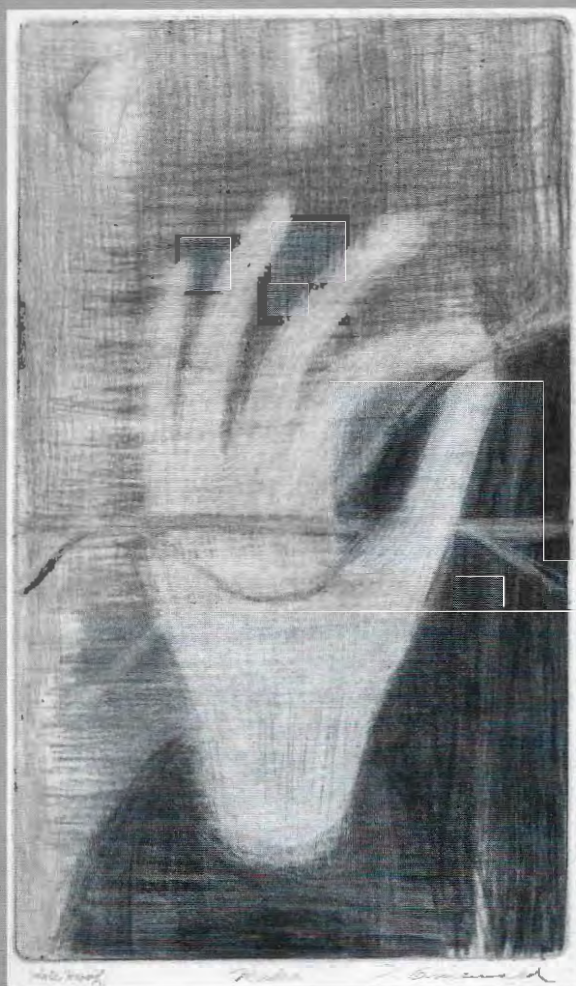


# Wind Bell



PUBLICATION OF SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER  
VOL. XXXIV NO. 2 SPRING/SUMMER 2000

# Wind Bell Contents

## News

MOUNTAIN SEAT CEREMONY FOR JIKO LINDA CUTTS

BY Tova Green 3

STEPPING DOWN CEREMONY BY Layla Smith 12

DHARMA TRANSMISSIONS 15

CITY CENTER'S NEW CONFERENCE CENTER 33

## Articles

THE FIRST TWO TIMES THEY MET

BY Kazuaki Tanahashi 34

DEEP IN THE HEART (SUTRA) OF TEXAS

BY Hogetsu Rick Mitchell 47

## Lectures

ZAZEN, RITUALS AND PRECEPTS CANNOT BE SEPARATED

BY Shunryu Suzuki Roshi 28

ACEDIA AND THE GOOD FRIEND

BY Abbess Jiko Linda Cutts 39

Front Cover: "MUDRA" BY John Gruenwald



## *Mountain Seat Ceremony for Jiko Linda Ruth Cutts*



BURCH BALDWIN

On February 13, 2000, Jiko Linda Ruth Cutts was installed as abbess of Zen Center in the traditional Mountain Seat Ceremony. She joins Abbess Shunbo Zenkei Blanche Hartman, who began her term as abbess in 1996. Linda has lived at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center for the last seven years as head of practice (*tanto*), with her husband, Rev. Steve Weintraub, and their children, Sarah and Davey. Linda first moved to Zen Center thirty years ago, when she was a student at U.C. Berkeley. She and Steve met at Zen Center and have lived at City Center, Tassajara, and Green Gulch ever since.—Ed.

*BY Tova Green*

**T**HE WEEK AFTER HER MOUNTAIN SEAT CEREMONY, in a talk at Green Gulch, Linda reflected on the meaning of the experience. She noted that a ceremony, like a play, can be transformative, when we devote ourselves to it. And, like a play performed on stage, the meaning is not only in the words, but in the energy we bring to the event.

There was a crescendo of activity at San Francisco Zen Center the week before the Mountain Seat Ceremony. A new carpet was installed in the art lounge at City Center, areas of the building were repainted, a platform which was to become the mountain seat was built in the Buddha Hall. A few days before the ceremony all the participants gathered for several hours of rehearsal. The kitchen was a buzz of volunteer and staff cooks baking cakes and cookies, rolling sushi and blending mushroom pate.

On the day of the ceremony, the rain poured down. While the abbes-to-be rested at the Zen Center Guest House, guests arrived at the Zen Center main building, shed their umbrellas, and entered the Buddha Hall. From inside the Buddha Hall, we could hear the procession approach—the rhythm of inkins, clackers, and the staff carried by Linda—and, inside the door of Zen Center, a drum roll built as she climbed the stairs to a small altar, symbolizing the Main Gate, just outside the front door, where she offered incense and her first words.

The procession of twelve temple officers and teachers (ryoban) and five attendants led the new abbes down the stairs to the zendo, the heart of our practice, where she offered incense. Cathleen Williams, the ino (priest

*Alisa Rudnick and Dave Weintraub walked ahead of the procession scattering flower petals.*



BARBARA WENGER

*The new  
abbess was  
sheltered  
from the  
rain by City  
head  
of practice  
Teah Strozer.*



BARBARA WENGER

in charge of the meditation and ceremonial life of the temple), led the new abbess in a formal circuit of the zendo and showed Linda her new seat.

Returning upstairs to the gathering in the Buddha Hall, Linda was formally invited to assume the position of abbess by Zen Center Board Chair Taigen Dan Leighton. She offered incense, bows, and statements to Shakyamuni Buddha, the protectors of practice, and to Bodhidharma. The procession filed out and climbed the stairs to the kaisando (founder's hall). Those sitting in the Buddha Hall could hear her words (thanks to the technology of microphones):

I offer this incense to my Grandfather  
Great Teacher Shogaku Shunryu  
Founder of these temples  
Cloud farmer  
your companion crops are planted  
A year together cultivating the way  
harvested forever  
You gave everything to us  
This little sprout vows to not let the teaching be cut off  
in deep gratitude to you.

In the abbess' room, Linda Ruth, the president of Zen Center Barbara Kohn, and secretary Wendy Lewis exchanged bows, signed documents and inspected the temple seal. All of this set the stage for the second part of the ceremony, Presenting the Teaching (sho koku kai do).



*Linda offered incense and made her first statement at an altar set up at the entrance to 300 Page Street.*



The procession re-entered the Buddha Hall. Linda was given a new robe, made of green linen, sewn by Rev. Meiya Wender with the help of many sangha members at Green Gulch and City Center, including abbess Zenkei Blanche Hartman. The sewing of her new bowing cloth was coordinated by Rev. Gaelyn Godwin at Tassajara. Linda voiced her appreciation with the traditional statement, "I vow to wear this robe with the mind and body of its sacred meaning."

Statements of support were made by Lama Palden Drolma, spiritual leader of Sukhasiddhi Foundation of San Rafael, representing the wider Buddhist sangha; Zen Center president Barbara Kohn, representing the Zen Center sangha; and Leslie James, representing the friends of the new abbess. Lama Palden declared, "In taking her place as abbess, Linda Ruth Cutts moves into a central holding position in the mandala . . . Although by its very nature the position of spiritual and community leader is beyond gender . . . it is very fitting to have women moving into this role because it is the very nature of the feminine to hold, nurture and lovingly contain other beings . . . Linda Ruth's style is like that of the Buddha Tara, whose activity is to respond quickly to whatever is needed in the situation." Lama Palden invoked Tara's blessing and transmission of awakened mind.

Zenkei Blanche Hartman read a statement from Pema Chodron, who encouraged Linda with the words once offered to a Tibetan Yogini: "Reveal your inner thoughts, help those you do not want to help . . . If you do not grasp with your mind you will find a fresh state of being."

*Zen Center president Barbara Kohn (with her back to the camera) shows Linda the contract for an abbess which she will sign. Zen Center secretary Wendy Lewis, at right, has the seal ready for Linda to affix to the contract.*





Later in the ceremony Daigon Lueck read a letter from Brother David Steindel-Rast:

Isn't the abbot expected to be teacher, physician, shepherd, steward and loving parent to the community? What a mountain of responsibilities! Any one of these roles would keep you hopping. If any one lacks time for sitting on a throne, it's an abbot. And the mountain is likely to be on your shoulders, not under your seat. And yet, Linda, I trust that your wisdom as a teacher, your compassion as a physician, your caring as a shepherd, your trustworthiness as a steward, and your affection as a parent to the community will all spring from your sitting firm as a mountain.

Linda ascended the Mountain Seat and stood, remaining standing throughout the ceremony. She offered incense and made statements for world peace, to all the Ancestors, to members, donors, families and deceased members of the temple, and to her teachers. Linda's statement for peace included these wishes:

May the fruit of the whole practice be dedicated to peace in the world.  
 May all beings in the ten directions live in harmony with themselves and each other.  
 May we care for one another with big, joyful, motherly-fatherly mind, watching over the plants and animals and our beautiful earth. May this offering for peace enfold the universe leaving nothing untouched.



Photos:

*Facing page:*  
During the mondo (question and answer) portion of the ceremony, the new abess responded to a question by Darlene Cohen.

*Right:*  
Lama Palden Drolma spoke as a representative of the wider Buddhist sangha.

*Below:*  
Leslie James spoke on behalf of the abess' friends.



BURCH BAUMYURT 121

To her root teacher, Tenshin Reb Anderson, she offered the words:



Red heart  
Overflowing with dharma  
devotion  
From the very beginning you  
taught me to just be myself  
and sit upright  
Under the Mississippi  
One blood jewel  
Only non-attachment is  
worthy of offering.

The new abess was invited to present her teaching. Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi, the abbot of Rinso-in in Japan and Suzuki Roshi's son, playing the role of Manjusri Bodhisattva, announced the teaching.

The first part of the teaching she offered took the form of questions and answers (mondo). Six dharma friends asked questions, and

in her answers Linda demonstrated her clarity and compassion as a teacher, mentor and friend. Darlene Cohen began, "Conventionally, we think of a friend as someone to go to the movies with, someone to go shopping for lipstick with, someone to have a drink with and tell our problems to. What is a friend in this practice?" Linda responded: "A friend is telling the truth and not running away."

She also presented her understanding of a koan. The theme of the koan, the story of Old Master Deshan, is "mind cannot be grasped," surprisingly connected to Pema Chodron's words.

In her statements, Linda illustrated her appreciation for the teachings, for her Dharma Uncle Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi, and for her years of living at Zen Center.

I came to practice at Zen Center and never looked back.

