Wind Bell

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Wind Bell

Cover art *by* Kakinuma Ninshou

Dharma Talks

News and Features

Suzuki Roshi carrying the kyosaku at Sokoji

PHOTO BY DONN DIANGELO

Zen Center Celebrates the 100th Birthday of Our Founder, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, May 21–23, 2004

YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO JOIN US as we celebrate the 100th birthday of our founder, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, over the weekend of May 21–23, 2004. Please save these dates and plan to join us as we reflect on the life of Suzuki Roshi and his important contribution to the flowering of Zen Buddhism in America.

Over the weekend, we will host a variety of events commemorating Suzuki Roshi's life. This will also be the occasion for a reunion of those who have practiced at Zen Center. Former disciples and students of Suzuki Roshi, as well as representatives from other sanghas in Suzuki Roshi's lineage will gather together over the weekend. Hoitsu Suzuki, son of Zen Center's founder, will attend the weekend and give the dharma talk on Saturday morning, May 22. We will announce more details about this weekend over the coming months.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

Friday, May 21

6:30–9 p.m.	Opening reception with refreshments at 300 Page Street, San Francisco
7–9 p.m.	Exhibit of Suzuki Roshi memorabilia, including calligraphy, artwork and historic photos of Zen Center. (Select photos of Suzuki Roshi will be available for sale.) The exhibit, at the Conference Center, 308 Page Street, will be open during limited hours over the weekend.

Saturday, May 22

6:30 a.m.	Zazen (in the zendo and Buddha Hall)
7:15	Service
7:45	Soji
8:05	Breakfast
10:15	Lecture by Hoitsu Suzuki
11:00	Question and answer in the dining room
12 p.m.	Lunch
2:15	Suzuki Roshi birthday ceremony in the Buddha Hall
7:30	Skit night at Green Gulch Farm—skits from all generations throughout the history of Zen Center

Sunday, May 23

2:30 p.m.	Meeting of representatives from sanghas in Suzuki Roshi's lineage

Recommended donation for the weekend is $100 and includes the Friday evening reception, Saturday breakfast and lunch, a long-sleeve t-shirt with Suzuki Roshi calligraphy commemorating the weekend, and a commemorative book. Proceeds from the weekend will benefit Zen Center and the Suzuki Roshi Archives.

For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Jeffrey Schneider, at (415) 255-6534 or via email: publications@sfzc.org. It will be very helpful for us to know in advance how many are planning to come.

We will also try to coordinate housing for out-of-town guests. If you need housing—or if you can offer housing for other guests—please let us know. Please also let us know what years you were at Zen Center so that we can arrange housing for you with others of similar years.

66-06-19D

Genjo Koan—Paragraphs 11–13

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi
June 1966
Sokoji Temple, San Francisco

ENLIGHTENMENT DOES NOT DESTROY THE MAN, just as the moon does not break the water. A man does not hinder enlightenment, just as a drop of dew does not hinder the moon in the sky. The depth of the drop is the height of the moon. The period of reflection, long or short, will prove the vastness of the dew-drop, and the vastness of the moonlight sky.

Dogen says that even though we are not aware of enlightenment, enlightenment is present when we practice zazen. If this is so, you may say, there will be no need to take some special consideration in your everyday life or practice. There is no need to study Buddhism, even. So he tried to correct our misunderstanding in this paragraph.

"When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough." Because you do not know what is the truth, you say there is no need to practice [laughs]. You obtain truth, and everything obtains truth. And everything is Buddha's teaching. If so, there will be no need even to listen to it [laughs] because we know it. That is a common mistake. But it is not so, because you do not know what is truth.

> *When the truth does not fill our body and mind, we think that we have enough. When the truth fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing.*

When truth actually fills your body, you think that something is missing [laughs]. Do you understand what he means? "Something is missing" means that if you understand the actual truth, it reveals itself in the eternal present. Not only this moment, but also eternally it will continuously reveal itself through our activity. What we do just now is not enough. We have to do another activity in the next moment.

