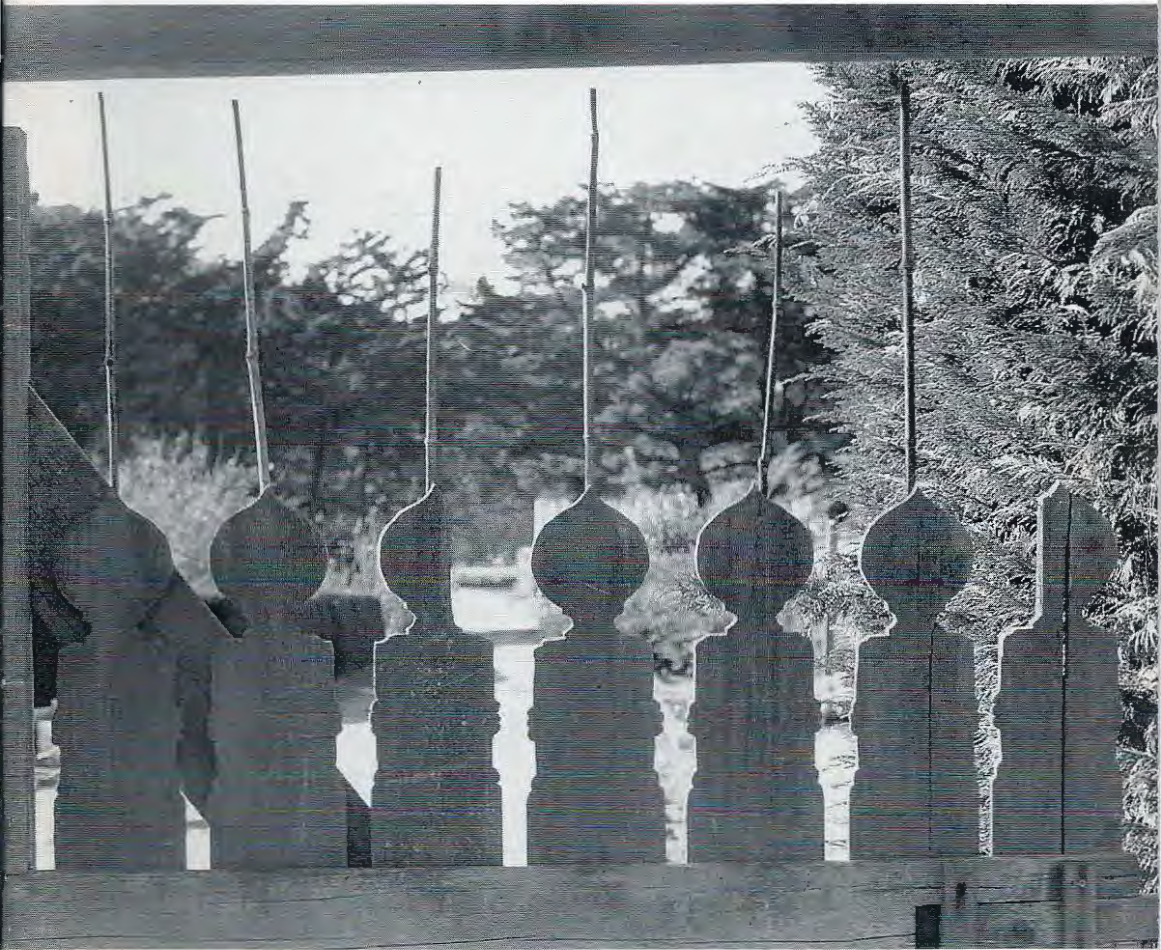


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The Life, Times and Teaching of Suzuki Roshi

Conference in Palo Alto
May 30–31, 1998

Gil Fronsdal

THOUGH I NEVER MET SUZUKI ROSHI, I heard many stories about him during my years as a student at Zen Center. Most often, I heard that people felt that he met them with a remarkable degree of acceptance and appreciation. It was as if he saw everyone—as they were—as an equal expression of Buddha nature.

Stories about Suzuki Roshi are still being told. Some of these were perhaps more legendary than true to who he was. I frequently heard that Suzuki Roshi sat simply and quietly at Soko-ji, allowing interested Americans to join him for zazen. The myth story was that he did nothing to reach out to these Americans, that he was not trying to promote Zen. Certainly he could not be characterized as a missionary!

Though there may be some truth to this, it is not quite accurate to say that he was passive in coming to teach in America or in allowing Zen Center to grow around him. Rather he was actively and perhaps even singlemindedly occupied with trying to bring Zen practice to his Western audience. He told his wife that this was all he thought about.

As with many people, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* was my introduction to Zen practice. However, on at least two occasions Suzuki Roshi explained that this book, transcribed and edited from his talks, was "not my book; it is my students' book—I look forward to studying it in order to know my students' understanding." And among Suzuki Roshi's most senior students there is some disagreement as to how well *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* represents his teachings.

Who was Suzuki Roshi? What were his teachings? Having only an indirect and very partial sense of the founder of Zen Center and key ancestor in our Western lineage, I would like to learn more about him—much more than the few stories I have heard here and there. Suzuki Roshi is too important to Zen Center and our Dharma lineage to let his memory both fade and become idealized.

Since his death over twenty-five years ago, no attempt has been made to coherently assess who he was as a person, the nature and

context of his teaching, and the influence he has had on American Buddhism. These years have perhaps provided enough distance for an objective overview and appreciation; yet people who knew him are still alive to provide a rounded sense of him as a person and teacher. I am helping the Palo Alto-based Sati Center for Buddhist Studies and the Buddhist Studies program at Stanford University organize a weekend conference devoted to Suzuki Roshi. The conference aims to provide a wide range of perspectives on Suzuki Roshi from students, friends, priests and Buddhist scholars who knew him.

Some of the topics to be covered include:

- ⇒ His life in Japan and America.
- ⇒ His Zen lineage and background; Japanese Soto Zen in the twentieth century.
- ⇒ His teaching in the context of Buddhism in America in the sixties.
- ⇒ Teaching stories by his students.

A multimedia show on Suzuki Roshi is being planned for the Saturday evening of the conference. For this I would be grateful to borrow any photos of Suzuki Roshi that anyone may have.

For information and conference registration, please contact the Sati Center at (415) 646-0530.



Our Everyday Life Is Like a Movie

March 15, 1970 City Center

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

I THINK most of you are rather curious about what Zen is. Zen is actually our way of life, and zazen practice is, maybe, like setting the alarm on your clock. Unless you set your alarm, the clock will not serve the purpose. So everyday we must have some starting point. Where to start is the most important thing. The sun rises at a certain time and sets at a certain time and always repeats the same thing. And we do too.

But we do not necessarily feel in that way. Our life may not be so organized, and we may not even know how important it is to know where to start our life. As Zen students, we start our life from zazen practice, we come back to zero and start from zero. We have various activities. How our activity arises from zero is the most important thing to know, to feel, or to realize.

Usually, I think, most people practice zazen to attain something, to achieve something. What is more important is to know where to start our everyday activity and to know how to practice zazen. At the moment you decided to sit, it means that you have already decided to set your alarm. And when you have that kind of confidence or have made that kind of decision and actually start zazen, that is zero.

During zazen, sometimes you will hear a bird singing. It is something that arises in your practice. In the same way, in our everyday life many things will arise. But if you know from where these things arise, you will not be disturbed by them. Because you don't know how they arise, you can lose confidence in your life. If you know how things happen to you, the moment something happens, you will be ready: "Oh, something is arising." Like watching the sunrise. "Oh, the sun is just coming up."

For instance, sometimes you will be angry, but anger usually doesn't come all of a sudden. It comes very slowly, actually. When you feel it come all of a sudden, that is real anger. But when you know how it comes, "Anger is arising in my mind," that is not anger. People may say he is angry, but actually, he is not angry. If you know that you have almost started to cry, "Oh, I am crying." Next two minutes, three minutes, "Oh, I started crying." That is not crying.

If you know what zazen is and what our practice is, you will be able to accept things as you accept the various images that arise when you sit in zazen. So in zazen the most important thing is to have Big Mind and to accept things as your practice and not even try to think about how things happen in your mind.

When you sit every morning, you know what time it is. To know what time it is is the most important thing for us in our everyday life. To know what you are doing is the most important thing. To know what kind of effort you are making and what kind of situation you are in now is the most important thing.



Our everyday life is like a movie which is taking place on a white screen. Most people may be interested in the picture on the screen without realizing there is a screen. Because there is a screen in the movie theater, someone will come and show some more pictures. So the most important thing is to have a screen in your mind and that screen should be white or clear. If the screen is colorful, colorful enough to attract people, it will not serve the purpose. The most important thing is to have a plain, pure white screen. But most people are not interested in the pure white screen. It is, I think, a good thing to be excited by seeing a movie. It is good. But to some extent the reason you can enjoy the movie is because you know that the movie is not actual. What you see is not actually going on.

So even though you have no idea of a screen when you are watching the movie, your interest is based on some understanding of the screen or the machine, and you know the movie is something artificial.

So you can enjoy it. You can enjoy something which you should enjoy; not more than that. That is how we enjoy our life. If you have no idea of the screen or machine, perhaps you cannot see the movie as a movie.

Zazen practice is necessary in order to know what kind of screen you have and to enjoy your life as you enjoy the movie in a theater. How you can do it is because you have your screen, and you're not afraid of the screen and you do not have any particular feeling for the screen. It is just a white screen, that's all. So you are not afraid of your life at all, but you can enjoy something which frightens you. You enjoy something that makes you angry or which makes you cry and you can enjoy the crying and the anger, too. But if you have no idea of the screen, you will even be afraid of enlightenment. "What is it? . . . Oh, my . . ."

If someone attains enlightenment, you may ask him what kind of enlightenment experience he had. He may say, enlightenment is a such and such kind of experience. "Oh no, that is not for me," you may say. But that is just a movie, something which you should enjoy. If you want to enjoy the movie you should know that it is the combination of film and light and white screen, and that the most important thing is to have a plain, white screen.