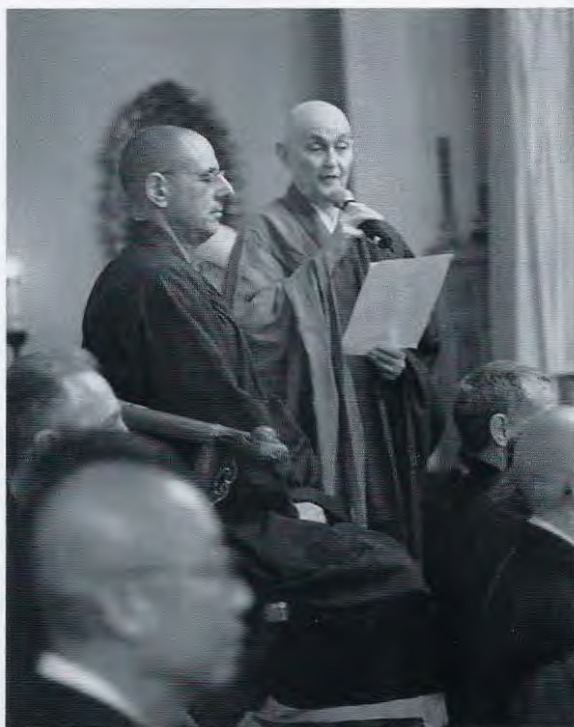
A stone woman learning to dance.

My understanding is not thorough or deep and yet I have great confidence  
in our practice . . .

I wish to give everything with nothing held back.

Body exposed to the golden wind.

*Blanche  
Hartman,  
who will  
continue  
to serve as  
co-abbess  
along with  
Linda Ruth,  
read a state-  
ment of  
support  
from Pema  
Chodron.*



BURCH BALMUT



*Very heartfelt words by Sarah Weintraub, Linda Ruth Cutts' daughter, and Linda's husband Steve Weintraub, seated at right, concluded the supporting statements.*

Linda's concluding statement ended with a short but powerful request:

Over half my life lived within the sound of the han  
 Struggles there are many  
 Priest or lay householder  
 What do you see?  
 Practice-spun chrysalis  
 of form and emptiness  
 Now I fly—completely supported, completely released  
 Still, myriad specks of pollen all over my wings  
 My effort  
 Just this  
 Meeting directly each spring flower  
 Please help me.

The ceremony ended with statements by Rev. Ed Brown, Rev. Shohaku Okumura, Linda's husband Rev. Steve Weintraub and their daughter, Sarah. Sarah read Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese" and encouraged her mother, saying, "You have all the things you need . . . compassion and courage because of the clean and clear way you live in the world. You will continue to give to the world and the world will give to you."

Many of us left the Buddha Hall with tears in our eyes, tears of appreciation, love and joy, ready to meet Linda's request.

# Stepping Down Ceremony

BY Layla Smith

**Z**OKETSU NORMAN FISCHER'S Stepping Down Ceremony as abbot of San Francisco Zen Center was held at the City Center in the late afternoon of Saturday, February 12. The ceremony was simple, direct, and warm. Norman offered incense at various altars in the building, following almost the same path from altar to altar that he had taken five years earlier at his Mountain Seat installation ceremony. The Buddha Hall was filled with students, friends, and well-wishers, and though a certain sadness was part of the afternoon, there was also a sense of new possibilities for Norman, and a calm sense of Zen Center's solidity and continuance as an institution.

During the mondo (question and answer) part of the ceremony, Norman requested questions from the sangha in his usual unaffected and straightforward manner:

I have always tried my best to be forthcoming and honest with all of you, and I see no reason to change that old habit at this late date. Please bring me your true questions. Please don't be polite or respectful; just speak your heart.

In the exchange of questions and answers that followed, Norman demonstrated the simplicity, profundity, humility, and humor that characterize his teaching:

Questioner: So this is it.

Norman: It's always it.

Q: That's what they say.

Norman: It's the truth, no? Don't you think so? (laughs)

Q: Yeah: I just don't like it all the time.

Norman: Who likes it!

Q: I like complaining.

Norman: Me too. It's an old tradition.

Questioner: You gave a teaching that parenthood is all about letting go. I can find no place in my heart for that teaching now.

Norman: Just know that that's the direction you are walking in, and be always honest about how your heart really is. That's the main thing.

Q: I'm not sure I want to walk in that direction.

Norman: When you suffer enough, you'll know that's the only way to go.

Q: I feel like I would rather learn how to hold differently, as each occasion merits.

Norman: Keep trying; you'll see.

Q: (Doubtfully) Maybe . . .

Norman: Nobody believes me, you know!

During the period of thank-you's, people expressed their appreciation to Norman for his term as abbot with great eloquence and feeling:

**Mel Weitsman:** Your practice is a long journey, with many stopping places . . . I think it all happened because your practice is the most important thing, not your ambition. You have never had any particular ambition, and just stuck your nose into practice and stayed there. With total integrity. And that's why you are where you are now. So I hope the best for you. I am just looking forward to sitting back and watching what will happen next. So good luck, and I wish you the best.

**Blanche Hartman:** You have so much willingness to just follow your heart and be innovative and say what's important to you and do what's important to you. And because your heart's in it, everyone can go with you.

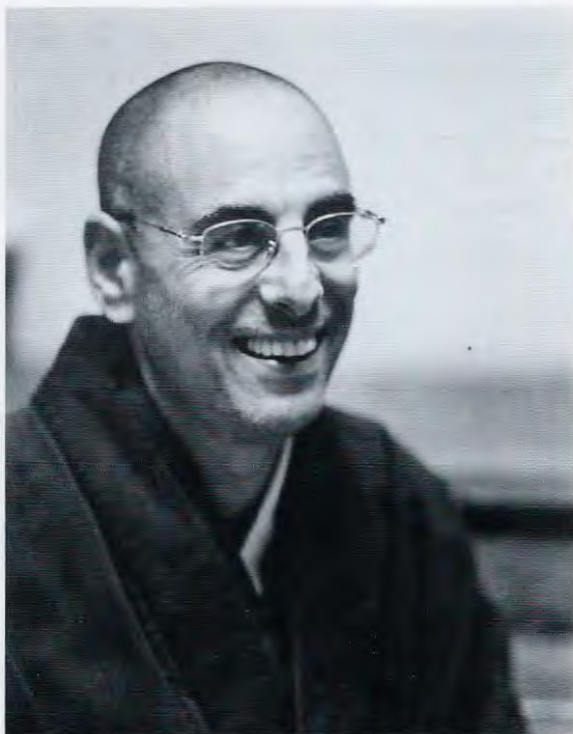
**Reb Anderson:** About five years ago you became abbot and during the ceremony I felt that somehow this event was a great healing. Something healed in the ceremony . . . and I've watched from that time until today, seeing you continually make the effort to heal wounds in the community of Zen Center and in the world at large. I think you've been successful in this work. I've also watched and seen you make tremendous effort, really working hard, besides teaching dharma in classes and lectures and dokusan, I've seen you work really hard to raise funds for Zen Center to help ZC be financially or organizationally sound and clear. I know that's a lot of work and I was constantly amazed how hard you worked on that in addition to your teaching responsibilities. Over and over I really did wonder how you could make the effort, because a lot of times you were kind of tired. But you did it anyway. Thank you so much, and I hope you live many more years to practice the way you have been.

Here is Norman's final statement to close the ceremony and his abbotship:

Dharma brothers and sisters, teachers, good friends, thank you so much for your kind words, for your generosity, for an overwhelming day of generosity capping off more than 25 years during which you have all been very

generous to me. And I have not deserved it, but I am glad of it, and I hope that in the future I can find some way to pay it back. With all of your wholehearted support, these few short years I have tried my best to exercise the awesome spiritual power that the office of abbot of Zen Center brings. And I think that I have succeeded in proving that an ordinary person with limited faith and even more limited realization can lead Zen Center. Now we all know that we can survive such a thing.

Zen Center has survived, you have survived, I have survived. And I've even been pretty happy, and maintained my health. And the most wonderful thing of all, I'm still married! Which was in some doubt at the beginning. When I step down from this mountain in a moment I will renounce all this power and all the love and support that goes with it. And tomorrow it will pass to a worthy successor, and a new era will begin and I will return to normalcy. I leave with gratitude, of course, but also with a degree of sadness and some disappointment. But when is there not some sadness and disappointment? I hope I can continue to practice with all of you as the years go by like phantoms, dewdrops, clouds, dreams, like flashes of lightning across the dark sky.



BUTCH SAIKRUP

## *Dharma Transmissions*

**S**INCE DECEMBER 1996 (the last transmission ceremony written up in the *Wind Bell*), 13 people have received Dharma Transmission at Zen Center. What follows is a short statement by each of them.



**Fran Tribe**    October 4, 1997  
*Engetsu Honshi*—Round Moon, True Vessel

Fran was given Dharma Transmission by Sojun Weitsman while at Kaiser Hospital in Walnut Creek. It was a very happy occasion for her as well as a closure of her practice. A few days later, a number of folks came together and in a few days' time made a one-piece okesa (robe) which we took to her in the hospital. On that occasion, she was witty, smiling and composed. Upon hearing that she was an inspiration to all of us, she said, "Please don't be too quick to canonize me." During her illness of six months, as her health gradually declined, she became more and more radiant and calm. Her smile had a wonderful sweetness. Accepting her condition and her impending death, she seemed more concerned for those around her with an openness and equanimity worthy of a true bodhisattva. With her passing we feel a great loss, but her wonderful spirit is present to all of us who knew her.

**Layla Smith** March 3, 1998

*Gyokujun Teishin—Pure Forge, Pervading Heart*

I received Dharma Transmission from Zoketsu Norman Fischer on March 3, 1998, during the spring practice period at Tassajara. It was wonderful to be doing a practice period at Tassajara again—my first in many, many years. The same remarkable strong current of practice continues in that deep valley. Lying on my bed in the yurt with the door open one warm spring morning, the fragrant air coming in and the sound of the creek in my ears, I experienced a strong sense of past and present uniting. The early 1970s—Tatsugami-roshi sitting implacably in the stone zendo, the kitchen under construction, struggling to learn to hit the bells and chant in Japanese—and the late '90s—new baths at the flats, study hall

*Layla Smith and Lee de Barros*





out in the yurt, now me leading the services—the same moment of eternally present ‘timeless spring.’