That is the true meaning of "to drop off our body and mind," or "nothing to grasp," or Bodhidharma's "I don't know" [laughs]. "I don't know" means there are many things to know. Because I don't know, I have to know many things. That is the true meaning of truth. Truth is not some particular thing. If I say truth, you think it is some special mathematical theory or scientific theory. But we don't mean such concrete, static logic by "truth." Truth is unconditionality or eternal reality. Reality does not take any form. That is why we call it reality. There is no other word for that. So sometimes we say unconditionality. Because it is unconditionality, it takes various conditions. It accepts various conditions. If so, there should be innumerable variety in its form and color.

PHOTO BY MINORU AOKI

Suzuki Roshi at Tassajara

When truth fills our body and mind, we know that something is missing.

When we become one with truth, we start to take various activities according to the circumstances because we feel something is missing. So we will start continuous study, continuous practice, because we feel we should study more. When you think truth is some particular theory or teaching, you think that is enough. So you don't want to study. But when you realize what is truth actually, you feel you should do it; then you will start continuous truth—true practice.

For example, when we view the world from a boat on the ocean, it looks circular and nothing else. But the ocean is neither round nor square, and its features are infinite in variety.

You think the truth is some particular thing—some particular, concrete theory. That is exactly the same as saying the ocean is round or square. It is not square or round, there are infinite features. "It is like a palace. It is like a jewel." For a dragon, it may be like a palace. For a fish, it may be a jewel.

It seems circular as far as our eyes can reach at the time.

Dogen had a pretty hard time when he went across the ocean to China. He is referring to the voyage here. "As far as our eyes can reach, the ocean is circular." That is only at that time. When storms come with black, dark

clouds, there is no ocean. We don't know what kind of ocean we will have tomorrow. Everything is like this. Though there are many futures in the so-called "dirty life" or "pure life," we only understand what our study can reach. We say "this is awful" or "this is wonderful," that is our particular understanding—one of many understandings of life at that time. In our study of all things, we must appreciate that although they may look round or square, the future of oceans or mountains are infinite in variety.

So if we actually understand what is truth, we will have this kind of feeling. What we do is not enough. This feeling should follow when you realize the truth. "I am not so good," you may say. Why you say so is because the truth is within yourself. The truth says, I am not so good [laughs]. But if you think, I feel I am not so good, that is a self-centered idea [laughs].

"It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here." You may look around and say the truth has infinite variety. We have to watch. But that is not right even. The truth is directly on this moment right here. Don't look around. When we say something, we are caught by our statement. When you are standing up, you are standing on the truth [taps the table several times] right now. Don't look around.

It is so not only around ourselves, but also directly here—even in a drop of water.

If someone asks you what is truth, you may say, "I don't know" or you can say, "What is it?" [Laughs.] "What is it?" means you stop and think, you appreciate life in that moment. We live in eternal present, but we know that we are not aware of the present time, even. We are just continuously doing one thing after another.

You are not even aware of your life. But if someone asks you what it is, "Oh, I am doing something." What am I doing [laughs]? This is the answer. What are you doing? "Oh my! I am watching the fish!" [Laughs.] That is the answer. Do you understand? "What am I doing? Oh, I'm practicing zazen." That is true practice. That is true answer. "What is it?" is the answer. "Oh, I don't know" is also the answer. "What are you doing? "Oh, my—I don't know!" [Laughs.]

When you are actually one with truth, things happen in your life in that way. That is true life. The more you discuss what the truth is, the more [laughs] you will be separated from the truth. But it's all right—if you try to answer someone's question, you may say, "Don't be silly, I am just eating." [Laughs.]

When a fish swims in the ocean, there is no end to the water, no matter how far it swims. When a bird flies in the sky, there is no end to the air, no matter how far it flies. However, the fish and the bird do not leave their elements.

It just flies. It just swims. There is no end of the water or sky for the fish or bird. A fish does not realize it's swimming. A bird does not realize it's flying. But where the fish swims, where the bird flies, there is water or sky.

When the use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in a small way. Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once.

So when you practice Zen, you practice enlightenment. Enlightenment and practice are not different. Dogen says, "When the use is large, it is used largely. When the use is small, it is used in small way." But you cannot compare which is large, which is small, which is good and which is bad. So each practice is absolute—each practice is enlightenment itself, as when a bird flies there is sky. There are not two kinds of water for small and big fish. Water is the same.

Though it flies everywhere, if the bird leaves the air, it will die at once.

Though a big eagle says, "I am big enough to fly. So I don't want any more sky." [Laughs.] If he says so, the eagle may die at once [laughs]. So in this sense, there is no big eagle, no small sparrow. Sparrow and eagle are the same. Not different at all. Anyway, they must fly in the air.

