so we might entertain him.

I'm hoping this will all happen again next year and for years to come. Some of us will get to go another time when the forms won't need to be improvised. But here's a chance to bow deeply to Paul Discoe for leading, listening, and putting up with us. We saw him frolic like a fish in water. We also saw him fold up, go to sleep, wake up the next day to start all over. His love for Hojosan, Suzuki Roshi, and Zen life keeps him going. This is what he wanted to share with us. I think it worked.

Yanagida Sensei's Visit

Zen Center was very fortunate to have Seizan Yanagida Sensei, the foremost Japanese scholar of Zen come visit with his wife, a noted Tea teacher. Yanagida Sensei gave a series of five talks, from September 29 through October 1, on his life and studies, using the Ox Herding Pictures as a connecting link. Many of the West's foremost Zen scholars, some of whom had studied previously with him in Japan, came to visit with and honor him. Zen Center was very happy to meet and renew ties with these scholars. Among those attending were Carl Bielefeldt, Robert Buswell, Griffith Faulke, Bernard Faure, Rob Gimello, Peter Gregory, John McRae, William Powell and Phillip Yampolski. Urs App, a scholar who specializes in Chinese Zen, came with Yanagida Sensei and did a wonderful job of translating Sensei's lectures.

Zen Center Hospice Volunteer Training Program

"We try to curtail 'helper's disease' as best we can. It seems to be rampant in our society: 'there's a problem out there, I must do something about it, I have to go help.' We're not necessarily motivated by the best intentions. Sometimes we act out of our fear or guilt. However, in the process of caring for the dying, we understand that, in the act of service, both people must be served," says Frank Ostaseski, director of the San Francisco Zen Center Hospice Volunteer program.

Last year Zen Center Hospice volunteers provided ten thousand hours of service, caring for 125 people who died of cancer or of AIDS. In our short two-year history, our clients, their families and the health care community have come to respect and appreciate the care offered by Zen Center Hospice volunteers.

Thirty of our volunteers care for terminally ill patients in the newly created nine-bed hospice at Laguna Honda Hospital. The unit's success as a model and the increasing demand for its services have inspired a plan to more than double the number of patients served by January 1990.

Community services to medically indigent cancer patients in San Francisco were cut back this year. We are helping to fill the gap with volunteer teams through our hospice outreach program at San Francisco General Hospital.

Patient and hospice volunteer caregiver.

Hartford Street Zen Center's Maitri Hospice provides 24-hour care for people with AIDS in a home-like setting. Recently, a new house was acquired, enabling them to serve more people. Our volunteers will continue to provide an important part of their care.

In this article we would like to give a more personal view of the program.

Frank Ostaseski: I was with Stella, who was living with us here. She had the impression that when she got here things would be much more comfortable for her, and indeed they were better. We tried to set up an atmosphere of kindness around her, so that if there was something she wanted to talk about we were there for her; if there wasn't, we'd talk about whatever else was going on. At one point she started to finish up her business, so to speak: resolving some things with her family, asking them to leave, deciding not to take a lot more food, giving away her possessions. She really expected that once these external things were completed, she could just "roll over and die." It didn't happen that way.

There was still her own letting go to deal with; her own body had to break down. The body takes its own time. She was angry and it became very painful for her, because she really wanted to get out. She started making letting go into something she somehow had to perform. She would continually ask, "How do I do this? How do I let go?" She cut herself off from care givers and became very uncommunicative. So our work was to continue to meet her with as much lovingkindness as we had met her with before, when she was being very sweet. We had to make room for what she was going through. I stopped talking to her about how to let go. I didn't use any more techniques; none of those things seemed very useful. We just sat quietly together, without much talk. I'd hold her hand a lot.

One day she got this light in her face and turned to me and said, "What do I do first — love, or let go?" I responded by saying, "What do you think?" I didn't want to give her more dogma to confuse her. She said, "Well, I'm not sure. That's why I asked you." I said, "Which one do you think you know better?" She answered, "Love." That was a real turning point for her.

Quotes from the "Volunteer Log"

"Sat with Mrs. Ho's body. Image of her face, so still against white sheets, with her prayer beads on her pillow, is a peaceful memory for me. Nice just to sit with her, to remember, cry a little, and goodbye."

Pam, volunteer

"John seems much further from reality than before. He is responding to a lot of delusions and was frustrated when I didn't see what he saw. He asked me to stay a while longer, because he is afraid of the changes he feels.
It makes me sad to watch him drift further and further away, off into the world inside his mind.
He seems less troubled when we talk about ordinary things, like how much sage we put in our turkey stuffing and how fat our mothers are...."