I was very grateful to Norman, and to Mel who helped him, for the warmth, presence, and care they brought to the Dharma Transmission ceremony, and moved by the energy and support of Zen Center and its resources to do this ceremony in its full, traditional, powerful form. I was grateful for the friendship and support of my fellow Tassajara practitioners, and grateful to Suzuki Roshi for bringing this simple, profound lineage of non-attainment to us. Now I’m continuing to wander onward in my life, but with a greater sense of permission to teach the Buddha Dharma and a greater sense of responsibility to do so.

Lee de Barros    March 3, 1998  
*Seido Eshu*—Clear Path, Constant Effort

I received Dharma Transmission from Zoketsu Norman Fischer, abbot of San Francisco Zen Center, in a red room at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. The instructor during the proceedings was Sojun Mel Weitsman, my original priest ordination teacher. Dharma sister Layla Smith received transmission just before me. Layla and I spent many days together doing ceremonies and copying lineage materials in preparation for the final event. I will always feel a close bond with her. I have deep gratitude for Zoketsu Fischer for transmitting to me his most precious non-possession and I thank him, Sojun Weitsman and Tenshin Anderson for looking after me all these years. Because of the efforts of every single Zen student and every single supporter of Zen Center all these years, the Dharma of Buddha unfolds right here. Central to Dharma Transmission is the vow to make every effort to continue and extend the Dharma of Soto Zen. I so vow and will do my best. And may all beings be liberated.

Gary McNabb July 30, 1998  
*Jakujo Gando*—  
Manifest/Silent, Sheer Cliff Way



The Ceremony of Zazen

At first  
It seems like  
Something  
We do.

Then  
Gradually  
Deepening  
Truths.

Perhaps  
It has waited  
For us  
Through so many realizations.

Until  
All  
Rituals  
Practices Ceremonies

Kindly  
Re Mind  
Us  
Together.

One practice precept  
Radiance  
No one  
Anything out

Much Love  
Nine Bows

Maylie Scott September 15, 1998  
*Kushin Seisho*—Great Heart/Mind, Brightly Shining

I received Dharma Transmission from Mel on September 15, 1998, with Alan Senauke. Driving to Tassajara for the ceremony, it became clear to me that the time had come to move to Arcata to be a full-time teacher for that community I'd helped develop there. I'd been thinking about the move for some time, but the impending ceremony clarified the decision. Mel readily agreed. Consequently, transmission marked a great change in my life, both in terms of circumstance and in being principally committed to being a teacher. The co-mingling of live and deceased ancestors that happened in those five days on the Tassajara grounds continues to take care of me, even though I will never live up to it. Fundamentally, it is a life of gratitude.

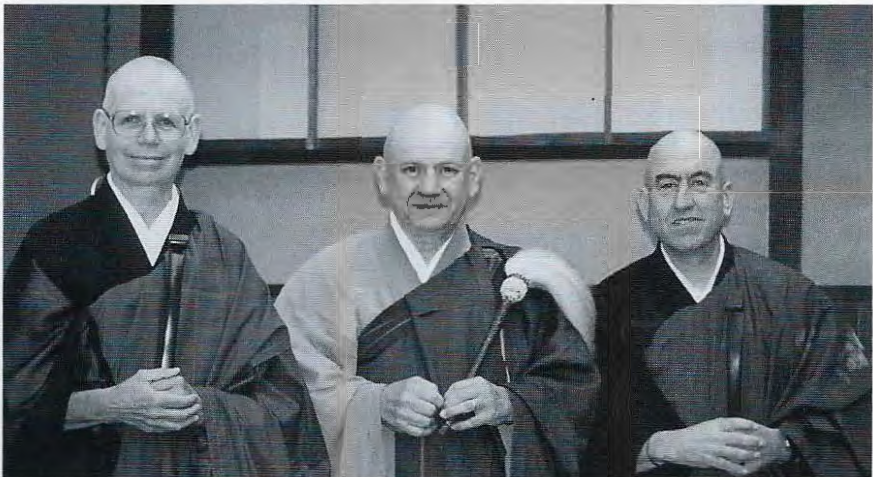
Alan Senauke    September 15, 1998  
*Hozan Kushiki—Dharma Mountain, Formless Form*

A year and a half later, the experience of Dharma Transmission from Sojun Weitsman feels like a dream. Daily life of family, practice, and work continues to unfold, and I am still very much at Berkeley Zen Center, practicing and studying with my teacher. And yet, something is changed. It is like my experience of marriage. We are doing the same things as before, yet something is different.

September of 1998 was warm and sunny at Tassajara. Across from our "scriptorium," where my sister Maylie Scott and I copied documents onto silk each day, roofers were hammering away steadily (and loudly!). During the days, we sweated in our robes. In the dark and chill of early morning, we offered incense and deep gratitude to Buddhas and temple guardians. Later in the morning, we did our daily bows to Buddhas, ancestors, and the first women practitioners.

In these activities and the ceremonies themselves, I felt wonderfully supported by Shosan Victoria Austin, Kokai Roberts, Paul Haller, and the Tassajara community. But the extraordinary generosity and effort of Sojun is impossible to convey. Even as it happened, there was a dreamlike quality of intimacy to the various ceremonies and rituals. Sojun moved through this dream with his customary air of nothing special, even though our activities were rare and special indeed.

*Maylie Scott, Sojun Mel Weitsman and Alan Senauke*



**Myo Lahey** March 26, 1999  
*Myomaku Seigetsu—Life Artery, Blue Moon*

Amid rain and snow, I spent March of '99 at Tassajara, performing the Dharma Transmission ceremony with my teacher, Reb Anderson. It was physically challenging for me and deeply affecting on many levels. The students who

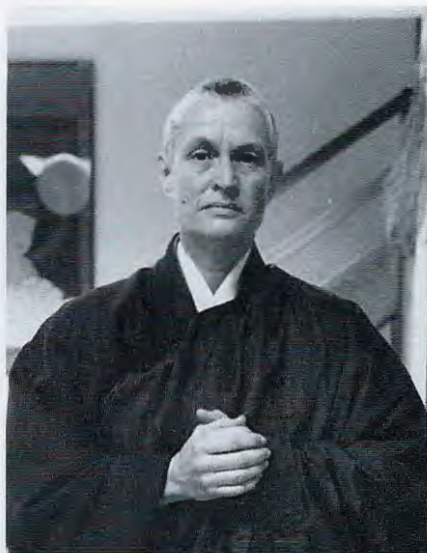


were at Tassajara at the time, and particularly those who were able to volunteer to provide various kinds of "practical support" for the ceremony, will always have my profound gratitude, as will Preceptor Linda Ruth Cutts, Tanto Vicki Austin, Chief Jisha Fu Schroeder, and Abbot's Assistant Kokai Roberts; my gratitude to my teacher is beyond comment. Near midnight on the final night, a dazzling moon flooded the space in front of the kaisando as I stood there alone, preparing to enter. The sliding door to the chamber was ajar, and the draperies, lit from behind, leaked red light, red as our own blood. That's really all I have to say.

**Fu Schroeder** July 30, 1999  
*Furyu Doshin—Wind and Stream, Way Seeking Heart*

Fu received Dharma Transmission from Tenshin Reb Anderson.

Watering the plants,  
putting the toys away,  
making the beds and washing  
the dishes.  
With these things accomplished,  
opening the door and leaving home.  
The Path, as always,  
directly beneath the feet.  
In a moment of repose and bliss,  
the Great Okesa finds its way  
around the body of all things.



BURCH BAUMONT (2)

*Sojun Mel  
Weitsman  
and  
Vicki Austin*



**Victoria Austin** September 19, 1999  
*Shosan Gigen*—Sunlight Mountain,  
Honoring Mystery

The 21 days of Dharma Transmission sealed a gift that my teachers have been trying to confer all along—that everyone mutually supports and actualizes the Way. The conditions of this ceremony were so unusual that the only constant was this support, expressed through the rituals acknowledging it. Every day I bowed to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, protectors and Ancestors, my teachers, including teachers Zentatsu, Tenshin and women teachers of the past and present, and the welfare of the sangha. The first day, a red-tailed hawk stood guard over Tassajara. Guests and summer students left, and work period volunteers came, all with helpful arms and open hearts. The fifth morning, as my helper and I offered incense, a giant thunderclap shook the zendo and rain poured from a clear sky. The next day, the other participants in the ceremony arrived—and the Ventana Wilderness forest fire began.

One day, in the midst of some delicate calligraphy, we all went to lunch. The director called us outside, saying, "I don't want to alarm anyone, but you have half an hour to leave Tassajara. The forest fire is very close." Mel, Blanche, Kokai and Alan gently and firmly packed everything back into the cars and set it all up again—in San

Francisco—by supertime. City Center staff and residents made big adjustments to accommodate a major shift. Everyone was so helpful.

In Dharma Transmission, verifying and entrusting arrives through all time from the Buddha to oneself, and oneself to Buddha. Body and mind join in the great astonishing dance to the beat of the warm, red heart. May I acquire the kindness of my teacher, Sojun Mel Weitsman, and of everyone else who so clearly and fully express the meaning of Dharma Transmission to me.

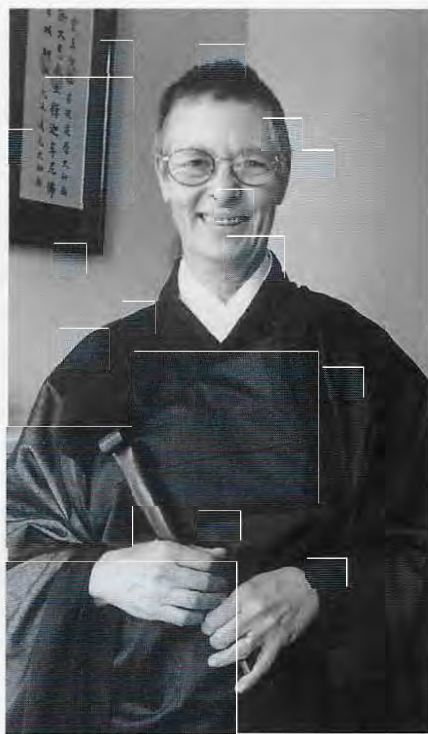


**Michael Wenger** September 20, 1999  
*Zenen Dairyu*—Zen Still/Deep, Great Dragon

My experience of Dharma Transmission was of recognizing the deep connection to my teacher, Sojun Mel Weitsman, to all those who came before him, to all those who will practice in the future, and even a sense of connection to all living beings, period. It's funny in a way to have a special ceremony celebrating the unity of beings, and yet, what could be better?