That is not actually something which you attain, but something which you have always. But why you feel you don't have it is that your mind is too busy; too busy to see, to realize it. So once in a while you should stop all of your activity and make sure that you have a white screen. That is zazen. It is not something to attain, but something you must find through practice.

That is the foundation of our daily life and the foundation of our meditation practice. Without this kind of foundation, your practice will not work. All of the instruction you will receive in our practice is about how to have a clean white screen as much as you can. It is not always pure white because of the various attachments we have and because of some stains made on it previously. We say that when we practice zazen we are like a baby on her mother's bosom. That is our zazen. We have no idea of anything. You are quite relaxed. But it is difficult to have complete relaxation in your usual posture. This kind of instruction is necessary, and is the result of many, many people's effort in the past. They found that this is much better than any other posture; better than standing up or lying down. So if you follow our instruction with this kind of understanding, your zazen practice will work. Whatever practice it may be, it will work. But if you do not trust your own mind, which is like pure, white paper, your practice will not work.

Thank you very much.

Soto Zen Text Project

Carl Bielefeldt

THE MAJOR WRITINGS of Dogen and Keizan, as well as other texts of Soto Zen, will be made available in new English translations from a team of scholars working under the sponsorship of the Sotoshu. The translations are the centerpiece of an initiative, called the Soto Zen Text Project, that seeks to provide materials for the international study and practice of Soto Zen. The project was formally launched in 1996 by the International Division of the Sotoshu Administrative Headquarters (Shumucho); it is guided by an editorial board made up of scholars from Japan and America, under the chairmanship of Professor Nara Yasuaki, president of Komazawa University. Griff Foulk, a professor at Sarah Lawrence College, and I will serve as editors-in-chief.

Work has already begun on the first phase of the project, which involves three distinct "tracks." The first is an effort to develop a new set of translations of the major Soto liturgical texts for use in chanting at American Zen centers. The purpose of this effort is not to impose a single "orthodox" liturgy on the various Soto communities but rather to foster a greater sense of community in the American Soto sangha by providing a common liturgical reference. In order to ensure the broadest possible consensus, we are developing the translations as a cooperative effort of the sangha, through a series of translation workshops that bring together the representatives of American Soto groups. The first such workshop was held last spring at Green Gulch Farm, with Reb Anderson as chair; a second meeting took place at Zen Center this fall. Once the workshops have arrived at a mutually acceptable version of the texts, the translations will be distributed to the Soto communities, which may want to test them out for possible adoption in their own services. The final version will be published, perhaps as early as next year, by the Shumucho.

The second part of our project now underway is a complete translation of the Sotoshu ritual guidebook. This work, known as the *Gyoji kihan*, is published by the Shumucho to provide detailed descriptions of the standard rituals performed in the school. Here again, the purpose of our translation is not so much to regulate Soto ritual practice in America as to provide a convenient reference for the training of American Soto priests. The translation is being done by Professor Foulk, who is a specialist in the study of Zen ritual. The text is long and highly

technical, but Griff hopes to complete the work by the end of 1998; once complete, the translation will be published by the Shumicho. Though the resulting book will of course be of principal interest to Soto practitioners, its translations of the technical terminology of Soto ritual practice and monastic routine will also provide a valuable resource for scholars of Zen.

We have also begun work on the main, and the most ambitious, task of the project, the translation of the major writings of Dogen and Keizan that form the scriptural basis for Soto. Although almost all of these works have previously been translated, some of them several times, our project aims to make the original Chinese and Japanese texts more accessible to scholars, students and practitioners by providing not merely new English versions but an abundance of reference material on the texts: extensive annotation on language and content; detailed glossaries on terms, books, people and places; supplemental notes on Soto commentarial positions regarding disputed passages; and so on. Needless to say, this kind of thoroughly researched translation will have to proceed slowly and, given the amount of material, will require the cooperative effort of several scholars working as a team. Because of its great bulk and importance for Soto Zen, we have begun with Dogen's famous *Shobogenzo*, a text that will surely require many years to complete. Meanwhile, we hope to start work soon on other writings as well, such as Keizan's *Denkoroku* and Dogen's *Eihei koroku*. Eventually, we plan to publish the entire set of Soto scriptures in both a fully annotated "scholars" version and a more abbreviated version for the general reader.

In its work of research and translation, the project plans to take full advantage of electronic media for storing and sharing information. To this end, we are fortunate to have Urs App, of Hanazono University, a specialist in the computerization of Zen texts, as a consultant to the project. Urs hopes to have all the original Chinese and Japanese materials input as electronic texts and is creating a system whereby translators can develop and share data bases through an internet site and consult with scholars in Japan by e-mail to a research assistant at the Shumicho. Once we have generated a significant body of material, we plan to begin making our translations and annotations available to the public through a web page and, when the project is complete, to publish the annotated version of our work in electronic form. We hope the result will be a rich reference tool for all students of Soto Zen.



Santa Cruz and Monterey Zen Centers

*A report by Bill Anelli and Santa Cruz and Monterey Zen students,
with commentary by their teacher Katherine Thanas*

"Old branches are nothing but plum blossoms. Blossoms and
branches are born in the same moment."

Plum Blossom by Eihei Dogen

AFTER LIVING, TRAINING AND TEACHING at Zen Center for twenty-one years, Katherine Thanas accepted an invitation to start a sitting group on the Monterey Peninsula. Although this action eventually involved leaving a vast network of relationships comprising much of her personal and professional life, she took a deep breath, gathered her courage, packed the U-Haul and moved on. Feeling a clear need to find her independent ground as a teacher and to see how she could inspire and sustain herself and others, she soon also accepted an invitation from the Santa Cruz Zen Center. She moved to Santa Cruz in 1990 and has been teaching in both the Santa Cruz and Monterey communities ever since.

Founded in the 1970s by Kobun Chino, who moved to New Mexico in the 1980s, the Santa Cruz Zen Center had been without a teacher for approximately six years. Prior to Katherine's arrival the group had experimented with a number of formats for survival, including inviting teachers from other traditions to teach.



Katherine:

Kobun's students began wondering whether the Zen Center would survive as a Zen sitting place. Initially, I was invited to Santa Cruz to give ten talks, then to teach for a year and after that the contract was extended indefinitely. It took some time for their disappointment to emerge that I wasn't Kobun and that my style was different than his. Eventually, some of the senior people left. I think this is not uncommon when there is a change in teachers.



Entrance to the Santa Cruz zendo

For me those early days were about my questioning how to present the teaching. I drew on my recollections of how Suzuki Roshi and Katagiri Roshi had taught us. That led me to Dogen's Genjo Koan, which I tried to present with the same luminous quality with which Reb taught it. I don't think I was successful.

I didn't immediately understand that people who were not singularly devoted to the study and practice of Zen Buddhism and who had other agendas, such as families and jobs, were not so much interested in Zen texts, like those of us living at San Francisco Zen Center. Rather, they were more interested in a teaching that they could immediately apply to their lives. Although



These folks participated in the summer 1997 sesshin at the Santa Cruz zendo, led by Teacher Katherine Thanas (far left front row).

it now seems obvious, it took a little time to see that I needed to present the texts as their lives and eventually I began to learn how to present Dogen, the sutras and other traditional teachings as nothing other than one's body and mind.

I gave weekly talks and led weekly classes that complemented the talks. The students asked a lot of questions and I saw how difficult it was for them to grasp the teaching. I was grateful to be able to repeat and explain again and again, emptiness, impermanence and suffering.

The mindfulness classes, especially, were a wonderful basis for studying the self. We spent weeks on body and breath practices. People resisted body awareness, but in this culture we are generally so unconscious of our bodies that we need to spend time this way.

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The timing of Katherine's early teaching in Santa Cruz was such that larger background events dramatized the suffering and impermanence she was describing in her talks. Santa Cruz itself seemed fragile and tentative in the continuing aftershocks of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, which left portions of downtown in rubble, and soon the 1990 Gulf War presented its horrible spectacle of ghostly technological destructions.

Attendance in both Santa Cruz and Monterey slowly grew. Sometimes 15 people came to a talk, sometimes 25. Over the years Katherine experimented with a variety of teaching techniques, dropping those that became stale or ineffective. When she decided to divide the classes into newer and older students, she concentrated on the newer ones while the others initiated self-study of the koans in the *Book of Serenity*. Sometimes she presented nontraditional topics for students to work with using traditional breath and observation techniques.



Katherine:

One summer we did a mindfulness class on sexuality and it was the first summer that attendance didn't flag. Students appreciated having a safe place to talk about sexual energy, body awareness and perceptions. People were open to discussing this material in the zendo, from a mindfulness perspective.

I'd like to offer a similar class on fear and resistance. Actually, we did once try to do a class on resistance and it was very painful because people had so much resistance.



Her work in Santa Cruz has been highly experimental relative to the traditional world in which she trained. There were and are constant challenges. After the subtle-colored toned-down world of Zen Center, where almost everyone wears sitting or ordination robes in some combination of black, grey or brown with just a hint of white at the neck, she found herself questioning the usefulness of a dress code for a lay group in a resort town where informality is the life-style. Should people wear shorts in the zendo? What atmosphere supports practice? Agreement has not been easily forthcoming.

For Katherine, the Santa Cruz and Monterey groups have brought everything into question from the superficial to the deep. For this she says she is continuously grateful because it keeps her engaged in a fresh, lively way with the forms of practice and the teachings.



Katherine:

It was new for me that sometimes when I was lecturing in Santa Cruz or Monterey energy would arise and I would find myself inventing stuff. I learned to trust what I was saying those times that went beyond the bounds

of "my knowledge." It was a provocative question for me: what did I know and where was the teaching coming from? Intellectually I had long known that Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching was strictly from his own experience, and although it may seem obvious that our own experience is the source of teaching and learning for us all, it took me a while to get it with my whole being that this was so. I'm still getting it . . .