Art, volunteer

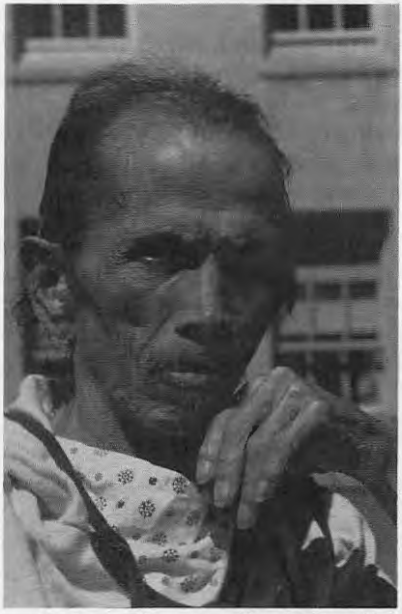
"Matt lies restlessly with eyes open, no focus. I don't know if he even knows I'm here. Nurse Gloria sits here with me. Just keeping company together. Nothing to be done. Send love and encouragement to Matt. Watch my fear and confusion. On and on."

Karen, volunteer

"Marie was so swollen and in such pain. It took a long time to make the slightest movement. She was so cooperative, put all her effort into it, held on bravely for the time it took. My heart went out to her then and there. Her illness makes bathing very hard. It is time for intuition, silence. I find it really helpful to keep a gentle, slow calmness around anything I do."

Mary Anne, volunteer

In closing, Frank Ostaseski states, "One of the main teachings of Buddhism is impermanence, that everything is changing. Perhaps we can approach the dying process with a bit more spaciousness, without panic, because in our meditation practice we see how from moment to moment we're always dying; things are always changing for us and we can't hang on to them. To hang on is extremely painful."



Patient at Laguna Honda Hospital.

On Saturday, December 9th, there will be one-half-day workshop Hospice Benefit with Stanley Keleman, entitled *The Somatic Experience of Grief.* Donation $45; for information call 863-2910.

Zen Center Members

Zen Center members are a large and varied group of people with one thing in common: we all feel that Buddhism and Buddhist practice are an important part of our lives and want to be part of the community of practitioners and supporters. Becoming a member at Green Gulch or City Center means that you are a member of Zen Center and can extend your privileges and discounts to the other temple as well as your home temple. After three years of membership, you are eligible to vote in the annual election to choose the Board of Directors, and have power of approval over any bylaw changes the board might propose. Members receive the *Wind Bell* magazine which is published twice a year and features lectures by Suzuki Roshi, the Abbots, and other teachers; news of Zen Center; and articles of related interest. They also receive a calendar of events, notices about Zen Center activities, and a ten percent discount on Bookstore purchases, as well as members' rates for Zen Center practice events.

We want membership to express the mutual relationship between Zen Center and the people who make Zen Center what it is. Last year, we began a newsletter to keep members informed of events and Zen Center news. Also, the president and secretary surveyed one hundred past and present members to receive feedback on current issues and find out what new programs they might want to see. This year we hope to arrange personal meetings between new members and senior practice leaders.

On the members' side, we ask that you consider how you can best support and maintain Zen Center. We rely on membership pledges to support our programs and practice centers in the Buddhist tradition of *dana*, or giving. The amount of your pledge is a personal decision which depends on what is appropriate for you. We suggest a pledge of $25, or more, per month for those who participate frequently. Students and those on fixed incomes may wish to pledge a smaller amount. No matter what you pledge, we are very grateful for your interest and intention to support Buddhist practice, and we consider your presence to be a valuable contribution in and of itself.

To become a member, please pick up an application form at either City Center, or Green Gulch Farm, or write to the Secretary, Zen Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Related Zen Centers

Buddhism is often likened to a lotus plant. One of the characteristics of the lotus is that it throws off many seeds from which new plants grow. A number of zen centers have formed which have a close relationship with San Francisco Zen Center. A partial list of these follows.

Zen Center has a number of teachers ready to lead small sitting groups. If you can help support, or are interested in forming, such a group, please write to Zen Center at 300 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

CENTERS WITH DAILY MEDITATION

Within California

Berkeley Zen Center: Sojun Mel Weitsman, Abbot
1931 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94703 (415) 845-2403

Hartford Street Zen Center: Issan Dorsey, teacher
57 Hartford Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 (415) 863-2507

Jikoji: in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga
Contact Doris Griffin (408) 741-9562

Kannon Do Zen Center: Keido Les Kaye, Abbot
292 College Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94040 (415) 948-5020

Santa Cruz Zen Center
113 School Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Wednesday: zazen 7:00 P.M.; lecture/discussion 8:00 P.M.
(408) 426-0169

Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, Genjo-ji: Jakusho Kwong, Abbot
6367 Sonoma Mtn. Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 (707) 545-8105

Outside California

Hoko-ji: Kobun Chino, Abbot
Taos, NM (505) 776-8677

Minnesota Zen Meditation Center: Dainin Katagiri, Abbot
3343 East Calhoun Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55408 (612) 822-5313

WEEKLY MEDITATION GROUPS

Within California

Cole Valley Zen Group: zazen, Sundays 6:30 P.M.
1000 Cole Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
Contact: Linda Cutts for lecture/instruction times (415) 863-3136

Community Congregation Sitting Group: Friday 6:30-7:30 A.M.
Community Congregational Church of Belvedere - Tiburon
Contact Yvonne Rand (415) 388-5572