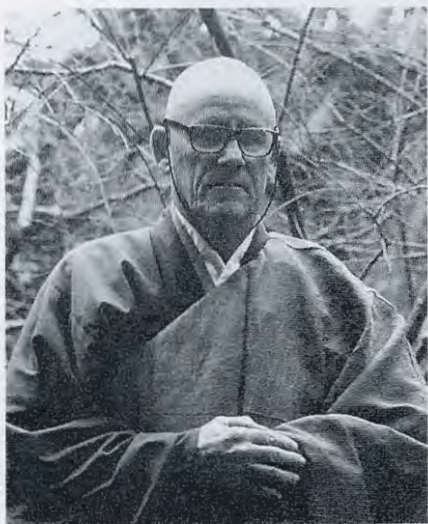
**Barbara Kohn**  
November 12, 1999  
*Shusen Seirin*—  
Spring River, Serene Forest

This fall I began, at City Center, a three-week process that culminated at Tassajara in the dark of a beautiful November night. During those weeks I had bowed to the ancestors and to the sangha members who assisted as I went from altar to altar offering my appreciation for this practice which has so altered my life. Myo has called it a meditation on the ancestors, and so it is. It also became a meditation on appreciation. I was stunned by the myriad ways that people offered themselves during those days. My intimacy with my teacher, Blanche, grew as my intimacy with all the sangha developed. Time, things, encouraging words, skills, friendliness—all were given freely, usually before I even knew what was needed. My own ability to care increased in this barrage of loving-kindness. It knew it wasn't just for ME, but for myself as another of so many who have been offered the opportunity to vow to continue this practice by giving it to others. On the day of the ceremonies, compressed into one night to accommodate a variety of schedules, Zenkei came down with the flu. She rose to the occasion with a voice that was especially deep, and she and I became the first two hens at San Francisco Zen Center to delve in these realms together. We laughed and were amazed, touched by each other and our relatedness to all things. My overwhelming feeling the next day and since has been one of gratitude for the generosity, intimacy, compassion, humor, honesty, and wisdom embodied in these rituals of bloodline which, when all is said and done, have opened wide the connection to all beings.



BLANCHE BAUMYUT

**Daigan Lueck** November 15, 1999  
*Daigan Tatsudo*—Great Vow, Accomplished the Way



BLITCH BALLYUT

On November 15, 1999, I received Dharma Transmission from then abbot Zoketsu Norman Fischer, at Zen Mountain Center. What can I say? Words can hardly reach it. That it was a traditional ceremony, a rite of passage, a family affair, intimate and irreplaceable. That it happened to take place in the autumn of the year which, fittingly enough, matched the late autumn of my life. That the russet shades of autumn were like the color of my robe. That the robe itself, stitched together by my clumsy fingers, felt impregnated with the thoughts and feelings of a lifetime. That when the ceremonies

took place on two consecutive nights in the red-draped room, all my past and present relations with the world were there with me, shining in my teacher's eyes. That gratitude overflowed my heart, and tears caught in my throat. That when it was over, I came away feeling something precious beyond precepts, lineage, verification, empowerment, yet at the same time nothing special at all, but simple, a commonality with the earth itself, natural and unhindered; and that a warmth enclosed me not unlike the warmth riding from a compost heap, rich and steamy, spreading in all directions. And that having said this much I've really not touched its true character. All I can say finally is thanks to all my teachers, bow again and again. And may I be a worthy recipient of this robe.



**Taigen Leighton** March 23, 2000

*Taigen Shizan—*

Ultimate Source, Smooth Mountain

Dharma Transmission is an amazingly wonderful and totally challenging process, possible only with the assistance of innumerable beings. I am deeply grateful for more than two decades of extraordinary patience and subtle guidance from my teacher, Tenshin Anderson. Abbess Linda Cutts was also extremely helpful as instructor for my ceremony, as she has been for many years. The Tassajara students were especially kind and encouraging, helpful in specific instances, but also just in the strength of their practice in keeping the jewel of Tassajara beautifully functioning. The real transmission of Buddha's Way is in the ongoing generations of students who engage the practice of facing and opening the deep self that is not separate from the whole interconnected universe. I am honored and humbled to now be taking on this new responsibility for upholding and maintaining this wondrous Dharma.





**Searching for the Ox**

all alone  
something missing  
everything shifting  
and unsteady



**Seeing the Traces**

what's this?  
something flashes  
startling  
right under his nose



**Seeing the Ox**

sudden insight  
overwhelming  
unexpected  
in his face



**Catching the Ox**

chaos!  
nowhere to stand  
attachment, aversion  
clinging in fear



**Herding the Ox**

dropped away  
too much to handle  
just observing  
looks OK

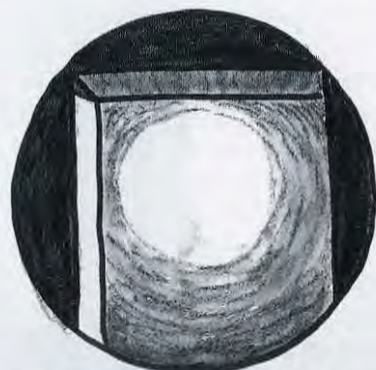
## The Oxherding Pictures

Zen Center's dean of studies, Michael Wenger, recently taught a class on the oxherding pictures and asked students to submit their own versions of the well-known scenes. This series was done by Robert Dodge.



**The Ox Forgotten**

the dream is over  
but something lingers  
safe, content  
he floats



**The Ox and Boy Both Gone**

through the window  
moonlight streaming  
floods everything  
all dissolves



**Returning to the Origin**

morning sunlight  
restores the world  
so familiar  
ever new



**Coming Home on the Ox's Back**

strong and steady  
marching homeward  
now is found  
what was not lost



**Entering the Market with Bliss-Bearing Hands**

life goes on  
moment by moment  
his delight  
shows the way

# *Zazen, Rituals and Precepts Cannot Be Separated*

BY *Shunryu Suzuki Roshi*

LECTURE AT SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

JULY 28, 1970

**I** WANT TO TALK WITH YOU about some problems you may have when you come to Zen Center. I think you understand pretty well why we practice. Why we observe rituals is perhaps more difficult to understand. Actually, it is not something to explain [laughs]. If you ask me why I observe rituals, it is difficult to answer.

First, I do it because I have been doing it for a long time so there is no problem. I tend to think that because I have no problem in observing my way, then you must not have a problem [laughs]. But you are Americans, and I am Japanese, and you have not been practicing the Buddhist way for so long, therefore there must be various problems [laughs].

These problems are almost impossible to solve. But if you actually follow our way I think you will have some understanding of our rituals. What I want to talk about is the precepts.

Precepts for me includes rituals. And when we say "precepts," it is another name for our zazen practice. For us, zazen practice and observation of rituals are not two different things. How to observe the rituals is how to observe the precepts. Our practice, especially in the Soto school, puts emphasis on everyday life, including rituals, eating, and going to the restroom. All those things are included in our practice.

So the way we practice zazen, the way we practice rituals, and the way of life of a Buddhist or Zen student is fundamentally the same. But when we talk about our way of life or rituals, we come face to face with some rules. The rules of observing ceremonies are rituals, and the rules of our everyday life are our precepts.

When we say "precepts," we usually mean some rules, but that is just a superficial understanding of precepts. Precepts are actually the expression of our true nature. The way we express our true nature is always according to the place or situation in which you live. So to practice zazen is to be yourself and to observe our precepts is just to be yourself.

As you have some way of sitting on a black cushion, we have some way of observing our rituals or ceremony in the Buddha Hall. The point of our zazen practice is to be free from thinking mind and from emotional activity. In short, that is the practice of selflessness. In our observation of rituals,

the point is to be free from selfish ideas. The practice of rituals is the practice of selflessness.

First you enter the room and you bow. In Japanese we say *gotai tochi*. *Gotai* is "our body." *Tochi* is "to throw away." It means to throw away our physical and mental being—in short, to practice selflessness. We offer ourselves to Buddha. That is the practice of bowing. When you bow, you lift your hands. We lift Buddha's feet, which are on your palms and you feel Buddha on your palms. So when you practice bowing, you have no idea of self. You give up everything.

When Buddha was begging, his follower spread his hair on the muddy ground and let Buddha walk over it. That is supposed to be the origin of why we bow. In ritual, you bow and work. You begin everything by some signal. That kind of thing you may not like so much [laughs]. It looks very formal, to begin everything by the sound of a bell. Whether you want to do it or not, you must do it. It looks very formal. As long as you are in the Buddha Hall, you should observe our way according to the rules we have there. We do it to forget ourselves and to become one. To be a Zen student in this Buddha Hall is why we observe our rituals.

This is a very important point. To feel your being, here, in this moment, is a very important practice. That is the point of observing precepts and observing rituals and practicing zazen. To feel or to be yourself at a certain time, in a certain place. That is why we practice our way.

So the actual feeling of rituals cannot be understood without observing them. When you observe them, you have the actual feeling of rituals. As long as you try to know what it means or why you do it, it is difficult to feel your actual being in this place.

Only when you do it will you feel your being. To be a Buddhist is to do things like Buddha. That is actually how to be a Buddhist [laughs]. It does not mean that when you are able to observe our rituals as your friends do, that you will have no problem in your everyday life. This ritual feeling, or practice, will extend into your everyday life.

You will find yourself in various situations, and you will intuitively know what you should do. You will have the right response to someone's activity. When you are not able to respond to another without wondering what he has on his mind, you will force something. Most of the time I don't think you will give the most intuitive response.

I want you to do rituals until you are quite sure about your response to other people. How one responds to others is very important. When we teachers observe our students, they may be trying to act right, and trying to understand people, but most of the time it is rather difficult for them to have some kind of intuition. If you start to have this kind of intuition, you will have big confidence in yourself, and you will trust people, and you will trust yourself. And so, all the problems which you created for yourself will



be no more. You will have no more problem. That is why we have training or practice.

My master, Gyokujun So-on, used to say: "Stay with me for several years. If you become a priest, you will be a good priest, and if you remain a layman, you will be a good layman or good citizen, and you will have no problem in your life."

I think that was very true. I was the sixth youngest disciple when I became my master's disciple. Two of us became priests, the rest of the disciples remained laymen. They are very good actually. When they came to my teacher [laughs], they had some trouble. Except for one disciple who passed away, the rest of them have done pretty well, although they are not priests. So I think what he said is very true.

This is very good practice for you. You may think our practice is like army practice [laughs], but actually it is not so. The idea is quite different. I think the Japanese army copied our practice. It looks like it, but they couldn't copy our spirit.

You should trust your innate nature, your buddha-nature. That is the most important point. If you trust your true nature, you should be able to trust your teacher, too. That is very important. Not because your teacher is perfect, but because his innate nature is the same as yours. The point of practice between teacher and disciple is to get rid of selfish ideas as much as possible and to trust each other. Only when you trust your teacher can you practice zazen, can you practice rituals, and can you act as a Zen Center student.