Water makes life and air makes life. The bird makes life and the fish makes life.

Water and fish, sky and bird, you may say [are] different, but actually they are not different.

Life makes the bird and life makes the fish. There are further analogies possible to illustrate in this way practice, enlightenment, mortality and eternity.

There may be various dualistic ideas in our thinking, but practice and enlightenment, mortality and eternity are the same in their true sense.

Now here is the problem:

If a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place.

True practice will be established in defilement. Before we attain enlightenment—before we are aware of enlightenment, we attain enlightenment. It is impossible for a bird or a fish to know what is air or water before they move in it. So enlightenment should be attained before we are aware of it. [Laughs.] Do you understand? True practice should be established before we attain enlightenment—before we know what is enlightenment. Do you understand? If you move in the practice, you cannot know the end of air or water. As you cannot know what is enlightenment or what is defilement before you practice it, when you practice it, you know, enlightenment is there. If you doubt it, you are trying to know what is enlightenment. You

are a fish [laughs] or a bird who wants to practice, who wants to move in it realizing the end of the water or sky.

> *If a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place. When we find our place at this moment, when we find our way at this moment, the practice follows, and this is the realization of truth.*

This is pretty difficult to accept. Pretty difficult to be a fish [laughs] or a bird who just moves in water or sky. Because we are not a fish or sky, we try to know the end of the sky or water before we move in it [laughs]. It may be quite natural for you to want to know what is enlightenment, what is water or sky before you practice or before you move in it. That is why I'm trying to explain what is enlightenment, why Dogen-zenji worked so hard to explain what is enlightenment. But before he wrote so many works to let you know what is water, what is sky, he said you should not wait to understand Buddhism intellectually before practicing Buddhism. That is like a bird who trys to move in sky after he knows the end of the sky.

Of course, we do not ignore the intellectual understanding of Buddhism, or someone who has time to explain it intellectually. It is their duty to explain it intellectually. But for us, it is necessary to start practice so you understand completely what is Buddhism. You will have no time [laughs] to realize what is Buddhism. Thank you very much.

It's good that these Tassajara summer students seem to be enjoying their work because it will soon start up again, with the 2004 guest season beginning in April. Pictured, from left, are: Brenda Eu, Terry Neumann, Hannah Meara, Amy Strother, and Joan Amaral.

PHOTO BY RENSHIN JUDY BUNCE

Charlotte Selver

Lee Klinger Lesser

CHARLOTTE SELVER, a longtime friend and supporter of Zen Center, died quietly in her sleep on August 22, 2003 at the age of 102 years. Norman Fischer spoke about Charlotte in a lecture at his one-day sitting two days after her death. He said, "Long ago her body stopped being strong. She was living on pure spirit and human relationship . . . That's why she had to die in her sleep by herself, because if anyone had been with her she would still be alive . . . forever!" Charlotte was a remarkable teacher, even though she claimed all of her life not to be a teacher. She often declared, "I have nothing to teach!" From her point of view, she simply invited people to wake up and be more true to their own natural responsiveness.

The mindfulness practice that she developed here in the United States was called Sensory Awareness. For over 75 years, thousands of students from the United States, Western Europe, Japan and Mexico came to study with her. Charlotte was a pioneer in the Human Potential Movement. Some of her students included Erich Fromm, Alan Watts and Fritz Perls. Suzuki Roshi and Baker Roshi were good friends with Charlotte and her second husband, Charles Brooks. They gave workshops and public events together to benefit Zen Center. Charlotte and Charles donated the yurts at Green Gulch and at Tassajara to Zen Center to make it possible for more workshops to take place. Charlotte loved giving workshops in the yurts and was delighted with their simple and elegant form. It was Charlotte and Charles who gave the first, and only, workshops at Tassajara for many years.

Charlotte was born in Ruhrort, Germany in 1901. She emigrated to New York City in 1938 to escape from the Nazis. Charlotte's teacher, Elsa Gindler, originated this work in the early 1900's through meeting a crisis in her own life. She was diagnosed with tuberculosis. She had no money to move to some other climate or for expensive cures. So she changed what she could of her own diet and life style and she began paying constant attention to what was happening in her. She became so sensitive that she could let one lung rest while the other one worked. Over time, much to the amazement of her doctors she was cured of the tuberculosis. From this time on she began to work with students to help them uncover their own natural capacity.