Malibu Sitting Group
Zazen Sunday morning, Thursday evening
Contact: Peter Levitt (213) 456-1441

Mill Valley Sitting Group - Monday evenings
43 Oxford Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941 (415) 383-8863
Contact: Steve Stucky

Modesto Sitting Group
Monday evenings 5:00 P.M.
Contact: Stan Cunningham for location (209) 577-8100

Monterey Zen Meditation Group: Katherine Thanas, teacher
Tuesdays 7:00 P.M.
Contact: Joan Larkey (408) 624-9519

Oakland Sitting Group: Thursday 7:00 A.M.
4131½ Piedmont Ave. Oakland, CA 94611
Contact Vicki Austin (415) 864-2813

Occidental Sitting Group — Wednesday evenings,
last Saturday of month
3535 Hillcrest, Occidental, CA 95465
Contact: Bruce or Chris Fortin (707) 874-2274

Peninsula Sitting Group
Wednesday 8:30 P.M. and Tuesday and Friday 6:00 A.M. followed by service
Skyline at Hwy. 84
Contact: Kathy Haimson for directions (415) 851-7023

Sacramento Meditation Group
Zazen/Discussion Mondays 7:30-10:00 P.M.
Contact: Brian M. Toole for location (916) 925-0704

Outside California

Chapel Hill Zen Group — Tuesday evenings, Friday mornings
307 West Cameron St., Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Call: (919) 967-9256

Eugene Zen Practice Group — Wednesday mornings
1515 Hayes, Eugene OR 97402 (503) 343-2525. Contact Gary McNabb

Zen Center

Comparative Balance Sheet

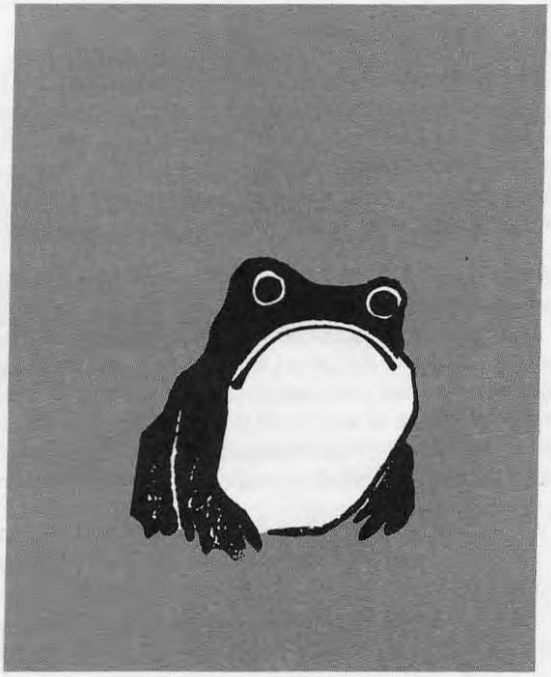
April 30, 1989, End of Fiscal Year

ASSETS	Balance April 30, 1989	Balance April 30,1988	Difference
Current Assets:			
Cash	$ 387,461	$ 222,134	$ 165,327
Accounts Receivable	61,088	35,386	25,702
Inventories	17,531	18,853	(1,322)
Prepaid Insurance	23,981	44,629	(20,648)
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	490,061	321,002	169,059
Buildings and Equipment	4,472,545	4,350,930	121,615
Less accumulated depreciation:	(546,490)	(483,698)	(62,792)
TOTAL PROPERTIES:	3,926,055	3,867,232	58,823
Common Stock: Everyday, Inc.	300,000	0	300,000
Notes and Accounts Receivable, less allowance for losses	23,650	89,660	(66,010)
Everyday, Inc, Note	337,225	337,225	0
TOTAL ASSETS	5,076,991	4,615,119	461,872
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE			
Current Liabilities:			
Accounts/Payroll Payable	53,179	65,483	(12,304)
Other Payables	72,850	0	72,850
Accrued Taxes	854	425	429
Deferred Income	216,340	211,653	4,687
One Year Long Term Debt	15,573	12,573	3,000
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	358,796	290,134	68,662
Long Term Debt:			
Mortgages	1,070,970	778,662	292,308
No-Interest Loans	9,683	10,183	(500)
TOTAL LONG-TERM DEBT	1,080,653	788,845	291,808
Fund Balance: Begin Year	3,536,142	3,508,059	28,083
Income Over Expense	101,400	28,077	73,323
Fund Balance: End Year	3,637,542	3,536,140	101,402
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE	5,076,991	4,615,119	461,872

Zen Center

Statement of Income & Expenses, End of Fiscal Year

	Year ended April 30, 1989	Year ended April 30,1988	Difference
INCOME			
Income from Students	$ 499,614	$ 465,012	$ 34,602
Self-Support Income	1,256,465	1,209,999	46,466
Royalties, Interest	413,885	342,463	71,422
TOTAL INCOME	2,169,964	2,017,474	152,490
EXPENSES	2,190,746	2,101,589	89,157
INCOME (UNDER) EXPENSES	(20,782)	(84,115)	63,333
CONTRIBUTIONS	122,182	112,192	9,990
INCOME PLUS CONTRIB. OVER EXPENSES	101,400	28,077	73,323