To remain always a Zen Center student is a very important point. You become a Zen Center student by trusting your true nature, and trusting your teacher, and trusting your zazen practice without saying why [laughs]. I think you should do it, as long as you come here. And if you don't want to do so, I think you shouldn't come here. As long as you come here, you should follow our way, or else maybe you will waste your time and you will regret it.

So in this way, we can carry on our schedule. The way we carry on our schedule is the way we observe our precepts. Precepts were initiated by Buddha when he said "Don't do this, or don't behave like that." That was the origin of precepts. In India, in Buddha's time, there were Buddha's

precepts. And in China, they have precepts which are based on the Chinese way of life. We have sixteen precepts, and these precepts are the essential precepts which we should observe as a Japanese, as an American, or as an Indian priest or layman.

These precepts are the precepts which you can apply to your everyday life. We say, "Don't kill," but "don't kill" does not just mean don't kill flies or insects. Actually it is too late [laughs]. If you say, "Here is a fly, should I kill it or not?" it is too late! Before we see the fly, we have this kind of problem. When we eat, we say: "Seventy-two labors brought us this rice." When we say "seventy-two labors" this includes protecting grains from various insects.

It is not just—not to kill insects. When you eat, and you chant "Seventy-two labors brought us this rice," it includes already the precept of "not to kill." After making a great effort to protect the corn from insects, we can eat. When you chant, "seventy-two labors," you should be relating to the precept "not to kill." So "not to kill," is not any special precept.

To exist here in this way is the result of sacrificing many animals and plants. You are always sacrificing something. So as long as you are involved in dualistic concepts, it is not possible for you to observe our precepts.

So how to get out of dualistic concepts and fill our being with gratitude is the point of practice. Actually it is very foolish to say "not to kill." But why we say "not to kill" is to point out or to understand our life from various angles. Not to kill, not to steal, not to speak ill of others. Each of these



Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's grandson, Shungo Suzuki, was shuso (head student) at Eiheiji in Japan. This picture was taken at his shuso ceremony on May 17, 1999. In the front row are Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi, far left, Shungo (center with fan), his mother Chitosei Suzuki, second from right, and Mitsu Suzuki (Okusan), far right. The ceremony was attended by more than 100 monks at Eiheiji and over 200 parishioners of Rinso-in (Suzuki Roshi's temple in Yaizu) who made the seven-hour bus trip to Eiheiji for the occasion.

precepts includes the other precepts. And each practice or ritual we observe includes the others. So if you have the actual feeling of being here, that is the way to observe precepts and the way to practice zazen.

If you understand how you observe even one precept, you can observe the rest of the precepts and you can practice zazen, you can observe rituals. Zazen practice and observation of rituals or precepts cannot be separated. How to experience this kind of feeling is how you understand our precepts.

If you say it is difficult, it may be very difficult. But it will not be so difficult a thing if you say, "I will do it." That is how you observe precepts, even without thinking whether you can observe them or not. "I will do it" means "don't kill animals." You may say so, because originally it is not possible to kill anything [laughs]. You think you killed, but actually, you cannot. Even though you think you killed, they are still alive [laughs]. Even though you eat something, it is still alive in your body. If something leaves your body, it is still alive.

It is not possible for anything to be killed. The only way is to be grateful for everything you have [laughs]. That is how we keep our precepts without having a dualistic understanding of precepts.

Then you may say, "If so, there will not be any need to have precepts." But unless you are sure, you cannot feel your presence or your being. You do not feel you are alive. You do not have the joy of life or gratitude for everything. You can easily say: "No, I wouldn't kill anything." But it means that you will not sacrifice yourself for anything. You will be just you. You will not be caught by a dualistic understanding of yourself, and you will feel yourself, as you feel yourself in zazen.

It is rather difficult to explain, but that is actually how we observe precepts. Dogen-zenji says: "Even though we do not try to observe precepts, like a scarecrow [laughs] more evil comes to you." It is strange, when you feel your being in its true sense right here, no evil comes. You cannot violate any precepts, and whatever you do, that is the expression of your true nature.

You will not say: "I shouldn't say so," [laughs] or "I shouldn't do that." You will be quite free from that kind of regret or arrogance of observing some special precepts. That is how to observe precepts.

To repeat, precepts is to chew your brown rice [laughs]. Without chewing your brown rice, you cannot eat it. Only when you chew it for a pretty long time will you appreciate the taste of brown rice. When you say, "Oh this is awful! [Laughs.] How many times should I chew it before I swallow it down?" that is a very foolish way of chewing brown rice or eating brown rice. If you say, "Oh, sixteen precepts! Awful to be a Buddhist!" [Laughs, laughter.] Then you have no chance to have a real taste of the Buddhist way. If you observe them one by one, that is how you chew brown rice and how you practice our way.

## *City Center's New Conference Center: A Restorative Place to Gather*



BUTCH BAUMWIT

"I like to introduce newcomers to the Conference Center, because people expect an ordinary meeting place. But there is appreciation, almost a sense of relief, when they walk through the door for the first time. They are surprised that such a place exists in the city."—*Cornelia Shonkwiler, Guest Manager*

**L**AST FALL, City Center opened the doors of our new Conference Center, situated in an elegant Victorian building adjacent to City Center in San Francisco. Designed to provide a peaceful and unique meeting place in an urban setting, the Conference Center gives us the opportunity to continue Soto Zen's long history of hosting guests. We practice attention to detail in the placement of teacups and in the arrangement of fresh flowers. We engage with people who work in the business world, and we invite them to allow the sense of calm and spaciousness to permeate the business they are here to conduct.

The Conference Center's graceful Parlor Room, with its high ceilings, wood floors and tall windows, is ideal for teaching and learning in a group, a business meeting around the conference table or a reception, workshop or ceremony for up to 25 people. The smaller and more casual Sun Room is just right for more intimate gatherings and workshops. Teas, coffee, fruits and breads are provided upon request. Delicious vegetarian meals prepared by the Zen Center kitchen are available to conference participants in Zen Center's spacious dining room. Meditation instruction can also be arranged by request.

As guest manager Cornelia Shonkwiler says, "Some people want zafus, others prefer chairs. Some people want to sit on the sofas. We try to accommodate different needs and be an invisible support, like a good jiko. The intention is to create a space for open and wholehearted participation in a meeting or workshop."

For further inquiries or to receive a conference center brochure, please call Cornelia at 415-255-6530.



# The First Two Times They Met

BY Kazuaki Tanahashi

A SLENDER MAN in his late twenties who, by his own description, embodied the military industrial complex, visited a Kyoto rock garden. Upon leaving, he decided to walk several miles back to the center of the city. There he went into a bar and by chance met a man about his age with a neatly trimmed beard who spoke quietly but with such power and engagement that they spent the next day together in the man's house outside the city. This meeting became one of many remarkable encounters that changed the course of the Vietnam War. I am still awed by the story.

It was 1960 when Daniel Ellsberg walked into that bar and met Gary Snyder, who had a day off from his training in a Zen monastery. Gary, the luminous Jephy Ryder in Kerouac's *Dharma Bums*, was known as a pacifist as well as a poet in Japan. Dan had earned his Ph.D. in economics at Harvard, writing his dissertation on decision-making processes in times of uncertainty or instability. As a member of the Rand Corporation, he had been a high-level consultant to the Departments of State and Defense as well as to Kennedy's White House, drafting a number of major U.S. policy initiatives. His trip to Kyoto had been occasioned by a Defense Department project in which he was advising the commander of U.S. Pacific forces on problems of the command and control of nuclear weapons. His desire, then as now, was passionate: to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by anyone ever again.

His mission was secret, but Dan and Gary talked extensively, with no small disagreement about pacifism. Elite of elite in the U.S. military mainstream brain-trust, Dan was nonetheless moved by his encounter with Gary. He describes his impression of Gary in an essay entitled "The First Two Times We Met," published in *Gary Snyder: Dimensions of a Life*:

His life was more together. I was as smart as he was, but he was wise . . . I had never met anyone like him. I felt, more than envy, glad that I had a chance to discover him, to find this particular model of the way that a life could be lived.

On that trip, Dan discovered that, in the Eisenhower administration, authority to use nuclear weapons in a crisis had been delegated to naval commanders in the event of loss of communications with Washington. Only later, as Dan revealed, did we learn how frequently such losses of

communications occurred, and how much closer we were to an accidental nuclear war than we feared.

The U.S. bombing of Vietnam started in 1964. With a civilian ranking equivalent to that of a three-star general, Dan was assigned to Vietnam from 1965 to 1967, to provide the Administration with a first-hand evaluation of the war. This direct exposure slowly led him to believe that the war was wrong. On his return to Washington, he became instrumental to Secretary of Defense McNamara in creating a top-secret history and analysis of the U.S. decision-making process in Vietnam. Through his research, Dan discovered that the government had constantly lied about its role in the war. This discovery began to cement his conviction that public knowledge of these details would more rapidly bring an end to the war. He decided to release to the public the 7,000-page study he helped to prepare for Secretary McNamara, at the risk of being jailed for the rest of his life.

Although Dan had not seen or heard from Gary for over ten years, his meeting with Gary had been a kind of touchstone, an image of right livelihood as an alternative way of living. His wife, Patricia, and other peace-workers inspired him, too. These subtle but powerful influences helped Dan to find a nonviolent avenue for peace which could never have been achieved by bombing, shelling, or the spread of chemicals.

In September 1970, Patricia and Dan drove east from San Francisco to a forest in Nevada City, California, looking for Gary. The so-called Pentagon Papers, the work with which Dan Ellsberg had been involved, were in the trunk of their rented car. They found Gary, who remembered Dan and offered them lunch. Dan conveyed to him his intent to make public his information about the war and thanked Gary for his role in the process of his awakening.

His disclosure of top-secret defense documents in the spring of 1971 was a powerful agent for changing public opinion about the war, and its effect was profound and broad, beyond my capacity to gauge. It is interesting to note that *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* gave more space for its entry on the Pentagon Papers than its entry on the Pentagon itself, saying, "The release of the Pentagon Papers stirred nationwide and, indeed, international controversy because it occurred after several years of growing dissent over the legal and moral justification of intensifying U.S. actions in Vietnam."

From my rural home in Japan, I followed the stories about Dan's arrest and trial. With his indictment, he faced a maximum possible sentence of 115 years. When the war in Vietnam came to a close in 1973, the court dismissed the charges against Dan, citing an extensive pattern of government misconduct in his case. After he was dismissed, Dan continued his efforts for peace, working tirelessly against nuclear weapons. He was arrested over fifty times for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience.