Charlotte was profoundly moved by what she learned from Gindler and she dedicated her own life to sharing this practice with others. It is a practice that is very kindred to Zen practice. Suzuki Roshi described it as "the inner experience of entire being, the pure flow of sensory awareness when the mind through calmness ceases to work—deeper than mind-made awareness. What is this 'entire being?' If you want to say something about it, you should know how to be it." Charlotte had a way of reaching into people and touching deeply what longed to wake up and respond. Sensing is all about responding, about being there for what is needed. Charlotte often quoted Elsa Gindler who urged her students to live constantly with the question, "What does this moment ask of me?" Charlotte lived her life with this question. She once commented that people so often spend time and energy in the beginning of things and in the middle of things, but they avoid the endings. She demonstrated the power of her own practice in her journey towards dying.

The last months of her life were spent simply in her home that is perched on the top of a hill overlooking the ocean at Muir Beach. When she could, Charlotte sat in the garden lovingly planted and tended by her third husband, Peter Gracey. (Charlotte was married and carried over the threshold for the third time in her life at the age of 98 years.)

Charlotte with Lee Klinger Lesser

When she was tired, she slept. When she was hungry, she ate. When she could be in connection with others, she was. When she had no more energy to connect, she said so and rested or slept. There was still a twinkle in her eye, especially when she was lying down to rest with great delight, or sucking the juice out of a strawberry, or when her cat Smoky jumped up to sleep on her chest.

One evening about five months before her death, Charlotte said, "I could weep, I could weep with joy at letting go." She then, with a smile and great release, settled into lying even further on the couch. She said that for so long she had tried to be strong and now she did not have to do that. And yet, she said, "It is not so simple. There is a place deep in my heart that is resisting." She spoke of needing to know and understand and meet that resistance—in a place that is not pushing or pulling or forcing—somehow coming to what says yes and what says no.

From February to the night she died, a weekly sensory awareness class was held in her living room. Charlotte gave the classes for as long as she could, then I began to give the classes and Charlotte participated in whatever way she was able. After sharing the conversation above, Charlotte ate dinner and led a sensing class with the 15 or so people who arrived for the class. For over an hour, people sat and simply hent forward and came to sitting and came to bending and came to sitting. Charlotte asked everyone to feel where bending began, just to follow what happened in bending—without pushing, without pulling, without forcing—just feeling what said yes and what said no, discovering where and how bending began and where it took us. It was a class that was so rich and quiet and deep. Charlotte was exploring the questions that were most acute for her, feeling in the work how we come to living, how we come to dying. This is the essence of the work—to live the questions that are deep in our lives and to discover the answers through the simplest of activities in the moments just where we are.

This was one of the very last classes that Charlotte gave. Charlotte lived her dying. She felt her way directly with ease and with joy in the moments of her living. Sometimes there were moments of struggle, but mostly Charlotte was letting go and responding to the moments as they came.

Charlotte's journey towards dying felt like a living spiral; she would feel her way and move away and then come back again, and then she would move away and then come back again. Each time moving a little further and further away. She lived with the changes happening in her and we accompanied her along the way.

About two months before her death, Charlotte was in bed with many of us gathered around her. She woke up and seemed very, very far away—somehow as though she was closer to the death side on her circling spiral. She began saying a few sentences at a time in German. She would make a comment in a slow, careful way. After a few minutes she would make another comment. It was as though she was realizing and incorporating the truth of what she was saying, as though she was feeling how to trust the truth of what she was saying. The following are a few of the things she said with English translations added:

Wir koennen uns ja ganz getrost der flut ueberlassen.

We can safely surrender to the tide.

Die flut ist ja ganz von selbst aktiv. Man braucht nichts zu tun; alles kommt von selbst.

The tide comes naturally. There's nothing to do; everything happens by itself.

Die flut ist so maechtig, so selbsttaetig.

The tide is mighty and happens naturally.

It was an important offering to all of us and to herself; recognizing the power, naturalness and ongoing movement of the tides and feeling how much the tides have to teach us about dying and about letting go. Charlotte spent so much time living by the the ocean in many parts of the world: Muir Beach, California; Monhegan Island, Maine and Barra de Navidad, Mexico and she had led so many of us to these places and other places on the edge of living.