Round Cooking

by Abbot Tenshin Reb Anderson

Almost exactly half my life has been lived in Zen temples and monasteries. In the morning I rise before dawn and shuffle sleepily to the zendo. Though painful difficulties often arise, friends and teachers are extremely kind and helpful to me. I cannot find words to fully express my gratitude and sense of good fortune for such a life. Trying to live a life of awakening is a joy beyond joy. Now it's autumn and I am approaching fifty. All around me and inside me there is dying and sadness. I deeply question what real compassion is. How may I live the rest of my life to repay the love and kindness I have been given and fulfill my responsibility for the welfare of all suffering beings. How can something helpful come from these mixed feelings?

Up until now, I have practiced by sitting still in the midst of all living beings, that is, by walking straight ahead in Buddha's way. Yet I sense that something is missing, and at times I hear the echo of a voice saying "reach out". In the last few years I feel a change in my practice. I wonder, is reaching out something different from the way I am already living, or is it just doing what I am already doing more thoroughly and carefully?

Perhaps reaching out will naturally develop from wholehearted devotion to the small tasks that appear before me every day. Perhaps caring for the near will somehow accomplish the far-reaching work of compassion. Yet I can't help feeling uneasy with this devotion to the small and the near unless I hold the thought of universal compassion in my heart and mind. In fact I cannot even really take care of the small things in my life without the support of others. Or, turning it around, only by devotion to the well-being of others am I able to accomplish the smallest things.

The authentic practice of sitting still in the depths of silence and understanding correctly Buddha's teaching is not accomplished by oneself. The true significance of Buddha's radical instruction "just sit" cannot be realized except in the context of the vow to save all living beings. We cannot know what even the simplest words mean "except when we love and aspire".

In the midst of such thoughts and feelings I find comfort and encouragement in the stories of our ancestral founders. Please consider this one: The monk Daokai went to study with master Touzu Yiching. He asked, "The sayings of the Buddhas and Founders are like everyday affairs--is there anything else to help people?" Touzu said, "You tell me, do the emperor's commands in his own realm depend on the ancient kings?" As Daokai was about to speak, Touzu hit him with his whisk and said, "The moment you intended to come here, you already deserved a beating." At this, Daokai was awakened.

It warms my heart to find my question reflected in Daokai's question: did the Buddhas and Founders teach anything other than this present everyday activity? Does repaying kindness and benefiting beings depend on anything outside of meticulous attention to moment-by-moment experience? Does our everyday practice of compassion depend on the authority of the ancient buddhas? The response to and the settlement of this question is contained in the rest of the story.

Within this settlement there are two approaches to settling our body-mind into the Buddha way. The first is going to a teacher and listening to the teaching; the second is total devotion to just sitting. Listening to the teaching opens our heart-mind and allows it to work freely. Just sitting is the everyday affair of the buddhas and the living realization of the zen founders. Neither approach can be neglected.

The story indicates that first we go in faith to receive help from an other. And then in accepting this help we realize it in ourselves without depending on the other. First the truth turns us, then we turn the truth.

Recently I went to an art show, a presentation of life-size dolls. The woman who made them also teaches doll-making. She said that doll-making is a way for people to manifest their deepest affirmation in form. Listening to her, I thought of the way of just sitting: manifesting in the sitting posture our deepest affirmation — clarifying the body-mind and awakening to reality. In the Buddhadharma true reality is free of form and formlessness, but it must be brought into form in order to be healing.

The doll-maker also explained that these dolls are always created within a circle of friends. What is a circle? A circle is a two dimensional image. In three dimensions we might call it a cauldron, a crucible or a womb — containers for the process in which the highest aspiration of our life comes into form.

So the circle is a relationship—a relationship of mutual commitment and support. It can be created by just two people. A student working with a teacher and listening to the Dharma forms the container in which we realize the total devotion to just sitting. Knowing that the process cannot be realized by oneself, each person in the circle seeks and gives help, thus strengthening the cauldron and allowing the contents to be cooked to perfection. Teachers and friends need us to realize our truest and most perfect potential and won't be happy until we accomplish this.

Practicing in the cauldron with friends and teachers may protect us from clinging to limited ideas of what sitting and awakening is. For example, in the process of realizing the way through our sitting we are likely to develop some narrow attitude about what awakening is. We may think that we have it or we don't have it.

Entering the meditation hall and sitting in the midst of friends and teachers may actually be seen as a request for guidance and feedback. We sit down and thus ask for feedback from everyone. "This is my practice; this is my offering to all beings. This is my attempt to manifest in form my highest aspiration. What do you think, folks?" Feedback may be received while a teacher walks around the meditation hall adjusting posture. Sometimes people call this "correcting posture."