Boundaries of the student-teacher relationship were another important issue for Katherine. At San Francisco Zen Center, size, formality, hierarchical structure, positions, titles, the seniority system and tradition clarify and regulate the student-teacher relationship; new students have many opportunities to observe the student-teacher relationship and are expected to imitate the traditional forms they see as part of their fitting into the community. Formality and distance are an intricate part of an elaborate system. For example, new Zen Center students don't speak to a senior teacher directly to ask for an appointment for a formal interview. Instead the appointment is made through leaving a note for the teacher's attendant, who then contacts the student for the appointment.



Katherine:

Initially I found the student-teacher boundary in Santa Cruz and Monterey not so clear as what I had been used to. Some of my hardest times were around issues of disappointing students who were hoping for a more social relationship. I had to talk about this openly with the students, which was hard to do. But it began to work out; they learned about my boundaries and I learned I could be more natural, playful and spontaneous in the teaching position and still maintain the boundary I feel is necessary in the student-teacher relationship. Probably for a single person teaching in a small group, boundaries constitute one of the trickiest areas, especially in a laid-back town like Santa Cruz where everyone hugs a lot.

Whatever my difficulties with students, I came to feel that I had the students I needed and deserved and that their problems were no different than problems I had and continue to struggle with inside myself; I learned to trust my irritation and to know that if I could trust them enough to express something from my dark side, they could trust me to express theirs.



Over the years the two groups have grown in strength and numbers. They work together in a variety of ways, including sponsorship of important benefit workshops led by author Natalie Goldberg and Zen cooking teacher Ed Brown, both of which provided the groups with substantial financial support.

The Monterey and Santa Cruz groups have made a strong connection to Tassajara. While many of their members had individually enjoyed visits to Tassajara during the summer guest season, soon after Katherine became their teacher, they began to visit the monastery for practice during work periods and for an annual weekend of zazen and work in May.

At some point the Santa Cruz and Monterey Zen Centers began doing nonresidential practice periods and five-day sittings. This deepened their practice and helped some group members to gain the experience and confidence necessary to sign up for practice periods at Green Gulch or Tassajara. Over the years there has been a nice flow of teachings, teachers and students back and forth between San Francisco Zen Center and the Santa Cruz and Monterey groups. Amongst the many teachings and forms of practice that Katherine, a participant in one of Suzuki Roshi's first lay ordinations in America, brought to her groups was the traditional Japanese art form of sewing Buddha's robe. By 1995 sixteen students had sewn rakusus and taken the precepts of lay ordination. Nine more are currently sewing.

In addition to the arrival of a new generation of students, the past several years have seen ongoing physical changes, especially in Santa Cruz, where the 120-year-old Victorian residence has been beautifully remodelled. Monterey Bay Zen Center acquired nonprofit status in 1997 and is beginning to think about a permanent and separate building of its own after its decade-long use of the Cherry Center for the Arts in Carmel. Some members also dream of an endowment fund for their teacher and are beginning to express these hopes to the community. Both centers express gratitude to previous generations: the Buddha, the Soto lineage, Zen Center's founder Suzuki Roshi, San Francisco Zen Center, Kobun Chino Roshi and the early lay founders and supporters of the groups who kept the centers alive when times were tough and drifting.



Miracles

This is a translation of Dogen's "Jinzu," a fascicle of *Shobogenzo* (*Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*). This piece, translated by Katherine Thanas and Kazuaki Tanahashi, is part of *Enlightenment Unfolding: Life and Work of Zen Master Dogen*, a Zen Center project forthcoming from Shambala Publications.

THE MIRACLES I AM SPEAKING OF are the daily activities of buddhas which they do not neglect to practice. There are six miracles [freedom from the six sense desires], one miracle, going beyond miracles, and unsurpassable miracles. Miracles are practiced three thousand times in the morning and eight hundred times in the evening. Miracles arise simultaneously with buddhas, but are not known by buddhas. Miracles disappear with buddhas, but do not overwhelm buddhas. Miracles occur throughout practice and enlightenment, whenever buddhas seek and teach, and whenever they search in the Himalayas or become a tree or a rock. When the buddhas before Shakyamuni Buddha appeared as his disciples, bringing a robe and a stupa to him, he said, "This is a miracle caused by the inconceivable power of all buddhas." Thus we know that this miracle can also happen to buddhas now and buddhas in the future.



Guishan is the thirty-seventh ancestor, a direct descendant of Shakyamuni Buddha. He was a dharma heir of Baizhang. Today, buddha ancestors in the ten directions, even those who do not call themselves descendants of Guishan, are all in fact his remote descendants. One day while Guishan was lying down, Yangshan Huiji came to see him. Guishan turned around to face the wall. Yangshan said, "I am your student. Please don't be formal." Guishan started to get up. Yangshan rose to leave. Guishan said, "Huiji." Yangshan returned. Guishan said, "Let me tell you about my dream." Yangshan leaned forward to listen. Guishan said simply, "Would you interpret my dream for me? I want to see how you do it." In response Yangshan brought a basin of water and a towel. Guishan washed his face and sat up. Then Xiangyan came in. Guishan said, "Huiji and I have been communicating intimately. This

is no small matter." Xiangyan said, "I was next door and heard you." Guishan said to him, "Why don't you try now?" Xiangyan made a bowl of tea and brought it to him. Guishan praised them saying, "You two students surpass even Shariputra and Maudgalyayana with your miraculous activity!"



If you want to understand buddhas' miracles, you should study Guishan's words. As "this is no small matter," to practice miracles is to study the buddha way. Not practicing miracles is not studying the buddha way. This miraculous activity is transmitted heir to heir. Do not study miracles from those outside the way, from the Two Lesser Vehicles, or from interpreters of sutras. When we study Guishan's miracles, we see that they were unsurpassable; each action was extraordinary. Beginning with Guishan lying down, there are: turning around to face the wall, getting up, calling "Huiji," talking about the dream, washing his face and sitting up. Yangshan leaned forward to listen, then



This international gathering of practicing students at City Center met with Shotoku-san (back row far right) to study forms for bowing and passing tea. Shotoku-san was visiting from Japan. Front row from left, Carol Hoare (from Australia), Alyssa Mudd and Abbess Blanche Hartman (U.S.), Marta de la Rosa (Columbia) and Showa Hernandez (Spain); back row, Kalle Magnusson (Sweden), Josh Van dervelde (U.S.), Lancelot Bourne (Guiana), and Shotoku-san.

brought a basin of water and a towel. Then Guishan described this as: "Huiji and I have been communicating intimately." You should study these miracles. These ancestors who correctly transmitted buddha-dharma talked in this way. Do not merely interpret it as Guishan expressing his dream by washing his face. You should regard their interaction as a series of miracles. Guishan said, "This is no small matter." His understanding of miracles is different from that of practitioners who follow the Small Vehicles, have limited understanding, or hold lesser views. It is not the same as that of bodhisattvas of the ten stages and three classes. People of limited views study small miracles and attain limited understanding. They do not experience the great miracles of buddha ancestors.

☪

These are miracles of buddhas, and miracles going beyond buddha. Those who study such miracles are beyond the reach of demons or those outside the way. Teachers and interpreters of sutras have never heard of this teaching, nor would they have accepted it even if they had heard. Rather than studying great miracles, teachers and interpreters of sutras, those outside the way, and practitioners of the Two Lesser Vehicles study lesser miracles. Buddhas abide in and transmit great miracles, buddha miracles. Had it not been for buddha miracles, Yangshan would not have brought water and a towel and Guishan would not have turned to the wall while lying down, or sat up after washing his face. Encompassed by the power of great miracles, lesser miracles occur. Great miracles include lesser miracles but lesser miracles do not know great miracles. Lesser miracles are a tuft of hair breathing in the vast ocean, a mustard seed storing Mt. Sumeru, the top of the head spouting water, or the feet spreading fire. Miracles like these are lesser miracles. Those who practice them never dream of buddha miracles. The reason I call them lesser miracles is that they are limited by circumstances and depend upon special practices and realizations. They may occur in this lifetime but not in another lifetime. They may be available to some people but not to others. They may appear in this land but not elsewhere. They may appear at times other than the present moment but not at the present moment. Great miracles are not like that. The teaching, practice, and enlightenment of buddhas are all actualized through miracles. They are actualized not only in the realm of buddhas but also in the realm of going beyond buddhas. The transformative power of miracle buddhas is indeed beyond thinking. This power appears before the buddha bodies appear, and is not concerned



Fire preparedness training at Tassajara

with past, present, or future. The aspiration, practice, enlightenment, and nirvana of all the buddhas would not have appeared without buddha miracles. In the inexhaustible ocean of the phenomenal world, the power of great miracles is unchanging. A tuft of hair not only breathes in the great ocean but it maintains, realizes, breathes out, and utilizes the great ocean. When this activity arises, it encompasses the entire phenomenal world. However, do not assume that there are no other activities that encompass the entire phenomenal world. A mustard seed containing Mt. Sumeru is also like this. A mustard seed breathes out Mt. Sumeru and actualizes the inexhaustible phenomenal world. When a tuft of hair or a mustard seed breathes out a great ocean, breathing out happens in one moment, and it happens in myriad eons. Breathing out myriad eons and breathing out one moment happen simultaneously. How are a tuft of hair and a mustard seed brought forth? They are brought forth by great miracles. This bringing forth is a great miracle. What enables a tuft of hair and a mustard seed to do such

things? Miracles enable them to do so. Miracles bring forth miracles. Do not think that miracles sometimes do and sometimes do not happen. Buddhas always abide in miracles.