The "Parlor Room," pictured here, and the "Sun Room," shown on the page opposite, are part of Zen Center's new conference facility at 308 Page Street next door to Zen Center. See page 33 for information about reserving the space for meetings or events.



BURCH BAUMUT 121

Meanwhile, I moved from Japan to the United States to work as a scholar-in-residence at the San Francisco Zen Center. In 1980, some members of the Zen Center and I created a Nuclear Study Group and started participating in the growing resistance to nuclear arms and the arms race. Among the literature I reviewed on the potential for nuclear war, Daniel Ellsberg's writing seemed most articulate and informative. I read his words many times over, trying to understand global politics and Dan's strategy for reversing the arms race.

In a 1979 interview by *Pacific Sun*, Dan listed the dangers of nuclear war posed during the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations with their use of nuclear diplomacy.

And then the biggest use came between 1969 and 1972, when Nixon constantly made nuclear threats, as Haldeman revealed in his memoirs. These threats were all kept secret from the American public and the world. We were repeatedly on the brink of a nuclear war, initiated by us, without ever knowing it. And the only reason Nixon gives for not carrying out the threat against North Vietnam is that in 1969 the antiwar movement was too big.

Dan wrote about one of the dozens of near-nuclear disasters. A nuclear weapon had been dropped from a U.S. military aircraft in the state of North Carolina. Five of the six safeties failed. Had the sixth failed, the weapon would have caused an explosion larger than all the wars in human history. He reported that a single Poseidon submarine could target 224 cities and



yet there were only 218 targeted Russian cities. The U.S. had 41 Poseidons. With 30,000 U.S. and 20,000 Russian warheads, the chances of avoiding an accidental detonation decreased daily.

I am optimistic, but we haven't much time. We have only a few years . . .

The existence of nuclear weapons manifests the dark side of our being, a human potential not to care about other humans. The challenge for us is to learn how to encourage and broaden and build upon that first potential, our capability for concern.

Thanks to myriad resisters throughout the world, we survived those fearful years. In 1990, Patricia

Ellsberg and I were part of a group of people trying to create a vision for a fair global economy. I overheard Dan's comment that this would be more difficult to achieve than what he was trying to do, and he was right; the group didn't last too long. Nevertheless, one night in the same year I had the opportunity to meet this walking legend at the home of musicians Edie and Robin Hartshorne. Being a pianist as well as an activist, Dan played Debussy beautifully. Knowing that I was an artist, he delightedly showed me his close-up photographs of flowers.

In 1991, I had an urge to see Dan. Edie had told me that he was writing a proposal called Manhattan Project II to undo the legacy of the project that had developed the atomic bomb. I felt the historic significance of the work and wanted to offer my help. Edie took me to Dan and Patricia's home in Kensington, near Berkeley. With great enthusiasm and thoughtful details, Dan told me about his mission for bringing the world's nuclear warheads "near zero." He said "near zero" to allow for a continued measure of deterrence. To call for the total abolition of all nuclear weapons at that point would, he felt, be seen as unrealistic and fail to gain necessary political support. But he said abolition was the final goal.

His proposal to all nuclear weapons states included a call to end production of weapons-grade fissile material, to end nuclear testing permanently, to adopt the principles of minimum deterrence and no-first-use, to abolish tactical nuclear weapons, and to reduce strategic warheads to 500 at most, and preferably to 100 or less by the year 2000.

I could hardly believe my ears. It was like hearing a gospel of peace in the nuclear age, a set of practical and strategic steps toward global nuclear disarmament. Dan said that some people were critical of calling the proposal "Manhattan Project II" since it was associated with something terribly negative. He asked me what I thought about it. I said it was a stroke of genius. The "II" expressed everything—the gravity of the project, the contrast and hope. His paper was published in the *International Tribune* on May 14, 1992, and in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in the same month.

The next time we met, I told him about the project other artists and I had just started and asked for his comments and advice. I believed that his plan and ours could be complementary. Manhattan Project II could be seen as a way for ending the military use of plutonium and our project, Plutonium Free Future, focused on ending the civilian use of the deadly substance. With Dan's help, we could have contact with some key scientists and policy makers. In turn, I was able to arrange publication of his proposal in Japanese and help set up his meeting with some cabinet members in Tokyo.

When Dan and Patricia moved to Washington, D.C., Manhattan Project II was set up in the office of Physicians for Social Responsibility and became increasingly visible and influential. Rumor had it that Dan had advised the Russian delegation in its negotiation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II signed by Presidents Yeltzin and Bush in 1993.

Most of my time from 1992 through 1994 was spent on the Plutonium Free Future work, which included attending conferences in Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston. Although I am spending less time in actual campaigns now, I still attend some public hearings and meetings in California that address nuclear weapons issues, and Dan is a frequent presence. The scope of his activity and influence is phenomenal.

Just as he described Gary as a particular model of the way life can be lived, Dan with his high degree of integrity and wisdom is also such a model. The world is still behind the challenge the Manhattan Project II has posed. Perhaps in the year 2000, we need to re-evaluate the steps and tactics set up by him and challenge the world, asking if we are serious about our call for a nuclear weapons-free world.

# *Acedia and the Good Friend*

BY Jiko Linda Cutts

SUNDAY LECTURE AT GREEN GULCH FARM

MARCH 12, 2000

**T**ODAY I WANT TO TALK ABOUT FRIENDSHIP, envy, hate, and acedia. Acedia, a new word I've recently learned, means spiritual torpor, ennui, apathy. There are situations that arise in monastic life and in everyday life, that are monotonous and repetitious. The feeling quality, quite hard to work with, is that we cannot keep going on with the endless things we have to do. It is all too much. Burnout. Desperation.

What are the antidotes to acedia, to spiritual torpor? How can we help ourselves and our friends when this kind of situation arises? And what fans the flames of acedia?

In the book *The Quotidian Mysteries: Laundry, Liturgy, and "Women's Work,"* Kathleen Norris talks about acedia and quotes from the fourth-century Catholic monk Evagrius. He considers acedia to be like what, in the Buddhist tradition, we call Mara, or the evil one: a demon that enters your consciousness and begins to undermine your resolve, your state of mind and your vows. Evagrius writes that the demon of acedia, "makes it seem that the sun hardly moves, if at all, and that the day is fifty hours long. Then [it] constrains the monk to look constantly out the windows, to walk outside the cell, to gaze carefully at the sun to determine how far it stands from the ninth hour [lunch time]."

This may sound familiar. A feeling, whether in the monastery, at home or at your work, of looking at your watch, looking at your computer screen, "When do I get to take that old lunch break and get out of here?" The sun hardly moves. The clock stands still. I remember feeling that way in high school especially. The monk (in this case, male) is distracted by this. He is supposed to be meditating or doing mindful work and instead he finds himself distractedly gazing around hoping lunch time will come soon.

Then acedia moves inward and "instills in the heart of the monk a hatred for the place. A hatred for his very life itself." The monk begins to think less of the other monks with whom he lives and works. We might feel less friendly towards our co-workers, or family members, or neighbors. We might spend time "brooding on the ways they have angered, offended, or merely failed to encourage us." They're ruining my practice, these people!



*Zen Center's first priest ordination of the new millennium was on January 2, 2000 at City Center, and five people received the precepts. They are, from left in gassho, Ingen Breen, Robert Thomas, Susan Rice, John King, and Jeffrey Schneider. Co-abbots Zoketsu Norman Fischer and Zenkei Blanche Hartman are shaving the last bit of hair from Jeffrey's head.*

"This demon [then] drives the monk to desire other sites where he can more easily find work and make a real success of himself." So you reject those around you, reject what is going on with yourself, and start to pity yourself, thinking about the "memories of your dear ones and your former way of life." It used to be better in Seattle. You begin to think, gee, if I just move there, or get another job, or get a new apartment, or get a divorce, or get married, then I'd make a real success of myself, then I would be appreciated. Thinking like this we believe we can change things around, so that everything finally, once and for all, will be okay.

Evagrius reports how acedia triumphs, "[depicting] life stretching out for a long period of time, and bringing before the mind's eye the toil of the ascetic struggle and, as the saying has it, it leaves no leaf unturned to induce the monk to forsake his cell and drop out of the fight." The monk believes it is going to be terrible, in just this way, forever, if he stays where he is. Absolute bleakness. You give up on even making an effort.

The word acedia itself comes from the Greek, meaning: a lack of care, and the root of the word, care, means: to cry out, to lament. Acedia is a

crying out for help that is not recognized. Can we understand this and “turn the light inward” to look at what are the causes and conditions of this feeling, rather than believing that the environment is wrong for us or that there is someone to blame? I remember my first sesshin, it was very painful. The person who sat next to me had a jaw that cracked every time she chewed. For seven days all the meals, there was this noise when she chewed: “click click.” And I hated her. I really felt she was ruining my whole sesshin. She was making it so difficult. I turned outward and blamed it all on her. She was the bothersome problem. If she would just get out of the way, get another seat, then I’d be able to practice. It was hard to understand that the practice was right there in front of me, in working with the very annoyances and irritations I felt. This is the fertile ground of our practice. But, caught in acedia, we can’t find the energy to make that kind of effort, to give that kind of attention to what’s going on, to “study the self” in that way. We don’t care anymore.

*Four Zen Center practitioners received priest ordination at Green Gulch Farm on April 8, 2000. From left are John Grimes, Roberta Werding, Abbess Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Senior Dharma Teacher Reb Anderson, Abbess Jiko Linda Cutts, Helen Appell and Bert Dyer.*



JUDITH KERNAN



One of the antidotes to acedia is to throw yourself into your daily life, the details of your daily practice, to enter the "quotidian," the everyday. The "dian" of the word quotidian means "divine, to shine or bright sky". Doing our daily activities of laundry, dishes and grooming is an expression of our connection to life. When these simple activities are forgotten it often means there is deep trouble. Staying grounded in the quotidian is one way to address acedia. That is the mystery of the everyday. Everything is included. Continuing with our sitting practice at those times of acedia is very important. We may turn away from zazen just at the time when we need to practice more thoroughly.

Another antidote to acedia is to encourage others, to help others. Helping others is a powerful way of encouraging oneself. When you extend to someone when they are in need, or needing encouragement, you find words that really are meant for yourself as well. You are being encouraged at the same time that you're encouraging others. Dharma talks are like that: encouraging others, but encouraging myself at the same time.