I don't feel comfortable using the word "correcting" in this context. It's not that our posture is corrected but more that it is opened up and we are shown some other possibilities. Sometimes we may feel that we are sitting quite straight and upright and after being adjusted we may feel crooked. It's not that we were right or wrong but rather we now have new information about what we are. Someone has touched us and through this touch has said, "I love you and really want you to be completely happy. And by the way, please try this posture, how does this feel?" And if this happens and we still don't feel that we are receiving feedback and guidance we need to say out loud to our teacher, "How is my practice, what is the truth?" By asking we create the cauldron and stir the soup.

Each of you, but not you separately, rather you with all beings, you in the cauldron, you cooking and you being cooked, are realizing awakening. Not you by yourself because that is not who you really are. You by yourself is not buddha nature; your total being in the cauldron of all beings is realizing the way. This is the total exertion of your life.

Neither can you really be flexible and free of fixed views by yourself. To decide for yourself what is flexibility is a kind of rigidity. Living in harmony with all beings is flexibility. It is a kind of cosmic democracy. Each of us has a role in the situation and gets one vote. You cast your vote by basically being here like a great unmoving mountain. Please cast your vote completely; that is your job. Then listen to all other beings, especially foreigners, strangers, and enemies.

Hang out with people who are capable of making a commitment to you and your life and who require that you make a commitment to theirs. Hang out with people who care about you, with people who need you to develop and say so. Make such a commitment and don't break that bond until you and all beings are perfect.

You cannot make the buddha-body without a cauldron, and you can't make a cauldron by yourself. You can't practice all by yourself; that is just delusion. Everything coming forward and confirming you is awakening. Then you are really cooking.

"Don't Spend Your Time in Vain"

Sandokai Lecture Number XIII 70/07/06

by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

(This lecture covers the following lines of the Sandokai *"Ayumi o susumereba gonnon ni arazu, mayote senga no ko hedatsu tsu-tsu-shinde sangen no hito ni mosu koin munashiku wataru koto nakare."*)

Ayumi means "foot" or "step" and *susumu* is "to carry on." *Ayumi o susumureba* actually means "practice." *Gon* means "near"; *non* means "far away." "(In practice) there is no idea of far away, or nearer to the goal." This is very important. When you are involved in selfish practice you have some idea of attainment. When you strive to reach some goal or attain enlightenment, you naturally have some idea of "far away." "I am far away from the goal," or "I am almost there." But if you really practice our way, enlightenment is there. This may be rather difficult to accept. When you practice zazen without any idea of attainment, there is actually enlightenment.

Dogen Zenji explained it in this way: In our selfish practice there is enlightenment and there is practice. Practice and enlightenment are a pair of opposite ideas, and both are events which we will have among the various events of our lives. But when we realize our practice and enlightenment as two events which appear in the realm of the great Dharma World, then enlightenment is one of the events which symbolize the big Dharma World, and practice is also an event which symbolizes the big Dharma World. If both express or suggest the big Dharma World, then actually there is no need to be discouraged because we do not attain enlightenment. Nor should we be extremely happy because we do attain it because there is no difference. Practice and enlightenment have equal value.

So if enlightenment is important, practice is also important. When we understand in this way, in each step we have enlightenment. But there will

be no need to be excited about it. Step by step we will continue endless practice, appreciating the bliss of the Dharma World. That is practice based on enlightenment; practice which is beyond our experience of good or bad, beyond our selfish practice.

Sekito says, "Whatever you see, that is the Tao." Even though you practice, if you do not understand in that way, your practice will not work. And in this line he says, "If you practice our way in its true sense, there is no problem about being either far away from the goal or almost there." Beginners' practice and great Zen masters' practice are not different. But if you are involved in selfish practice then that is delusion.

If you practice our way in the dualistic sense of practice and enlightenment, then "You will be separated from the Tao by the difficulties of crossing mountains and rivers." (*"Mayote senga no ko o hedatsu." Sen* is "mountain," *ga* is "river," *ko* is "difficulties.")

The next line is*"tsutsushinde sangen no hito ni mosu." Tsutsu shinde* is "most respectfully," or "reverently." *San* is like *sanzen*, "to visit a Zen master." *Ga* is "profound teaching"; *hito* means "human." So *sangen no hito* means "seekers of the truth," "those who visit a profound teacher or study a profound teaching." "I say respectfully to those who want to visit the real teachers."

The next line is *"koin munashiku wataru koto nakare." Ko* is "sunbeam" and *in* means "shadow"; *koin* means "day and night" or "time." *Muna shiku watare* means "to spend" or "to cross" or "to pass." *Nakare* means "not"; *muna shiku* is "in vain." "Don't pass the day and night without doing anything," or "in vain." To pass the day and night in vain does not mean only to "goof-off."