Layman Pangyun was an outstanding person in the ancestral seat. He not only trained with Mazu and Shitou, but met and studied with many enlightened teachers. One day he said, "Miracles are nothing other than fetching water and carrying firewood." You should thoroughly investigate the meaning of these words. Fetching water means to draw and carry water. Sometimes you do it yourself and sometimes you have others do it. Those who practice this are all miracle buddhas. Although miracles are noticed once in a while, miracles are miracles. It is not that things are eliminated or perish when they are unnoticed. Things are just as they are even when unnoticed. Even when people do not know that fetching water is a miracle, the fact that fetching water is a miracle is undeniable. Carrying firewood means doing the labor of hauling, as in the time of Huineng, the Sixth Ancestor. Even if you do not know that miracles happen three thousand times in the morning and eight hundred times in the evening, miracles do happen. Those who see and hear the inconceivable function of miracles by buddha tathagatas do not fail to attain the way. Attaining the way of all buddhas is always completed by the power of miracles. Causing water to spout out of the head is a practice of the Lesser Vehicles. It is merely a minor miracle. On the other hand, fetching water, which Layman Pang speaks of, is a great miracle. The custom of fetching water and carrying firewood has not declined, as people have not ignored it. It has come down from ancient times to today, and it has been transmitted from there to here. Thus miracles have not ceased even for a moment. Such are great miracles, which are "no small matter."



Dongshan Liangjie, Great Master Wuben, was once attendant to Yunyan, who said, "Liangjie, what are miracles?" Dongshan politely brought his hands together at his chest and stood near him. Yunyan asked again, "What are miracles?" Dongshan bid farewell and walked away. In this story words are heard and the meaning of miracles is understood. There is merging, like box and cover joining. You should know that it is a miracle to have a disciple like Dongshan who does not veer off, or to have a high ancestor like Yunyan who does not come

forward. Do not think that the miracles they are speaking of are the same as those taught outside the way or in the Two Lesser Vehicles. On the road of buddhas there are also great miracles that happen at the top or bottom of the body. The entire world of ten directions is the true body of a single monk. Thus, the Nine Mountains and the Eight Oceans around Mt. Sumeru, as well as the ocean of thusness and the ocean of wisdom, are no other than water spouting from the top, bottom, and center of the body. It is also water spouting from the top, bottom, and center of the formless body. The spouting out of fire is also like this. Not only is there the spouting out of water, fire, and air, but also there is the spouting out of buddhas from the top and bottom of the body. There is the spouting of ancestors from the top and bottom of the body. There is the spouting of immeasurable eons from the top and bottom of the body. There is also the spouting out of the ocean of the phenomenal world and the swallowing of the ocean of the phenomenal world from the top of the body. To spit out the lands of the world seven or eight times and to swallow them two or three times is also like this. The four, five, or six great elements, all elements, and immeasurable elements, are also great miracles that appear and disappear, are spit out and swallowed. The great earth and empty space are miracles that are swallowed and spit out. Miracles have the power of being activated by a mustard seed and of responding to a tuft of hair. Miracles arise, abide, and return to the source beyond the reach of consciousness. The realm of buddha miracles is beyond long or short—how can this be measured by discriminatory thinking?



Long ago when a sorcerer who had the five miraculous powers was attending the Buddha, he asked, "You have six miraculous powers and I have five. What is the one I am missing?" The Buddha called to him, "Sorcerer." "Yes," he responded. The Buddha said, "What miraculous power are you asking about?"

You should thoroughly study the meaning of this dialogue. How did the sorcerer know that the Buddha had six miraculous powers? The Buddha has immeasurable miraculous wisdom, which is not limited to six miraculous powers. Even if you see six miraculous powers you cannot master them. How can those who have lesser miraculous powers dream of the Buddha's six miraculous powers? You should say, "When the sorcerer saw Old Man Shakyamuni, did he actually see the Buddha? When he saw the Buddha, did he actually see Old Man Shakyamuni? If the sorcerer saw Old Man Shakyamuni and saw the

Buddha, did he also see himself, the sorcerer of the five miraculous powers?" You should study the words of the sorcerer's questions and study going beyond the words of this dialogue. Isn't this question about the Buddha's six miraculous powers like counting the treasure of a neighbor? What is the meaning of Old Man Shakyamuni's words, "What miraculous power are you asking about?" He did not say whether the sorcerer has this miraculous power or not. Even if Old Man



The 100-year-old Tassajara stone dining room was renovated during the fall, winter and spring of 1997-98. It will be completed in time for the opening of the Tassajara guest season on May 8.

Shakyamuni had spoken about it how would the sorcerer have understood the single miraculous power? Although the sorcerer had five miraculous powers, they are not the same as the five miraculous powers of the Buddha. Although the sorcerer's powers may look like those of the Buddha, how can his powers compare with those of the Buddha? If the sorcerer attained even one of the Buddha's powers, he could reach the Buddha by this power. When we see the sorcerer he had powers similar to the Buddha's, and when we see the Buddha he had powers similar to the sorcerer. But the sorcerer did not have the Buddha's miraculous powers. If one of the sorcerer's powers could not reach one of the Buddha's powers, none of his five powers could be equal to those of the Buddha. So what is the use of asking the Buddha, "What miraculous power am I missing?" Old Man Shakyamuni thought the sorcerer should have asked about the powers the sorcerer already had. The sorcerer had not even mastered one of those powers. In this way the Buddha's miraculous powers and other people's miraculous powers look alike but in fact are completely different.



About the Buddha's six types of miracles, Linji, Great Master Huizhao, said, "According to an old teacher, the excellent marks of the Buddha Tathagata's body are listed to accommodate the needs of people's minds. To counter the common tendency toward nihilistic views, such provisional names as the thirty-two marks or the eighty appearances of the Buddha are used as expedient means. But they are imaginary concepts. Such a body is itself not awakening. Having no form is the Buddha's true form.

"You say that the Buddha's six types of miracles are wondrous. Devas, sorcerers, fighting spirits, and demons also have miraculous powers. Are they buddhas? Fellows of the way, do not be mistaken. A spirit defeated by Indra took his eighty-four thousand retainers and hid inside a lotus stem. Do you call this a miracle?

"The miracles I have described of these devas, sorcerers, fighting spirits, and demons are the result of past actions or present skills. But the six types of miracles of a buddha are different. A buddha enters forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, and objects of mind and is not confused by them. Thus a buddha masters the six sense objects, which are all marked with emptiness. A buddha is free of conditions. Even having the body of five skandhas accompanied with desires, a buddha does not depend on anything. A buddha practices miracles which are grounded on the earth.

"Fellows of the way, a true buddha has no form, and the true dharma has no marks. From your mind's illusions, marks and appearances are created. What you get is a wild fox's spirit which is the view of those outside of the way, and not of a true buddha."

Thus, the six types of miracles of the buddhas cannot be reached by those of the Two Lesser Vehicles, or of devas or demons. The six types of miracles of the buddha way cannot be measured. They are only transmitted to disciples of the buddha way, person to person, but not to others. Those who have not inherited such miracles do not know them. Those who have not inherited such miracles are not persons of the buddha way.



Baizhang, Zen Master Dazhi, said, "The eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are not defiled by form or formlessness. This nondefiling is called receiving the four lines of a verse of vows and receiving the four fruits of the arhats. Leaving no trace in the six sense organs is called the six types of miracles. Not to be hindered by either form or formlessness, and not to depend on intellectual understanding, are miracles. Not abiding in these miracles is called 'going beyond miracles'. A bodhisattva who goes beyond miracles does not leave traces. This is a person going beyond buddha. It is a most inconceivable person, an uncreated self."

The miracles transmitted by buddha ancestors are as Baizhang described. A miracle buddha is one who goes beyond buddha, a most inconceivable person, the uncreated self, a bodhisattva of going beyond miracles. Miracles do not depend upon intellectual understanding, do not abide in themselves, and are not hindered by form and formlessness. There are the six types of miracles in the buddha way which have been maintained by buddhas ceaselessly. There has not been a single buddha who has not maintained them. Those who do not maintain them are not buddhas. These six types of miracles leave no trace in the six sense organs. An old teacher [Yongjia] said, "The six types of miracles are neither empty nor not empty. A circle of light is neither inside nor outside." "Neither inside nor outside" means leaving no trace. When you practice, study, and realize no-trace, you are not disturbed by the six sense organs. Those who are disturbed should receive thirty blows. The six types of miracles should be studied like this. How can those who are not authentic heirs of the buddha house learn about this? They mistakenly regard running around inside and outside as the practice of returning home. "The four fruits of the arhat," mentioned



El Niño at Tassajara

by Baizhang, are the essentials of the buddha way. But no teachers of the scriptures have correctly transmitted them. How can those who study letters or wander in remote lands receive these fruits? Those who are satisfied with minor achievements cannot master them. The four fruits are transmitted only by buddha and buddha. The so-called four fruits are to receive four lines of verse, and this means that eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are undefiled in all things. Undefiled means unstained. Unstained means undivided mind—"I am always intimate with this." The six types of miracles and the four fruits have been correctly transmitted in this manner. Anything different from this is not buddha-dharma. Thus, the buddha-dharma is invariably actualized through miracles. When actualized, a drop of water swallows the great ocean, and a speck of dust hurls out a high mountain. Who can doubt that these are miracles?

On the sixteenth day, the eleventh month, the second year of the Ninji Era [1241], this was presented to the assembly of the Kannondori Kosho Horin Monastery.

Recently the news of the Zen institutions' involvement in World War II has come to light—see *Zen at War* by Brian Victoria, Weatherhill. We will review this important book and others in the next *Wind Bell*. While participation in the war was great, we print here some examples where Zen provided a healing framework.—M.W.