Friendship and the Good Friend are important at these times. The Buddha, as the teacher of dharma, is the quintessential Good Friend and these Bodhisattvas are thought of as Good Friends as well. The way you actually help another, the greatest gift you can give, is to expose someone to the teachings. In fact, having Good Friends is one of the main, proximate causes that are conducive to practice. We can help one another in many other ways as well, including the material realm. Our friends are those that we can trust in such a way that it feels like—this is how it's described in the sutras—as if you're a baby putting your head down on your mother's breast. That feeling of complete reliance, trust, and faith in our friends—that is a true friend.

On the other hand, the sutras say, if you take a wonderful stick of incense and wrap it in an old dead fish it will begin to smell like an old fish. The same with our friends. You can have great resolve, but if you are wrapped in friends who are not upholding the precepts, you will be strongly influenced by this. If you surround yourself with Good Friends, that will have an amazing positive effect on you as well. Both sides are true. I have a friend who has a chronic illness, and she has found, by carefully watching her life and taking care of her body, that there are certain people she cannot spend time with, because they drain her. She actually feels more sick after spending time with these people.

Although the bodhisattva ideal is to go everywhere and be with anyone, sometimes the bodhisattva herself needs protection and care, like a young flower. It is important to be aware of how strong this influence from our friends can be.

What is friendship? The root of the word "friend" means: to love, beloved, belonging to the loved ones, not in bondage, free. All these words

come from the root of the word "friend." Also, dear, precious, safety. I think that's how we feel with our true friends. We feel safe to reveal ourselves and express ourselves. We feel that we are beloved, and we love.

One of the fuels of acedia is not being a friend to our own self, not being content within oneself. A dissatisfaction and a dis-ease within oneself that's not being attended. This is "the crying out for help that is not recognized." It is fed by the daily round of annoyances, irritations and sufferings of our regular everyday life, which we cannot avoid. Being human beings there is no way we can get outside, around and away from these kinds of difficulties and pains of the day. Be they an extreme form of illness, suffering, lamentation and grief, or just having someone's jaw click who sits next to you for seven days, when those things begin to irritate us, if there is a dissatisfaction or discontent that we are not examining and taking up in our life, we experience annoyance. This annoyance conditions our getting angry and hateful. The slightest thing can tip us into a full-blown expression of anger.

It is a mental discomfort, not necessarily a physical pain. I think many of us know people who have physical difficulties and pain and yet they are at peace. They are not on the edge and irritated all the time. They're working with it in a way that's an example and a great inspiration to everyone. When the kind of unhappiness and dejection I'm referring to goes unattended, these are the conditions for outbursts of anger, envy, jealousy, and greed. One way of thinking of hate is as if it were an enemy who's got his or her chance to get in there and do some harm. Another traditional image of hate is a snake, ready to strike, spreading venomous poison, even to those that we love, or those we call our friends.

Again, what is the nature of friendship? What are true friends? It may get mixed up in our minds. We may feel that someone is a real friend to us, and then something will happen and we are shocked to hear that they spoke about us in an unkind way. These are the pains of our life. Or we may find ourselves talking about someone in a way that may be bordering on slander. Using speech in a way that ruins another's reputation, or plants seeds for other people to think less highly of someone is slander. A true friend is love and peace and safety and relying. So are we able to be a true friend to our friends and family? Or does something unconsciously get constellated so that we strike out in such a way that we don't even know what's going on ourselves?

One of the ten qualities that is present in every wholesome state of mind is called, in Sanskrit, *prasrabdhi*. *Prasrabdhi* is translated as serenity, lightness, pliancy. A definition of pliancy is: "fitness for action that freely applies the full energy of body and mind for good purposes." Pliancy. Fully applying your mind for good purposes—at will—turning freely. This ease comes from relaxing rigidity in body and mind. Rigid ideas and rigid views

about how things should be, the way it used to be, and how we want it to be. Looking around and discriminating in that way, there's a rigid quality to that. So relaxing that, allowing what is to come forward and realize itself, and to witness it—this is a kind of ease with whatever happens. Lightness. Serenity. Tranquility. Just saying the words. They're beautiful words. So along with pliancy is happiness and joyfulness, preceded by faith and clarity. When there is lightness and fully using the body and mind toward good purposes rather than "errant tendencies," then striking out, hatred and its derivatives cease. This means freedom to move, beneficial action, and being the Good Friend.

It reminds me of watching the Aikido black belt tests I saw recently, at the Aikido Dojo where my son takes lessons. In the final of these tests, the student is surrounded by five or more black belts who come at her from all sides doing different moves, moves not scripted ahead of time. The student just has to be ready. Totally ready. She meets each person in whatever way he comes, turning this way and that, throwing each one in turn. It was amazing to see. This is pliancy. Allowing the full energy of body and mind to meet whatever is coming. There was also a tranquil feeling, a peaceful way; no hate, no striking out venomously. Just meeting, meeting, all the way. At the end, the teacher said one student really exemplified the peaceful way of Aikido. It was a grandmother, a little tiny lady, perhaps in her late sixties. Her face during the test was completely serene and unstrained as she just met each person, all of whom, by the way, were much larger than she was, and threw them into the air. It was just fitness for action that freely applies the full energy of body and mind. Very beautiful.

This is a way to live in the world with pliancy. But if we are encumbered by the unattended parts of ourself, those parts of ourself crying out but unrecognized, then it's very hard to turn. Various afflictive emotions may gain ground: envy, jealousy, covetousness. "Covet" is an interesting word. I remember as a young person never knowing what the word "covet" meant, when it was referred to in the ten commandments. It wasn't a word that was bandied about in my house. Covet and envy are "contemplating another's successes, possessions, or good qualities, and wanting those for yourself." There is a feeling of discontent and resentment around this very contemplation of others' desirable possessions. The root of the word envy is "to look out at other things," and the root of the word covet is "to smoke," "to cook," "to move violently and agitate emotionally." When you covet something you are right over the fire, on a slow rotisserie, smoking and cooking, agitating. Your mind is the one that's disturbed.

There's a prayer from Saint Teresa of Avila: "Thank God for the things that I do not own." This is the opposite of envy or covetousness. Seeing the pain that material possessions can cause someone, you are so happy that your life is simple, and that you are free to turn and help others. Envy,



*Zen Center board member and former City Center director Mary Mociue recently moved to Vallejo and opened a new zendo there. Sojun Mel Weitsman, abbot of Berkeley Zen Center and former abbot of San Francisco Zen Center, was on hand for the dedication ceremony.*

jealousy, covetousness: your body and mind experience these as painful and actually unhealthy. If you look at the medical literature, these kinds of emotions cause constriction of the blood vessels, high blood pressure and other problems. Very different from pliancy, serenity, freely moving and engaging with whatever arises.

In the traditional literature, it is said that a person who has a hateful temperament also has a temperament conducive to wisdom. The hate type has a disaffection for people. In wisdom however, the same type of person has a disattachment for objects of the senses, or external objects. Disaffection means the same as disattachment, but the former is disattachment in an unprofitable way, a hurtful way, an unwholesome way. The hate type and the wisdom type are the same person except one way is unprofitable, the other profitable, one way unbeneficial, the other beneficial. The hate type, when it transforms, becomes wisdom; hate has the possibility of transforming into wisdom. For all of us who deal with hateful feelings, whether momentary or of longer duration, it is important to know that this feeling can be transformed.

One antidote to hatred is, "not to see unpleasant people." This is similar to my friend's experience, realizing she can't go out to dinner with certain people because she gets sick. At certain times, this kind of practice may be necessary.

"Encouraging the pleasure that comes from association in such matters as common meals" is another antidote to hatred. This reminds me of those studies about the French, who sit at a meal for hours on end, and eat cream and butter and all those things that we are not supposed to be eating any more, and they have less heart disease. This simple practice can address the constriction associated with hatred.

And perhaps the most fundamental antidote to hatred is friendliness, rooted in *prasabdhi*, rooted in the freedom to move, the freedom of beneficial action. Friendliness, *maitri*, is one of the four Brahma Viharas, or "heavenly abodes," including equanimity, compassion, and sympathetic joy, cultivated by *bodhisattvas*. Though *bodhisattvas* see that beings don't actually exist in a substantial way, that they have no "inherent existence," nevertheless, *bodhisattvas* radiate great friendliness and compassion toward all these very same beings, and give their attention to them, thinking: "I should become a savior to all those beings. I shall release them from all their sufferings." This is the *bodhisattva's* vow of saving all beings. This friendliness brightens the world.

Friendliness means to have hopes for the welfare of others, to long for it. This is the opposite of coveting, wherein you contemplate what others have and what you want of theirs for yourself and feel resentment. It means to delight in the happiness and prosperity of others. It is affection unsullied by motives of sense desire, passion, or hope of a return.

In the traditional literature, friendliness is explained as threefold. In *bodhisattvas* who first raise their hearts to enlightenment, friendliness has beings for its object. For *bodhisattvas* coursing in the way, it has *dharmas* (defined as fundamental elements of reality) for its object. And for *bodhisattvas* who have acquired "the patient acceptance of *dharmas* which fail to be produced," who have acquired the "intuitive tolerance for the inconceivability of all things," for these *bodhisattvas*, friendliness has no object at all. These are *bodhisattvas* who understand emptiness. They understand the non-production of *dharmas*. They have no object for their friendliness, they are just friendliness. They don't need anything to direct it toward: it is just friendliness that covers the universe.

There is a story told of the Buddha encountering a woman who had lost all her presence of mind, after enduring enormous suffering in her life. With great *maitri*, Buddha said to her, "Sister, regain your state of mind." A friend of mine has that on her computer screen, as a screen saver. When she is at work and the demon *acedia* has entered, and she is wondering when lunchtime is going to come, and pliancy and joyfulness seem far away, then, being a Good Friend to her own self, she can say, "Sister, regain your state of mind." Recover your presence of mind. We have the ability to do this.

## *Deep In the Heart (Sutra) of Texas*

BY *Hogetsu Rick Mitchell*

**T**HE SEVEN BLACK-CLAD ZEN STUDENTS filed into the room and took their places on cushions facing Tenshin Reb Anderson, senior dharma teacher of the San Francisco Zen Center. Together, they removed their navy-blue, hand-stitched rakusus from their envelopes, placed them on their heads and chanted, "Great robe of liberation/Field far beyond form and emptiness/Wearing the Tathagata's teaching/Saving all beings . . ."

The only difference between this Jukai initiation ceremony for lay practitioners and dozens of others Reb has presided over was that it happened neither at City Center in San Francisco nor at Green Gulch in Marin County. It took place at the First Unitarian Church in Houston, Texas, where the Houston Zen Community has been meeting on Sunday evenings for the past 11 years.