That may be one way, but what Sekito means is more profound. Even though you work very hard, sometimes you may be passing your valuable time without doing anything. So if you don't know what you are doing, we may say, "Oh, you are passing your time in vain." You may say, "No, I'm striving very hard to make my savings account $10,000," but to us that may not make much sense. Even though you work very hard at Tassajara during work period, it does not always mean that you are doing something properly. What does it mean then? If you "goof-off" you are wasting your time; but even though you work hard, maybe you are also spending your time in vain. This is a kind of koan for you.

"Every day is a good day." This is a famous koan. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't complain although you have some difficulty. What it means is, "Don't spend your time in vain." I think most people are spending their time in vain. "No, I'm always busy," they may say. But if they say so it is a sure sign that they are spending their time in vain. Most people do things with some feeling of purpose, as if they know what they are doing. But even so, I don't think they are doing things with the proper understanding of their activity. I think they may be doing things in vain.

When you do something with the usual purpose, which is based on some evaluation of what is useful or useless, good or bad, valuable or less valuable, that is not perfect understanding. If you do things whether they

are good or bad, successful or unsuccessful (which is not the question), because you feel you should do them, then that is real practice. If you do things, not because of Buddha or truth, or for yourself, or for others, but for the things themselves, that is the true way.

I cannot explain it so well. Maybe I shouldn't explain so much. You shouldn't do things just because you feel good, or stop doing things just because you feel bad. Whether you feel good or bad, there is something you should do. If you don't have this kind of feeling of doing something, whether it is right or wrong, good or bad, you have not yet started on our way in its true sense.

I don't know why I am at Tassajara: it is not for you or for myself or even for Buddha or Buddhism. I am just here. But when I think I have to leave Tassajara in two or three weeks, I don't feel so good. I don't know why. I don't think it is just because you are my students. I don't have any particular person whom I love so much. I don't know why I have to be here. It is not because I am attached to Tassajara. I'm not expecting anything in the future in terms of a monastery or Buddhism. But I don't want to live in the air. I want to be right here. I want to stand on my feet.

The only way to stand on my feet when I am at Tassajara is to sit. That is the reason I am here. To stand on my feet and to sit on my black cushion are the most important things for me. I don't trust anything but my feet and my black cushion. They are my friends, always. My feet are always my friends. When I am in bed, my bed is my friend; there's no Buddha, no Buddhism, no zazen. If you ask me, "What is zazen?" my answer will be, "to sit on my black cushion," or "to walk with my feet." To stay at this moment on this place is my zazen. There is no other zazen. When I am really standing on my feet I am not lost. For me that is Nirvana. There is no need to travel, to cross mountains or rivers. That is how we don't waste time. Moment after moment we should live in this moment right here, without sacrificing this moment for the future.

In China in Sekito's time, Zen Buddhism was very polemical. In the background of the teaching there was always some discussion or a kind of fighting. They were often lost in dispute. There were many schools of Zen. But because they were involved in some idea of "right teaching" and "wrong teaching," or "traditional teaching," or "heretical teaching," they lost the main point of their practice. So that is why Sekito said, "Don't spend your time in vain," sacrificing your actual practice for some idealistic practice, trying to attain some perfection, or trying to find out what is the traditional understanding taught by the Sixth Patriarch.

They compiled the *Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* in their own way and said, "This is the Sixth Patriarch's way. Those who do not have this book are not the descendants of the Sixth Patriarch." This kind of understanding of Zen prevailed at that time. That is why Sekito said, "I reverently say to the seekers of the profound way, don't spend your time in vain." What it means is very profound. To not be caught by some idea, some selfish understanding of practice or teaching, is to follow our practice in the right way.

This kind of practice is called "polishing tile practice." Usually, people will polish a mirror, because if you polish it, it will be a clear, good mirror. So if someone starts to polish a tile you may laugh at him. But to make a good tile is to polish a tile, and to polish a mirror is to have an actual mirror. Someone may say, "Oh, this is just a tile. It cannot be a mirror." That is the practice of those who easily give up, because they think, "I cannot be a good zen student, so I have to give up without polishing, without sitting zazen." They do not realize that a tile is valuable, sometimes more valuable than a mirror, because a mirror is too expensive for roofing. No one can afford to make a roof with mirrors. Tiles are very good for making roofs, as a mirror is important for looking at yourself. That is "tile-polishing-practice." *Ma sen*, we say.

As you know, there is a famous story about Nangaku, a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, and Baso, a "grandson" of the Sixth Patriarch. Baso was practicing zazen and Nangaku, his teacher, passed by him and asked, "What are you doing?" "I'm practicing zazen." "Why are you doing that?" asked Nangaku. "In order to become a Buddha," Baso said. "Ah, that's very nice of you," Nangaku said, "to try to be a Buddha," and he picked up a tile and started to polish it.

So Baso asked him, with some curiosity, "What are you doing?" and Nangaku said, "I want to make this tile into a mirror." His disciple asked him whether it was possible to make a tile into a mirror. Nangaku answered, "You said you are practicing zazen to be a Buddha, but Buddha is not always someone who attained enlightenment. Everyone is Buddha whether they attained enlightenment or not."