The Zen of Ending War

Kazuaki Tanahashi

DURING WORLD WAR II, the Zen monk Soen Nakagawa was living in Ryutaku Monastery on the rural hill of Mishima, near Mt. Fuji. He wrote this subtly anti-war haiku:

News of a victorious battle
I just shuffle along in the mud
at this spring temple

After U.S. forces captured a few Pacific islands in hellish battles, their bombers started to devastate Japanese cities. Monk Soen replaced one word of the poem, "*senka*," with a homonym:

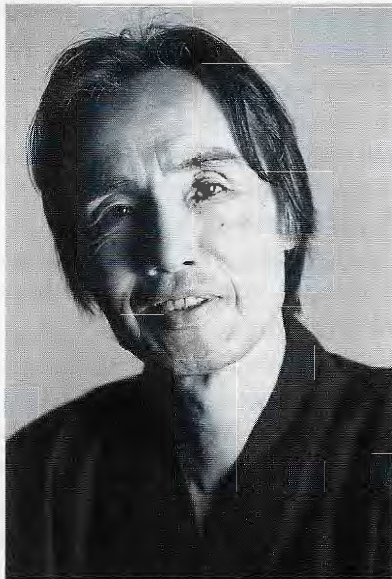
News of a disastrous battle
I just shuffle along in the mud
at this spring temple

Months after Japan's surrender in August 1945, he wrote:

City of ashes
Fuji soars serene
New Year's first light

Surprisingly enough, during the 1946 *rohatsu sesshin*, an American was already participating at the monastery. Soen wrote:

Middle day of rohatsu
sitting with us
a G.I.



Kaz Tanahashi

In 1951, when his 86-year-old teacher Gempo Yamamoto retired, monk Soen assumed abbotship of Ryutaku-ji. It is a small but important monastery, founded by the eighteenth-century master Hakuin who had revitalized the Rinzai School of Zen, and who created the koan, "What is the sound of one hand?" Some Westerners were attracted to this training center, where the abbot spoke English.

In the same year, Soen Roshi went to Yokohama to see off Robert Aitken, who would later become one of the first roshis in the Western world. At that time he was going back to the United States after a half-year's stay in the monks' hall. Soen wrote:

One hand
waving endlessly
autumn ocean

Although I did not have an opportunity to meet this legendary Zen master, I passionately admire his poems. This led me to collaborate with his dharma heir Eido Shimano and Roko Sherry Chayat, the teacher at Syracuse Zen Center, in compiling a book on the Zen path of Soen Nakagawa, titled *Endless Vow* (Shambhala Publications, 1996). During our work in 1995 at the Dai Bosatsu Zendo in upstate New York, I asked Eido Roshi about Soen's teacher Gempo Yamamoto. Eido Roshi told me a story about how Gempo Roshi had contributed significantly to ending

the war. I remembered vaguely having read about it in a Japanese magazine a long time before.

It felt like a coincidence that I was reminded, exactly half a century later, of Gempo Roshi's influence on the fate of the nation, as well as of the world. I had always been troubled by how little Japanese Buddhists had done to oppose imperialism, colonialism, racism, sexism, militarism, and war while Japan was expanding its empire in Asia and the Pacific. So it was important for me to know that someone had done something.

Several people speak of the incident in a book called *Kaiso: Yamamoto Gempo* (Memories of Gempo Yamamoto), edited by Benkichi Tamaoki. In April 1945, the army general Kantaro Suzuki was offered prime ministership when the failure of General Hideki Tojo, who had started and conducted the war as the prime minister, became evident. At a secret meeting in Tokyo with Gempo Roshi, who had been nearly blind since his youth but was highly regarded for his profound insight, General Suzuki asked for his advice.

At that time Japan was in an impossible situation, which was clear even to an eleven-year-old boy like myself. On the one hand, we had been made to believe, by a massive brainwashing education, that Japan was a divine nation; that it had never lost and would never lose in war. On the other hand, despite all the radio propaganda from military headquarters, there was no question that Japan kept losing important battles on land and sea. U.S. bombers were cruising unchallenged at high altitudes, burning city after city.

Even in primary school, kids were all taught that surrender was utterly disgraceful and should never be considered a choice. Since there was no hope for Japan to roll back and win the war, while surrendering was out of the question, the fate for us civilians was either to be killed by the enemy or to kill ourselves by jumping off a cliff or drowning ourselves. The government was propagating a poetic but horrifying message, "*ichioku gyokusai*," which meant "one hundred million people crushed like jewels." The entire nation was taking a fanatic dive toward collective suicide.

Merely mentioning to friends or family members of the potential of the nation's surrendering was regarded as an act of treason. In this state of terror, the Zen monk Gempo was one of the few people who had the wisdom to see the reality of our position and the courage to risk his life by speaking truth when asked to advise General Suzuki. Without hesitation, Roshi encouraged Suzuki to assume the office and lead Japan to surrender as soon as possible. A week later Suzuki became the prime minister.

Early on the morning of August 12, a messenger from Suzuki informed Roshi of Japan's decision to surrender unconditionally. Roshi wrote, "Your true service is starting now. You must endure the unendurable, bearing the unbearable."

At noon on August 15, the Emperor Hirohito made his very first radio broadcast and read his edict, ordering an immediate cease-fire. The most quoted line from this historic announcement remains the paradoxical Zen phrase: "We shall seek peace for myriad generations, enduring the unendurable, bearing in the unbearable."

Wataru Narahashi, formerly a key member of the Constitution Drafting Committee, also testifies on his experience of 1946 in *Kaiso: Yamamoto Gempo*. Seeing Narahashi arrive and enter the room in the hot spring inn to meet him, Gempo Roshi said, "Does your visit concern the status of the Emperor?" Narahashi was shocked, as this was precisely the secret issue he had been sent to discuss. He said, "You are right, Roshi," and asked for his advice.

The Drafting Committee for Japan's new constitution had become polarized and was unable to reach agreement on whether imperial rule should be continued or eliminated. Some political leaders believed that elimination of imperial rule would upset millions of people and be a cause of nationwide riots. People had been conditioned to dedicate their lives to the Emperor. Others, including those who were occupying Japan, did not want continuation of the imperial system that had led Japan to conquer most of Asia. The Drafting Committee was under great time pressure, as the Soviet Union was demanding that Japan be divided and the northern island of Hokkaido be occupied by the Soviets. They needed to propose a draft quickly before the Soviets threatened to move forces into Hokkaido.

Responding to Narahashi's inquiry, Roshi said nonchalantly, "If the Emperor maintains political power, it is bound to be misused. Instead, the Emperor should be a symbol, shining high in the sky—like the sun." Narahashi thought it was a brilliant idea and brought it to his colleagues and the U.S. officers in charge of the Occupation Forces. Everyone supported this idea, which became one of the central concepts of the new Constitution: "The Emperor is the symbol of the Nation of Japan."

Like millions of other people in Japan, I had been familiar with this opening line of Article One of the Constitution. But like most others, I had failed to see in this line a monk's lifelong meditation.



The Agony of Hate

Rachel Carr

Nothing endures but change.

—Heraclitus

MY FEELINGS FOR THE JAPANESE PEOPLE were sharply divided between hate and love. I had suffered greatly from starvation and cold in Shanghai when the Japanese occupied this city. In the 1950s when I made my home in Tokyo with my family, I agonized over how to rid myself of this hate. I began a serious study of the language and various cultural arts. Before long I was accepted in the warm embrace of my Japanese tutors and new friends.

I thought a great deal about finding a place where I could study the philosophy of Zen. Still, I wanted to make peace with the inner conflicts of my mind.

In one of my jaunts through the suburbs of Tokyo, I discovered a little-known temple that became a haven for me. As I approached the garden I was surprised to see a slender, tall Caucasian in his thirties, in Buddhist robes, raking the sand with a bamboo broom. In this small garden was the harmony of force, of nature, and of spirit. It was deceptively simple in design, but it is this very quality that gives it power. The rocks were so arranged in a sea of raked sand that some remained hidden from any vantage point, suggesting life's mysteries. The Zen masters believe that a spiritual garden of this kind speaks, but only to those who are willing to listen.

I approached the monk and asked if I could study Zen in the temple. He smiled and said in an American accent that I had come to the right place. In Japan it is customary to carry name cards, so I handed him one and followed him inside the temple. I wondered how this man with a shaved head had chosen a life of retreat in a foreign country. The mystery soon revealed itself.

"Please wait here," he said in a soft tone, "I will call Suzuki *sensei* (teacher). He will be the newly appointed *hojo-san* (abbot) of this temple."

The tiny waiting room was simply furnished. Nothing garish offended the eye. The bare walls were a soft beige enhanced by a polished bench and a dynamic calligraphic scroll that hung above two morning

glories with their long, rhythmic tendrils peeking out of a slender bamboo vase. Printed by hand in small letters attached to the scroll was the English translation: "Lost in the beauty of nature."

"*Irrashai* (welcome)," a melodious voice greeted me. It was the new abbot, a man of slender build and medium height with unusually expressive eyes. I apologized for the intrusion.

"*Iye! Iye!* (no! no!)" he said with a broad smile. Breaking into fluent English he added, "It's a pleasure to meet you. I understand you want to study Zen."

"Yes," I nodded, and went on to explain to him my distress and the almost insurmountable difficulty I anticipated in resolving it.

The young abbot listened sympathetically and nodded as if he understood the depth of my anguish. "The only way to find your inner peace," he said, "is by knowing that others have suffered in similar ways and how they have transcended agonizing barriers."

"You are perhaps wondering what the gentle, tall *gaijin* (foreigner) you have just met is doing in my temple. Shigeru is his Japanese name given to him by our revered *roshi*. He has abandoned his worldly cares and shares a life of serenity and peace with us here.

"I will tell you how we met. It is not an easy story to relate. When Tokyo was bombed by American planes during the Second World War, I lost my entire family. I was wandering in a daze among the ruins when the roshi of this temple found me. I have lived with him since. He is now a man of advanced age, and that's the reason I will become the new abbot, which is most unusual at my age of 45. All through those years I had been sheltered in this temple, protected by compassion and dedicated only to a spiritual existence. Though I loved the roshi I could not understand how he was able to forgive the enemy who exploded two atomic bombs on innocent Japanese. I find it difficult to admit that years of daily meditation did not erase this deep-seated hate. That was the time when Shigeru came to this temple for instruction in *zazen* (meditation) and was a faithful student for a long time. Whenever I saw him, I was stirred with mounting fury.