The last Thursday night class in Charlotte's home took place on the night before she died, August 21. Her breathing was loud and distinctly audible. We simply sat and sensed quietly together, each of us being with Charlotte, with breathing and each other in silence. It was a time of deep quiet. After about 35 minutes, people began to share some thoughts or feelings. One man read a poem by Rumi that he had been carrying in his wallet.

He said it came up very strongly in him as we were sitting and he hoped it was okay to read it, because it was about death. His voice resonated with depth and simplicity as he read this poem to us and to Charlotte:

On the day I die, when I'm being carried
toward the grave, don't weep. Don't say,

He's gone! He's gone. Death has nothing
to do with going away. The sun sets and

the moon sets, but they're not gone.
Death is a coming together. The tomb

Looks like a prison, but it's really
release into union. The human seed goes

Down in the ground like a bucket into
the well where Joseph is. It grows and

Comes up full of some unimagined beauty.
Your mouth closes here and immediately

opens with a shout of joy there.

– Rumi

Another person sang a beautiful mantra that had come up for her very strongly while we were sitting. She sang it also with clarity and love. It translates as something like, I bow before my own true self. The melody was beautiful and we all sang with her, filling the space around Charlotte and all of us with gentle, loving sound. We left for the night around 10:30 p.m. Charlotte died in her sleep sometime between 1:30 and 5:00 a.m.

With the loving help of Zen Center and Zen Hospice, we cared for Charlotte and created a space to be with her after she died. Green Gulch brought up buckets and buckets and buckets of flowers and herbs to place on Charlotte and two beautiful flower arrangements for the rooms. Charlotte loved flowers and I think she especially loved Green Gulch flowers and most especially loved the flowers from the garden that Peter had planted and cared for outside her windows in their Muir Beach home. Peter cut a long nasturtium vine with bright orange flowers. He put it in a vase and draped it across the top of Charlotte's bed. So there was a living flower growing above Charlotte's head and somehow still cradling her in life.

We began putting rose petals, lavender, rose geranium, lemon verbena, rosemary and sage around and over Charlotte. As people came in to visit or say goodbye, they added flowers and herbs to Charlotte. All of the doors and windows were open and the room was filled with air, love and quiet. In the midst of grief was also laughter and joy with the memories and stories

of Charlotte's living. We had 11 *yartzheit* candles (Jewish memorial candles that burn for 24 hours) burning throughout the room, one for each decade of Charlotte's life. As people came they were also invited to sound the big gong that Charlotte brought back from Japan many years ago. She loved that gong and used it in many workshops, listening to the sound until it was completed. Even when she was very weak and being pushed in her wheelchair to the bathroom in her home, she would often stop on the way back from the bathroom, lift up the striker and sound the bell with delight! So we also sounded the bell throughout the two days that she stayed in her home after her death, hoping to greet her in her new passage with the sound of the bell.

We had arranged with the Neptune Society to come and get Charlotte's body at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday. I woke up early Sunday morning, just on the edge of light and dark. Smoky, Charlotte's cat, jumped up on my chest and lay down there. We were breathing quietly together. As I lay there on the couch in Charlotte's living room seeing Charlotte, the flickering candles

Tree near the lower garden at Tassajara

PHOTO BY RENSHIN JUDY BUNCE

and the arriving morning, I heard an owl call from nearby. Then another owl answered. The two owls spoke with each other, calling back and forth, then they gradually flew away, still calling back and forth to each other. It felt like a greeting from Charlotte. The morning before I had gone for an early morning run up through Green Gulch and up into the hills. As I began running towards the ocean, I saw the fog begin to roll in. In front of the fog was a big fat rainbow. It was not raining, but the rainbow was there. It felt like another greeting from Charlotte. Another friend said that she felt a strong wind on Monhegan just as they were gathering there to honor Charlotte. She felt sure it was Charlotte coming to greet them. And another friend described seeing a finger of fog coming from the ocean to her house, and she was sure it was Charlotte beckoning her. So it seems as though Charlotte has been quite busy. Even in her new place of business she is actively reaching out to us in different places, in different moments and still with great mystery and power.