Baso's answer was, "I want to be a Buddha through sitting practice." And so the teacher said, "You said, practice in the sitting position. But to sit is not always Zen. Whatever you do, that will be zazen." Baso was lost. "Then what would be the appropriate practice?" he asked. So Nangaku, without explaining to Baso, asked, "If a cart does not go, what would be the appropriate way to make it go: to hit the cart, or to hit the horse?" But Baso couldn't answer because he was still involved in practicing to attain something.

So Nangaku continued his explanation of the practice. I cannot translate it literally, but, in short, what he said was, "If you try to think which is right: to whip the horse, or to whip the cart, this is wrong, because the cart and horse are not separated, they are one."

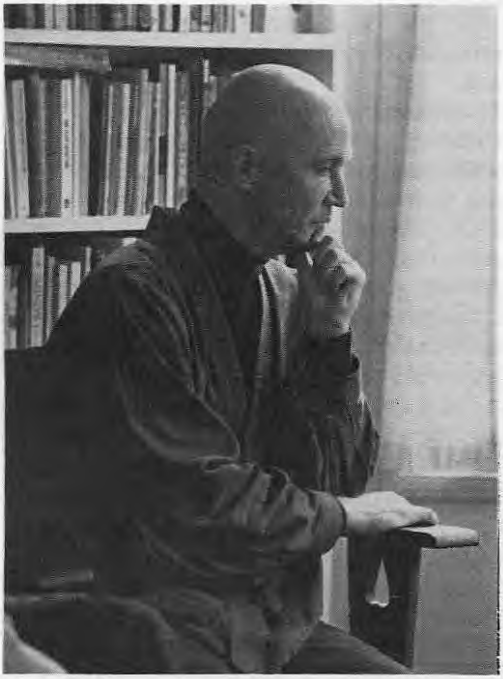
Practice and enlightenment are one, like cart and horse are one. So if you practice actual physical practice, that is also enlightenment. We call practice based on enlightenment "real practice which has no end," and we call enlightenment which started with practice, which is one with practice, "beginningless enlightenment." If someone starts to practice, there is enlightenment, and where there is enlightenment, there is also practice. There is no enlightenment without practice. If you don't stay on this spot realizing your position, then you are not practicing our way. So you are wasting your time if you are sacrificing your present practice for some future attainment. That is not real practice.

Sekito actually was the direct disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, and he knew the Sixth Patriarch's practice very well. So when Kataku Jinne and his disciples started to denounce the northern school of Jinshu, Sekito felt bad about their being attached to some idea without realizing real practice. His understanding was carried on by Dogen Zenji in Japan, and Dogen extended this understanding, not just logically, but more widely and with more feeling and in a more poetic way, through his tenacious thinking mind.

Some people say the *Sandokai* is not so good because it is so philosophical. It may be so if you don't understand the background of Sekito's teaching, and if your mind does not penetrate through his words. We say, "to read the back of the paper," not the printed character, but the other side of the book. The *Sandokai* is actually a very important work.

Part 2 — Questions and Answers

Student A: In light of what you said tonight, I don't understand the vows. If there are no sentient beings why do we save them? It all sounds like a big joke.
SR: That is because your practice is always confined within the realm of "why do we practice zazen? what does it mean?" Actually, your practice is



Best wishes to Issan Dorsey on his upcoming Mountain Seat Ceremony and installation as Abbot of the Hartford Street Zen Center.

Tensho David Schneider is seeking information, anecdotes and interesting stories for a biography of Issan Dorsey. Please contact him at (415) 548-1910 or c/o Zen Center, 300 Page St., SF CA 94102

very good. Why is your practice so good? I don't understand.
Student A: It doesn't feel so good to me.
SR: Anyway, you are doing well. My lecture may be some enticement. Perhaps it may be better for you not to hear my lectures, just practice zazen.
Student A: I don't mind zazen so much, but I don't like to make promises I don't understand.
SR: If sentient beings are numberless, or desires are inexhaustible, you cannot say, "I vow to save them." Our promise is very silly. It doesn't make any sense. I agree with you. But still you do it. Why? Because you don't feel so good if you don't work for others. We make the four vows, but what we mean is more than that. Tentatively, for the sake of convenience, we say just the four. But I really, truly feel lucky that we have inexhaustible desires and numberless sentient beings to save, and also that it is almost impossible to save each of them in terms of "I save you." You cannot save in that way. Whether this is possible or not, whether this is "Buddhist," or "Bodhisattva way," or "Hinayana," or "Mahayana way" is not the question. Anyhow, do it! To continue this kind of practice is our vow.
Student A: When I promise to do something, it has to have some meaning. If it doesn't have some meaning, I can't say it.
SR: That is your arrogance.
Student A: I don't know, maybe, but ...
SR: Even though you are crying. That crying doesn't make any sense. Your effort is still based on some selfish practice. You don't give yourself up. You have to suffer and fight more with yourself. There is no one to fight with, nothing to fight with. Fight with your selfish practice until you give up. That is the most important point for real students. They shouldn't fool themselves. They don't want to be fooled by our teaching, or by zen, or by anything. That is right. They shouldn't be fooled by anything.
Student A: Well, what will I do at the end of lecture? Everyone will say the four vows and I won't believe them.
SR:You don't have to believe in them literally. Because various teachers and numerous people repeat them in that way, you should do it. If they are cheating themselves, you, too, should be cheated; you should be fooled with all sentient beings. That you cannot do it means that you want to be some special person. That is good. That much spirit we should have; but that is not our way. My answer is very cold. I cannot be sympathetic with your practice. Maybe some great teacher will give you some candy. Go and get it.
Student A: It's not like that, Roshi. Maybe part of it is, but I still don't understand. I don't feel right. Even if the whole world is fooled, if there is something I don't believe in, or I don't understand...
SR: You don't understand. You see various colors, but how many colors do you see with your eyes? How much sound can you hear? How much can you understand with your small mind? You should know the limit of your thinking mind. Your thinking mind only works dualistically. You have no words to explain this kind of reality. It is almost impossible to understand our teaching through words. But because you stick to my words, or to scriptures, you think that the scriptures should be perfect, something more convincing. You think in that way, but I must confess that what I say is not always right, not always true. I am suggesting something more than that. Not always Buddhism, but Confucianism says, "If someone wants to fool