"On the day I was to be installed as the abbot, I was so unsettled inside myself. Was I really capable of taking over the mantle from the roshi? He was the personification of compassion and forgiveness: I was the one plagued with hate and revenge!"

The abbot described this memorable day in detail. He was accustomed to rising at dawn. On hearing the sounds of the drum that broke the early morning stillness in the temple, he quickly slipped into his Buddhist robes and strode barefoot across the flagstones to draw water from the well, rinsing his hands and mouth as a daily purification

ritual. He lingered in the garden. He knew it well. Every day he scrubbed and swept it, sprinkling water on the winding paths of flagstones and on the soft velvet moss. He raked the bed of white gravel into artful symmetry around a grouping of rocks to simulate an island. He knew it well and spoke of this spiritual sanctuary with passion. It was here that the monks, invited by the roshi for this auspicious day, chanted the Buddhist sutras. He lit an incense stick and planted it in the ashes of the porcelain brazier. Facing the bronze statue of Buddha, he placed a *zabuton* (square cushion) in front of it and made his prostration, then knelt on the *zabuton* and lowered his head to the polished floor, his hands, palms up. His limber legs folded easily into the lotus pose. Eyes half-closed, he drew long breaths, focusing his mind on its rhythmic flow. He chanted the sutras in a deep baritone. He thought of the roshi who loved his voice and listened to his chanting every day.

Somehow he could not anchor his concentration. He was unable to find his path to the level of serenity where all extremes disappear. The flow of boundless thoughts and images paraded through his mind. One quotation was particularly persistent, and he recited it carefully, pronouncing each meaningful word: **"No gate stands on public roads. There are paths of various kinds. Those who pass this barrier walk freely throughout the universe."** He knew of his weakness. He was unable to pass this barrier and walk freely throughout the universe. In his mind he could hear the roshi's voice assuring him that there are times when one must use continued gentle persuasion eventually to reach the depth of stillness. Hard as he tried, only his body was in repose.

His mind was unbearably painful. So many memories inflicted themselves on his need to bring about inner calm. His anger soared whenever he thought of the *gaijin*—mostly Americans who came to the temple for instruction in *zazen*. Did they really understand *zazen* and the total devotion that one must have to achieve any degree of serenity? *He* had failed. How could *they* succeed? Deep in his heart he had qualms about his capability of assuming the role of an abbot.

On his way to the roshi's chambers he heard a familiar voice laughing. "No, it couldn't be!" he thought with a shudder. His heart pounded when he heard the resonant laughter again. He feared the worst. On entering the chambers he saw Shigeru sitting awkwardly on a *zabuton*. His long legs were loosely crossed and he was chatting amiably to the roshi in a mixture of Japanese and English. The roshi smiled at the abbot's arrival, then suddenly excused himself and withdrew from the room, followed by the monks in attendance. The two young men, now left alone, faced each other.



Corky Sacciuto chose rocks from Tassajara Creek to use in the new tea garden at Green Gulch Farm.

The abbot bowed to break the silence.

"I am humbled by your presence," he told Shigeru.

"And I, yours," Shigeru bowed lower to express humility. "I have heard that your parents and three brothers were killed in the war. I suppose you feel that we Americans killed your family with our bombs. Remember, Japan started the war!"

The abbot felt as if a dagger had pierced his heart when Shigeru laughed: "Ah that clever old roshi. He had reasons for bringing us together on this auspicious day, challenging you to the edge! You see, my father was killed by the Japanese gendarme in China. I was a teenager then. My mother died soon after from grief."

"Was your father a spy?" the abbot asked, gritting his teeth.

"No, just a simple devoted missionary who loved the Chinese, but the Japanese were convinced that he was engaged in some kind of espionage. He was tortured and died in a concentration camp."

Shigeru was now caught up in his own bitterness.

"You see, I didn't choose to come to your country, I was sent here by my company. The reason I have been coming to the temple for study in zazen is to rid myself of the hate I harbor for the Japanese, except the roshi. I love him. He is like a father to me."

The abbot's heart was racing. "That makes us brothers!" he thought, suppressing his emotions.

"Tell me," Shigeru asked, "Why do you refer to me as the gaijin?"

"That is what you are. A foreigner. All non-Japanese are gaijin to us."

"And where did you learn to speak such fluent English?"

"At school, and I read a lot."

"Perhaps I have no right to ask this," Shigeru said, "It's rather personal. How long did it take you to rise above anger and hate?"

It was then that the young abbot searched his conscience for an honest answer.

"Only now," he admitted. With this confession he felt a sudden release from his tortured soul and a strange rising warmth for Shigeru. He burst into uncontrollable laughter.

"What's so funny?"

"You!" the abbot said. "You really look ridiculous trying to meditate with those long legs that refuse to bend. I've watched you many times struggling with yourself."

"I must have been quite a sight!"

The abbot could no longer restrain the surge of affection he felt for the American. He reached out and clasped Shigeru's hand.

"Since we both look upon the roshi as our father, that does make us brothers."

"Indeed!" Shigeru agreed.

The old roshi had an uncanny sense of timing. When he entered the room he was pleased to see the two men in a warm embrace. He reminded them that the ceremony was about to begin.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

The young abbot smiled with tears in his eyes.

"Yes, now I can truly say that I am!"

"Then it is time for you to be installed as *hojo-san* of this temple."

After hearing this moving story I found it incredible that the three of us were caught in the same web of hate. Eventually I also came to terms with my own agony. I learned to forgive and forget. While living in Japan I developed a love for that country.

The Zen masters with whom I have studied in later years taught me that the spirit of Zen is feeling life, and that Zen has no doctrinal teaching, no formal program of spiritual development. Its philosophy develops a sense of clarity that permits one to absorb the sufferings of one's life. I have learned that we are the possessors of special perceptions and ability. We can, with the proper use of will and mind, come

to understand just who and where we are in the scheme of things.

The roshi died in 1975, followed by the abbot in 1987. Shigeru is living somewhere in the United States as a Zen monk. The calligraphic scroll that I saw when I first came to the temple was given to me, and now graces my home.

This year City Center celebrated the birthday of Julia Morgan, designer and architect of the 300 Page Street building, with an elegant fundraising dinner and day-long program of activities. These senior staff members visited various Julia Morgan buildings in the Bay Area, including this one in Berkeley. From left, Kosho Jack McCall, Rachel Frankford, Basya Petnick, Lise Ceniceros, Vicki Austen, Teah Strozer, Alan Ladd, Todd Stein, Mary Mocine and Butch Baluyut.





Buddhism at Millennium's Edge

THE YEAR 2000 IS LESS THAN 1,000 DAYS AWAY.

While this fact means little to most of us, millions of people around the globe view the approaching millennium with intense yearning or deep fear. Many Christians await the return to earth of Jesus, 2,000 years after his martyrdom. Muslims fear the mythical Third Temple will be raised against their will on the holy ground of Jerusalem. And hordes of Aquarian New Agers, UFOlogists, and cult prophets predict that the end of the twentieth century will be followed closely by worldwide financial collapse, apocalypse, or attacking space aliens.

Zen Center's cure for all this millennial anxiety is a simple prescription: Buddha's teachings.

One of the best ways to fill that prescription is "BUDDHISM AT MILLENNIUM'S EDGE," a landmark series of lectures and workshops sponsored by Zen Center and featuring America's leading Buddhist teachers and writers. The series kicked off on January 31 with a lecture and workshop by Robert Thurman, followed by Gary Snyder and Peter Matthiessen in February, Jon Kabat-Zinn in March, and Joanna Macy in April. It continues throughout 1998 with evening lectures and one-day workshops by a stellar list:

NATALIE GOLDBERG May 8-9 (with YVONNE RAND May 9)

SHARON SALZBERG August 7-8

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN July 10 (lecture only)



TENSHIN REB ANDERSON July 11 (workshop only)

DAVID WHYTE September 18–19

PEMA CHODRON October 9–10

EDWARD ESPE BROWN November 13–14

"This series brings together speakers who are probably the most creative and influential in the world in carrying Buddhism fresh to the West," says Abbot Norman Fischer, who personally lined up the presenters for the series. "Together, they are interpreting and furthering Buddhism in ways that have never been dreamed of in Asia, and in ways that are not only helpful but necessary if we're going to get through this millennial passage."

The theme of the series, says Norman, is simple: Even in difficult times, Buddhism can help.

"The turning of the millennium for me signifies that the human condition is coming of age," Norman says. "When you come of age you realize life isn't forever and you have to take responsibility. If at that point in your life you don't have confidence, you get nervous. The turning of the millennium is like that. If you're confident, there's nothing to get nervous about, you just have to roll up your sleeves. Buddhism is all about that, about becoming mature and learning how to cope with what's really happening."

Lectures in the "Buddhism At Millennium's Edge" series will be on Friday evenings at the Unitarian Center, Gough and Geary Streets, in San Francisco. Workshops will follow the next day from 9:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. at Green Gulch.

Tickets may be purchased in advance from:

- ⇒ TicketWeb (Visa or Mastercard only): 510-601-TWEB, or online at www.ticketweb.com.
- ⇒ City Center, Green Gulch Farm, or Tassajara Zen Mountain Center (check or cash only).
- ⇒ A Clean Well Lighted Place For Books in San Francisco (check or cash).
- ⇒ By mailing in the ticket order form in the Millennium's Edge brochure.

To order a Millennium's Edge brochure, or for more information, call 415-863-3133. Or visit our website at www.zendo.com/~sfzc. Audio tapes of all of the events are available by calling the Electronic University at 1-800-969-2887.

Proceeds from the series will be used to construct new housing at Green Gulch Farm.



Abbot Norman Fischer and Robert Thurman at the Unitarian Center before Thurman's lecture on January 31, 1998, which kicked off the benefit series.