A couple of the new Lone Star bodhisattvas, or "bubbhasattvas" as one Texan jokingly dubbed them, had never even been to San Francisco. Yet they now have a formal teacher-student relationship with Reb Anderson and wear the blue rakusus identifying them as disciples of Buddha in the Soto Zen lineage of Shunryu Suzuki.

"I didn't have any expectations. I just went to meet the people," says Setsuan Gaelyn Godwin, the Zen Center priest and Tassajara operations manager who served as a sewing instructor for the Houston Zen Community in the spring of 1999.

"But when I realized how long many of the members of the group had been practicing together, that surprised me. I was really impressed by how regularly people sit together, how strong the sitting practice is, despite the very busy lives people have."

The Houston Zen Community exists as a hybrid experiment in home-grown American Buddhism. At the sangha's Sunday evening gatherings, you'll encounter not only blue rakusus, but the brown robes of the Order of Interbeing and the black rakusu pattern worn by students in the Zen lineage of Maezumi-Roshi.

The HZC formed in 1989 following a Houston visit by the Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh. While most of his appearances were directed toward the city's thriving Vietnamese community, he also gave a speech in English at the First Unitarian Church.

As a result of that visit, Thay invited two Houstonians—Unitarian Universalist minister Robert Shaibly and philosophy student Gary Stuard—



KSHIN ERIC ARBUJER

*Reb Anderson, second row far left, leads a Houston Zen Community retreat at the Margaret Austin Center, Chappell Hill, Texas, 1997.*

to spend a summer retreat at his monastery in Plum Village, France. Upon their return, Schaibly and Stuard co-founded the Houston Zen Community as a Sunday night sitting group, with the two of them initially alternating as facilitators.

In its mission statement, HZC described itself as "a lay Buddhist sangha supporting each other in practice primarily through following the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh and the Order of Interbeing. We provide a resource to the community for the study and practice of Socially Engaged Buddhism."

In 1990, Schaibly and Stuard returned to Plum Village and took the 14 Wonderful Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing. Schaibly was also ordained as a dharma teacher, though his responsibilities at First Church have precluded him from fulfilling that role for the HZC except on an occasional basis.

In 1991, the Houston Zen Community hosted another Houston visit by Thich Nhat Hanh that included a weekend retreat in the East Texas piney woods. In the ensuing years, the HZC began hosting retreats with visiting teachers at the Margaret Austin Center, a rural farm northwest of Houston that the Zen Community shares with other regional groups devoted to meditation practice, Buddhist and otherwise.

A handful of HZC members eventually joined Schaibly and Stuard as full-fledged members of the Order of Interbeing. At the same time, the Sunday night sits attracted Houstonians drawn to other Zen traditions, including the Japanese Soto lineage of Suzuki Roshi. One of these students, Nessho Cathy Crouch, met with Reb Anderson in San Francisco shortly after the formation of the Houston Zen Community in 1989.

"I had been doing Transcendental Meditation since 1975, and I was having some problems in my practice. I kept getting headaches," says Crouch. "I had come across these tapes of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. I was in the Bay Area on business, so I made an appointment to meet with Paul Haller.

"On my next visit, I met with Reb, who was abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center at that time. I asked him for guidance on how to help our sangha. He told me he had been thinking about Houston for a long time. I think, at that point, he made an offer to come."

Crouch returned annually to California to sit at City Center or Green Gulch, attend retreats and have dokusan with Reb. But it wasn't until 1995 that she brought Reb's offer to the HZC board, which voted to take him up on it the following year.

Tenshin Zenki Reb Anderson hosted his first retreat at the Margaret Austin Center in the summer of 1996. He's been back at least once every year since, most recently in September 1999 for the Bodhisattva Precepts Initiation Ceremony described at the beginning of this article.

Following the weekend retreats, Reb typically stays over at Crouch's Houston home for a few days, leading morning and evening zazen, doing public speaking engagements at First Church, working out in a local gym and meeting formally and informally with HZC members. This has allowed him to develop personal relationships with the students, which in turn led seven of them to follow Crouch's lead by formally asking him to become their dharma teacher.

When Reb returns to Texas in September of this year, he'll be giving the precepts to four more lay practitioners from Houston and Austin.

"He's been generous with us in so many ways," says Crouch. "He's made himself available to us. We can go out there (to Green Gulch) for dokusan, but it's very formal. Hundreds of people come on Sundays there. We have an opportunity for more informal access to him when he's here."

In recent years, the karmic kinship between the San Francisco Zen Center and the Houston Zen Community has broadened through visits by other priests and teachers. Ed Brown hosted a cooking class and fund-raiser dinner at the First Unitarian Church, and David Chadwick spoke on his biography of Shunryu Suzuki, *Crooked Cucumber*. Green Gulch's Stuart Travis helped the first group of sewing students get started on their rakus, and Tassajara's Gaelyn Godwin arrived a few months later to make sure everyone finished on schedule.

Zen Center priest Myo Lahey came to Houston in 1997 and 1998 to lead ten-day practice periods including daily pre-dawn sits and weekday evening classes. Gaelyn returned in the fall of 1999 to lead another well-attended three-week practice period. She has been invited to come again in May 2000. The next logical step would be for the Houston Zen Community



to ask Zen Center to send a teacher who could stay for a longer period, perhaps three months to a year. And that's exactly what they've done.

But this deepening relationship hasn't come without a fair amount of internal pain and conflict. In 1997, two members of the Houston Zen Community split to form another group, Dharma Rain, devoted exclusively to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. For a brief period, the very existence of the Houston Zen Community appeared to be at stake. The crisis was resolved when the other Order of Interbeing members in the HZC made it clear they weren't going anywhere, and the sangha emerged stronger for having had its faith put to the test.

The split created bad feelings on both sides. But members of Dharma Rain and the Houston Zen Community subsequently reunited at a retreat led by Arnie Kotler and Therese Fitzgerald at the Margaret Austin Center. Arnie and Therese, who came up in the Soto tradition of Sukuki Roshi before joining the Order of Interbeing, are the only visiting teachers besides Reb Anderson to be invited annually by the HZC. Several members of the sangha received the Order of Interbeing's Five Mindfulness Trainings for Lay People from Arnie and Therese before taking the precepts with Reb.

While the HZC's mission statement has been revised to delete the reference to any specific teacher or tradition, Thich Nhat Hanh's guiding influence can be felt in the translations of the sutras HZC uses in its services and in the dharma discussions that follow the Sunday evening sitting period. The group is currently studying his book, *Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*.

Glen Duval, a senior HZC member who has asked to receive the 14 Mindfulness Trainings from the Order of Interbeing this year, points out that the Houston Zen Community is not alone among American Buddhists in attempting to bridge more than one tradition. He cites the example of Wendy Johnson, a student of Thich Nhat Hanh who lived at Green Gulch for many years. "I think we are unique, but I think that's a characteristic of the way we formed," says Duval. "It's both our struggle and our strength that we didn't have a lot of other sanghas around us to measure how we were alike or different. We didn't have a mold that someone tried to throw on us. And when someone did try to put one on us, we sort of rebelled, like any young kid."

Duval believes the Houston Zen Community has a spiritual mission to continue to evolve as a unified sangha: "We only can't if people decide we can't. And if we decide we can't, then we're violating our own precepts. I hope that the sangha will never be unfriendly to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, or Dogen, or Shunryu Suzuki, or Sister Annabel, or whomever else we should be so lucky to get here. It's very important for whoever comes here as a (permanent) teacher to be respectful of that."

Duval describes his request to join the Order of Interbeing as a personal decision consistent with his last ten years of practice. But he says he has

very much enjoyed working and studying with the teachers from Zen Center, including Reb, Myo, Gaelyn and Ed.

HZC co-founder Gary Stuard says it's up to the current membership to decide what direction the group should take. Stuard, who lived as a monk at Plum Village from 1992 to 1996, now makes his home in a Catholic monastery in Dallas and describes himself as both a practicing Buddhist and a practicing Christian.

"This group was founded in that (Thich Nhat Hanh) tradition, and I know there were some people who wanted to see it continue that way," Stuard said. "My only wish is for the group to be happy in their practice."

Cathy Crouch admits that she's felt like "the bad guy" at times for pressuring the group to keep searching for a full-time teacher with the help of the San Francisco Zen Center.

"It's like I opened a door that some people didn't want to have opened," she says. "But I also believe it's been helpful for the entire sangha. Our sangha is in a different and stronger place than it was five years ago."

In that time, average attendance at the Sunday gatherings at the church has roughly doubled—from 12–15 to 25–30. The group has had to move into a larger hall at the church to accommodate the increasing numbers. Many members of the group also sit together weekday mornings at "pocket zendos," starting at different times in different parts of town. In addition to the three- and four-day retreats at the Margaret Austin Center, the sangha periodically organizes half-day and full-day sesshins in town. There are two ongoing sutra study groups, as well as opportunities for socially engaged practice through the Sangha Without Walls prison support group and at the Depelchin Children's Home.

"For years, we had these growing pains and growth spurts," says Sayokozai Doug Lindsay, who succeeded Crouch as HZC president in January. "We were like a seed, or a new plant. If you'd put us outside in the wind and the rain, it wouldn't have taken much for the group to dissipate. But now it seems like we're ready to go out in the sun. We've grown not only in numbers, but also in practice."

Lindsay believes it's now a matter of when, not if, the sangha will find a full-time teacher. In the meantime, the HZC will continue to present visiting teachers representing various traditions.

Gaelyn Godwin says it's not unusual for Zen sitting groups to branch out into one style or another. "It's part of the American experiment," she says. "But the people in the Houston group are open to a number of teachers. It's pretty special. It's a rich experience for the group and the visitor. I find it extremely inspiring."

Write to the Houston Zen Community at P.O. Box 542299, Houston, Texas 77254-2299 or visit the website at <http://home.att.net/~langur/hzc/>. You can email Rick Mitchell at [mitchako@msn.com](mailto:mitchako@msn.com).

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**W**IND BELL is a publication of San Francisco Zen Center, a Buddhist group with its main offices located at 300 Page Street, San Francisco CA 94102. Published twice yearly, Wind Bell is available for subscription at a cost of \$4.00 per issue. Please send subscription requests to the address above.

Zen Center is comprised of three practice places: the City Center, Green Gulch Farm, and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. The City Center and Green Gulch Farm offer a regular schedule of public sittings, lectures and classes, as well as one-day to seven-day sittings and practice periods of three weeks to three months. Guest student programs are also available.

Information may be obtained from the City Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco CA 94102, 415-863-3136, or from Green Gulch Farm, 1601 Shoreline Highway, 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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