you, you should be fooled by them." That is very important.
Student A: Even though practice is greater than words, still, in the small world of words I don't feel strong enough yet to be inconsistent. If I say to you, "I don't see that lamp, Roshi," then something funny happens inside of me and sometimes that same funny feeling happens inside of me when I say the vows. I think, "O.K., I vow to save all sentient beings," but then something is going on inside which doesn't...
SR: Yes, I understand that. You know, we priests always put our hands together in *gassho* when we meet. How many times have you put your hands together at Tassajara? When I was young I didn't like it at all. I felt as if I was fooling myself, and I didn't feel so good. But as I had to do it, I did it, that's all. But now I understand, because I understand how foolish I am. I haven't as much spirit as I had before. But, still, truth is truth and I can't agree with you now. Maybe if I were your age I could agree with you quite easily, and we would be great friends, but now I am not your friend.

Student B: Roshi, do you think that we have any choice? For instance, am I here at Tassajara by my choice, or am I simply here at Tassajara?
SR: Your Buddha nature brought you here to Tassajara, that is my answer. I don't think it was your choice completely. Maybe twenty or thirty percent is your choice. But most of the reason for your being here is more than that. That we hear Buddha's teaching is because of our previous study. Wisdom seeks for wisdom, and we are listening to the teaching that we have listened to under many teachers in our past lives. Dogen says this. Even though you feel as if your whole body is saying, "I am feeling this way one hundred percent," that voice which now is covering all of your being, or character, actually is only a little, tiny part of you. Maybe I shouldn't explain so much in the traditional way.
Student B: Well, then, if I were, say, to become Buddha, would I have anything to do with it?
SR: First of all, try to forget yourself and rely on your true voice, your voiceless voice, your nonverbal voice. And "listen to the tongueless teaching," we say. Don't listen to my words. Think about this point.

Student C: Will I hear your stick on my shoulder early tomorrow morning?
SR: All right.

Student D: Whose voice is it that we listen to?
SR: Your voice and Buddha's voice. That is what the *Sandokai* is talking about. You sometimes think it is your voice, but that voice is Buddha's voice. You think in that way from a one-sided feeling. You think you are here. You think you are Joe or Mary, but actually it is not so, not at all. I think I am Suzuki, but if someone calls me Suzuki I feel very funny. "Oh, is this Suzuki?" The first reaction is, "No, I am not Suzuki."

Student E: Roshi, I may *gassho* (bows) and someone may look at me and say, "Oh, that is a good *gassho*," but there may be a cold heart behind it.
SR: Cold heart or warm heart is not the point?
Student E: Is it still a good *gassho*?
SR: Perfect!

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SCHEDULES

SAN FRANCISCO	GREEN GULCH FARM
MONDAY through FRIDAY 5:35-7:10 A.M. zazen & service 5:40-6:35 P.M. zazen and service	SATURDAY through THURSDAY 5-7 A.M. two zazens and service
SATURDAY 7-8:10 A.M. zazen & service 8:10 A.M. temple cleaning 8:25 A.M. open breakfast 9:10-9:50 A.M. zazen only 10 A.M. lecture (8:30 A.M. zazen instruction)	FRIDAY 6:30 A.M. zazen and service 5:30 P.M.
SUNDAY no schedule	SUNDAY 5-7 A.M. two zazens & service 8:30 A.M. zazen instruction 9:25 A.M. zazen 10:15 A.M. lecture 12:45 P.M. lunch

ONE-DAY SITTINGS: once monthly SEVEN-DAY SITTINGS: twice yearly
THREE & FIVE-DAY SITTINGS: offered periodically

Each year we hold residential practice periods of two-to-three months' duration at Green Gulch, City Center and Zen Mountain Center. For more information, please write to the City Center.

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