Marin Charity Gives \$100,000 for Green Gulch Housing

MARIN COUNTY'S LARGEST PUBLIC CHARITY has awarded \$100,000 to build new housing at Green Gulch Farm. The Marin Community Foundation approved the grant in September, marking the first time the \$650,000,000 foundation has aided a Buddhist group.

"Thanks to the Marin Community Foundation, we're much closer to being able to build the new housing we badly need," said an ebullient Norman Fischer, co-abbot of Zen Center. "Right now many of our students and teachers are forced to live in the trailers and shacks that were at Green Gulch when we arrived here in 1972. Most of the places are pretty run down and leaky, so this is a marvelous gift!"

Timing of the grant corresponded with a change in the foundation's grant-making guidelines, says Linda Compton, program officer in the Religion and Human Needs program. The updated religion guidelines speak of encouraging "efforts that explore the ways in which spiritual values and/or ethical principles can challenge and benefit both individuals and the broader community."

Says Compton: "Green Gulch's commitment to offer programs, teaching and experiences with the expressed intention to benefit society is in deep accord with Marin Community Foundation's religion guidelines. So based on that we're delighted to support your current project to improve your sacred site, which continues to offer its unique hospitality to the broader community. Really what speaks to me is the resonance between your essential practice and vows, and your commitment to reach out to a hurting world and bring some sense of comfort and awareness. Green Gulch is a tremendous resource for the entire community."

The Marin Community Foundation, established in 1986, distributes the majority of income from the \$600,000,000 Leonard and Beryl H. Buck Foundation, and administers and oversees 55 other donor-advised funds and endowments. Last year the foundation distributed nearly \$30,000,000 to nonprofit community groups in Marin County.

The Green Gulch grant—to be dispersed over two years—will go to replace several of the center's aging existing residences. Three new residential units will be built beginning this summer. Each of the new units, which cost about \$200,000, will house four people.

The grant marks the first time the Marin Community Foundation's religion program has given money for capital construction projects. The foundation simultaneously awarded \$100,000 to Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, assuring that Marin's two most popular Buddhist centers received equal notice on the same day.

Future funding for the Green Gulch Housing Project will come in part from the upcoming "Buddhism At Millennium's Edge" lecture and workshop series (see related article). The series—featuring some of America's leading Buddhist writers, including Pema Chodron, Gary Snyder, Peter Matthiessen, Jon Kabat-Zinn, and Sharon Salzberg—kicked off in January with a lecture and all-day workshop by Robert Thurman.



Tassajara Raffle Raises \$25,000

WE WOULD LIKE TO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE all those Zen Center supporters who purchased raffle tickets last summer for a free weekend stay at Tassajara. Guests at Tassajara, City Center and Green Gulch bought more than 1,200 of the \$20 tickets between May and September, contributing some \$25,000 to help renovate the Tassajara Stone Dining Room.

"It was really wonderful to see how enthusiastic our guests were in supporting us through the raffle," said Arlene Lueck, former guest manager at Tassajara. "I think it's a statement about the appreciation they have for the practice and the kind of life we live at Tassajara."

The 100-year-old Stone Dining Room has undergone a \$700,000 renovation this winter to make it seismically safe. The repairs will be completed in time for the 1998 Guest Season.

The winners of the three raffle prizes—a weekend at Tassajara during the 1998 Guest Season—are Paula and Lee Opengart of Richmond, Beth Benjamin of Boulder Creek, and Michael and Susan Newton of Carmel Valley.

What We've Learned

*A Dharma talk delivered September 7, 1997 at Green Gulch Farm
on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the temple*

Zoketsu Norman Fischer

TODAY IS A PUBLIC OCCASION and my job is to say something to commemorate Green Gulch's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Twenty-five years ago this zendo was a funky barn and Green Gulch was a one-family ranch with a muddy road and a few ramshackle buildings. It was a lonely and a damp place but we were very excited to take it on and to try to experiment with it. What would it become? How would we practice here? Over the years we tried many experiments and a lot of them didn't work out. But of course there is no such thing as a failed experiment, and today Green Gulch is a pretty well-known and well-established place and it is anything but lonely. There are usually about forty-five or so students in residence and on any given day perhaps twenty or more guests and guest students. There are well developed ongoing traditions of farming and gardening and formal Zen practice and there are many, many programs for people to come and access the Zen life offered here. There is a magnificent Japanese tea house and a program of tea events and lessons. In fact, sometimes it feels as if there is so much going on it is hard to understand it or keep up with it. But it's interesting that the unifying vision for Green Gulch really hasn't changed at all in twenty-five years. It's expressed very clearly and simply in the poem Richard Baker Roshi wrote for the Japanese bell that was cast for us in Japan in 1975. You can go out to the bell and read the poem for yourself:

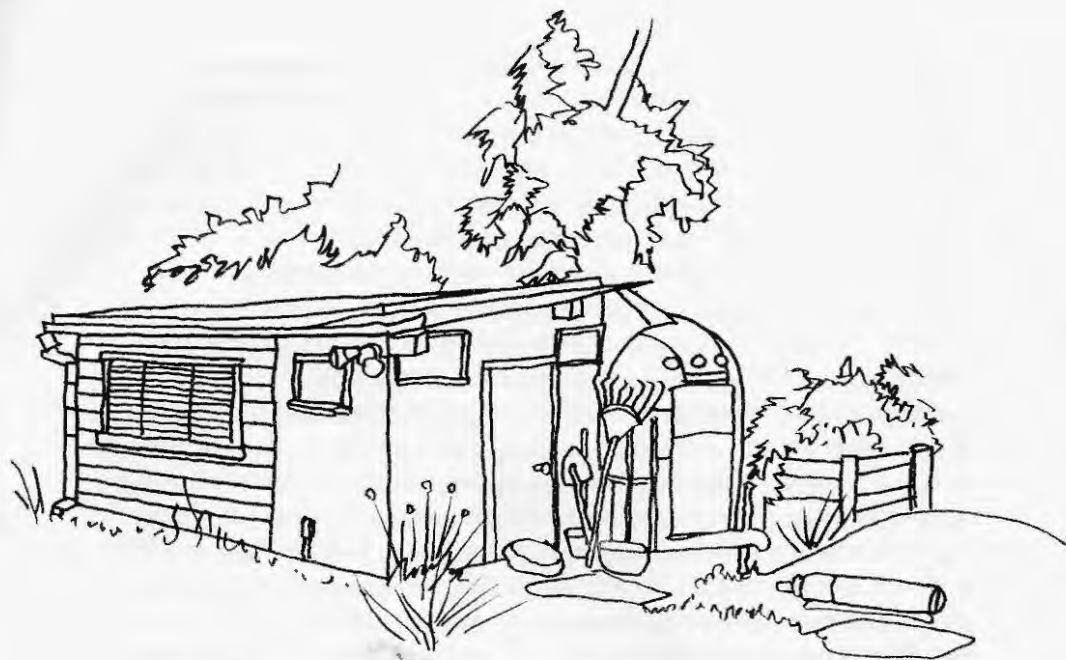
Awakened
By this Japanese bell
The sky-headed sea-tailed
Green Gulch dragon
Stirs the fine mists and rains
Of right Dharma
For East and West

Farming and greeting guests
The pre-voice of this old bell
Is not hindered by the wind

In twenty-five years we've done a tremendous amount of physical work on this place, planting trees and building soil, putting up fences, putting in water and sewage systems, renovating old buildings and building new ones, although most of us still live in the same ramshackle run down houses that we inherited from George Wheelwright. Building new houses is something we have to do in the next twenty-five years—and I am sure much sooner—so that Green Gulch can survive into the next generation. Not because survival is a necessity, but because there is still a lot more work to do to develop practice and to help repair the world. There's no end to the job of caretaking a temple like this, and it's good that there's no end. The journey and the effort is its own reward. We learn a lot every day, and we all develop in our understanding of the Path and of ourselves through the work we do toward helping Green Gulch to survive and flourish. I hope we can all continue to participate in this journey for a while longer.

Twenty-five years seems like a long time in a way and so much has happened. I do not know how many thousands of people in that time have been to Green Gulch, for a day or for ten years, and have given of their lives here. People we have forgotten and many, many people we will never forget. But twenty-five years is also a pretty short time. You blink your eyes a few times and twenty-five years are gone. To the woolly mammoths and ancient peoples that used to live here twenty-five years is a short time. A little while ago Green Gulch was part of the ocean. If someone were to come here in thirty or sixty years it's likely that not a one of us sitting here now would be around. You can close your eyes and imagine that—all these seats filled with different people, most of them not yet born. This happens very quickly, like a lightning flash, like a dream. Truly time is a strange phenomenon.

Human beings mark and measure time and so we are given to anniversaries. What's good about an anniversary like ours today is that it gives us a chance to reflect on where we are now, to see how the present depends on and comes from the past. Whenever you look at the present like that you see its depth and it always brings up a powerful feeling of gratitude. So on behalf of all of us I want to express gratitude for twenty-five years in this beautiful valley. Except for some of the plants and animals here we are all visitors and lucky to have been able to stay here so long. So gratitude to the natives for tolerating us—to the land itself for supporting our activity, and to the sky and water for sustaining us. Gratitude to George Wheelwright for helping us to get Green Gulch and for loving it enough to want us to have it. And to Yvonne Rand and Richard Baker and Huey Johnson and other Zen Center students, teachers and friends who were instrumental in securing Green Gulch for us.



Much of the housing at Green Gulch is more picturesque than comfortable.

Gratitude to our great teacher Shakyamuni Buddha who gave us a good teaching so that we'd be inspired to be here as we are, and have a way of life clear enough to help us to continue to be here. To Suzuki Roshi who came here from Japan and transmitted Buddha's teaching to us in a way that we could really appreciate it. To all our succeeding teachers and abbots, to all the students and helpers whose daily labor and support and loving practice created the human habitat that keeps us going still. And to all students of the present who continue the tradition here, and to all of you for your support in all ways. Though we have much more work to do, and though every day we have some difficulty, still, I think all of us do feel this gratitude and the good fortune we have to be able to come to Green Gulch and experience it as a place on this earth, a place where Dharma has come to be practiced.

And so, in the spirit of anniversary and gratitude, I would like to reflect a bit with you on some of the things we have learned in our years here.

First, we've learned something about the Dharma. That it's not a foreign doctrine or a set of exotic spiritual exercises, that it's not something outside of us or other, but rather that it's a true and simple vision of the human mind and heart—a way of life that leads to increased

happiness and ease and kindness. I think it took us a while to realize this—that the Dharma wasn't something imposed from outside, that it wasn't a wish or an ideal. It took us a while to see that the Dharma is actually none other than we ourselves as we most truly and profoundly are. It took us a while to see that while practice does take work and serious effort, and that it might even cause us to restrict ourselves in various ways, or to do things that we do not initially prefer to do, it doesn't need to be grim and joyless. There are many pleasant things in this life, but perhaps nothing is more deeply satisfying than the happiness that comes with settling into the quiet truth of who we really are.

We've also learned something about power. First of all that there is power—that even in a religious community there will be the exercise of power, and that the responsible and compassionate exercise of power is a difficult necessity. Many of us came to practice to escape from the world of power so it was not an easy lesson for us to learn, and it is still not easy. But now we know that where there are people some activity of power is present and power must always be shared in appropriate ways, ways based not on ideologies but on a careful and subtle consideration of what will really work to develop the wisdom and compassion of every member of the community. This sharing of power takes carefully considered and often revised rules and structures but, more importantly, it also takes courage and a lot of heart. It takes a lot of patience, a lot of communication, and especially a lot of listening. Where there is a real appreciation of the words of the Heart Sutra—"form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form"—there must be a tremendous flexibility and a tremendous strength. So over the years we have had many controversies in our community and we have tried to settle them with as much wisdom and fairness as we could. Usually we were not very successful at this because we were not wise enough, but we have certainly reflected on our experiences and learned from them and are, I believe and hope, wiser now in understanding how to be in disagreement and conflict without losing our ability to listen and negotiate and solve problems.

We've also learned a lot about how we as Westerners can most successfully practice the Dharma. We've learned, mostly by trial and error, with plenty of error, that as Western people we are in many important ways different from our Asian ancestors and so must skillfully find our own way in the practice, without distorting the Dharma in the process. We need at all points to find out how to honor what really arises in us, without ever overriding it in the name of the teaching. Even though we may be full of delusion and selfishness we have to honor even that as a way of working through it, and we have to pay attention to our

character and history. We have to pay attention to the fact that the elements of western culture, especially psychology and philosophy, including our Judeo-Christian heritage, are not abstractions to be set aside, but are in fact living aspects of our minds and hearts as we honestly find them. They need to be considered and worked with along the way of our path toward liberation. All of this is something we meditate on every day and make an effort to try to understand because it is not always so clear. To practice the way truly is to become free *within* our cultural preconceptions, because there is no way to really step outside of them. Being free within our cultural preconceptions is neither eliminating them nor assuming them. So we are left every day with the question: what to do now? The Dharma is actually quite clear, so there's no confusion about that. But how will it manifest with us today?

Community and appreciation of community is another thing we've learned about. We've learned that the sangha jewel isn't the least of the three jewels—it is equally important with Buddha and Dharma, and that the three jewels are mutually supportive and interconnected—inseparable. So we've learned, again, through trial and error over time, how important it is for all of us to be friends. Toward this end we have studied carefully the Buddhist teachings about compassion and love and taking joy in others' joy, and staying balanced in our intimate relationships. We've learned to emphasize and contemplate the ten grave precepts, to meditate on them as the true basis for our community life, seeing them as koans, processes of understanding, rather than as rules imposed by authority. What does it really mean, not to be possessive? What does it mean, not to speak ill of others? What does it mean, not to lie or intoxicate self or others? Working with all these ways to live has helped us to be more thoughtful and careful in our living together over time. And we've learned that community is never perfect, and that we can be enormously disappointed by this, but that this disappointment is a part of becoming mature, and that we can go beyond it. That where there are people together there will be problems, but that the problems can be workable if people are willing to be courageous and to let go, and if there is an agreed-on principle for how we live together.

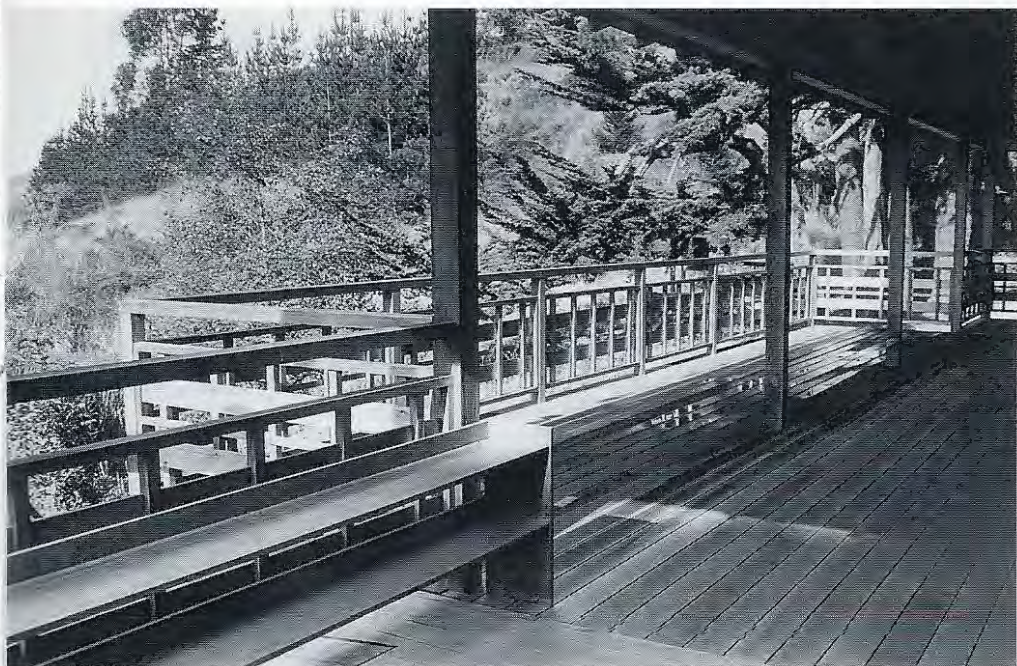
We've also learned a great deal about faith and commitment. We've learned that very much in our lives and backgrounds militates against these values, but that they are necessary for a life of Dharma, or any good life, and that their presence or absence needs to be noticed honestly. We've learned that faith and commitment do not appear by chance—that they can be cultivated and encouraged, with patience, over time, as a fruit of our effort in practice.

We've learned a lot too about spiritual teachers. About how necessary and subtle the relationships with our teachers are. That it is necessary to trust and to surrender and harmonize, but that we can never ignore our own views and attitudes and we can never let go of our own ultimate responsibility for our practice. We've learned that teachers can be true teachers and yet fallible and human, and that we want them and need them to be so. Suzuki Roshi once said, "You continuously go over and over the great path of the Buddha with your teacher, who is always with you." This means that the teacher is another person and must be another person, but also he or she must be understood as not another person. This is something very deep and hard to understand. How can we really be ourselves as we are without indulging our confusion and small-mindedness? The alchemy and mystery of working with our teachers who are us and are not us is the process we need to find the true ground of our living, the firm foundation for living lives of heart and peacefulness.

Looking back over twenty-five years one thing is very clear—that things change and that each new day calls for a new way of life. In a way one starts entirely over again, but, in another way, one builds fresh on what is already there. Building fresh, respecting what has gone before, is the best way, I think, the strongest and calmest way, the deepest and longest-lasting way. Anyway every day's a good day, and every day's the only day. Still, I appreciate the last twenty-five years, and I think about the next twenty-five years. Will Green Gulch be able to survive, and should it survive, is it worthy of survival? What will we need to do, what resources will be called on in the future? Green Gulch looks like a strong place, a place that all of us can rely on, but really it is a little baby, and no one knows how long this baby will live or what it will look like if it grows up. So we all have a good challenge here—something that is bigger than our own individual needs and desires, something that is of real benefit to many beings, and something that will call forth the best in us. I am glad to be a part of that and I hope all of you are too.



After the Dharma talk there was an outdoor ceremony followed by square dancing on the lawn and hayrides through the fields. The afternoon was lively, with many old timers in attendance. For the ceremony a sutra was chanted and a coast live oak tree was planted near the zendo to replace the oak tree on the front lawn that a storm blew down a year ago. During the ceremony Zoketsu gave the following Dharma words:



Engawa surrounding the zendo at Green Gulch

“In the Dharma world there is no coming or going no birth no death no increase no decrease no time and no space.

“By the power of Buddha’s Dharmakaya wisdom body, like a flash of lightning, like a phantom, like a lantern or a light show, twenty-five years have passed in this peaceful valley as we worked and practiced the Way.

“What has it all meant, what has it amounted to? Has there been any benefit? Have we managed to leave well enough alone? Have we defiled this holy spot with our confusion?

“So that we can appreciate the power of the past and the strength of the future we now offer incense, chant, and plant a tree, bringing our energies together with gratitude for what has been accomplished through the efforts of so many.”



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Information may be obtained from the Zen Center, 300 Page St, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 863-3136, or from Green Gulch Farm, 1601 Shoreline Hwy, Sausalito, CA 94965, (415) 383-3134.

Tassajara Zen Mountain Center usually offers two three-month practice periods: September to December and January to April, when the Center is closed to visitors. During the Guest Season in the summer months, visitors may come as guests or as students. For more information on the opportunities available, please contact the office in San Francisco.

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