After the morning greeting from the owls, we began to cover Charlotte with all of the remaining herbs and flowers. Charlotte's hands were resting on her chest above the sheet, gently touching each other. Her hands and head were not covered with flowers and herbs, but everywhere else on the bed and on her were splendidly and outrageously adorned with flowers. Wendy Johnson, a longtime friend, came up to sit with Charlotte. She sat quietly as I and another old friend of Charlotte's, Jill Harris, covered Charlotte with the flowers. Wendy told us that she had a song she wanted to sing for Charlotte when we were finished. So when all of the flowers and herbs found their places, the three of us knelt at the foot of Charlotte's bed. We held hands and Wendy spoke to Charlotte and then began to sing the following song. I have spent hours singing it since, feeling it is an ongoing offering to Charlotte and to me too, a way of somehow staying connected essence to essence.

You are a Buddha.
And you are in my heart.
You are a part of me.
You are a Buddha.

There was something quite glorious singing this song to Charlotte, seeing her royally decked out in flowers and knowing the depth of which she is a part of me and in my heart. We sang it over and over again. Charlotte's cat apparently didn't think it was quite as glorious as we did, however, because as we were singing, Smoky began heaving loudly and trying to vomit behind us. We kept singing and listening to Smoky and laughing. After a few more verses, Wendy stopped and said, "You know I am a gardener, and in the garden all offerings are received—and Smoky has made her offering too." I sat there, considered, and agreed. So I went to get a

Kleenex, and I scraped up a little of Smoky's offering and it went under the flowers. We continued singing and then began to sing the song in Spanish. As we sang in Spanish, our voices came out loud and strong and full, and in a few minutes, Smoky was right there howling and meowing along with us as we sang—four female voices offering their love and goodbyes

Throughout the day, old friends came to say goodbye and to be there. At around one o'clock some of us gathered to meditate and be present with Charlotte in this last hour in her home. Peter brought sunflowers from the garden and placed them on Charlotte. We took turns sounding the bell as we sat quietly together. After about thirty minutes of this quiet being, it felt a little somber and that didn't seem quite fitting for Charlotte. Charlotte loved to laugh and enjoy the moments and it seemed important to honor that part of her as well in these last moments her body would be dwelling in her home.

Jill said she had a joke and she told it in her warm, full voice: Sherlock Holmes and Watson went camping together. Sherlock asked Watson what he saw out there in the wilderness in the dark. Watson eagerly replied as he looked up at the stars, "Why I see stars. Many, many stars. Whole galaxies! And even galaxies beyond galaxies! And galaxies beyond those galaxies!" Watson continued on for quite a while and then said, "So Holmes, what do you see?" Holmes replied, "I see that someone has taken our tent."

This joke seemed just right to me and I could hear Charlotte laughing. She liked things direct and simple and nothing high faluting. We toasted Charlotte with some of the sweet white wine that she loved. This was a ritual that brought Charlotte great joy, clinking glasses with wine, taking time to hear the sound of the glasses with each "clink." (If the sound was not pure and clear, Charlotte would grimace; when it was a rich clear sound, she would smile with delight.) And with each meeting of glasses she would say, *"Prosit"* ("May it be for you"). And so we said "Prosit" to Charlotte. As we heard the car approaching from the Neptune Society, we gathered together and we sang "You are my sunshine . . . "

Two very sensitive men from the Neptune Society came in. We gathered around Charlotte and all together we wrapped her in the sheet from her bed, swaddling her close with all of the flowers, herbs and offerings, covering her face for the last time. Peter said, "Even like this she looks beautiful." And she did. Just seeing the form of Charlotte was a beautiful sight. So Charlotte was bundled and wrapped with love and together we lifted her and put her gently down onto the gurney. The two men wrapped her in a kind of paper shroud and they took her outside and loaded her into the car. We all gathered outside and waved goodbye until the car disappeared. I have so many memories of other goodbyes and partings when Charlotte would drive away, waving her little hand until she was out of sight.

I know that for me, I will be saying goodbye and hello to Charlotte for the rest of my life, in many unknown and surprising ways, with laughter and with tears. At the end of the last workshop that Charlotte gave, which took place in Barra de Navidad, Mexico in January 2003, Charlotte said, "I don't know if we will see each other again. But if we don't, I will be very interested in finding out what happens with each of you from under the ground." I believe her.

Hafiz, the great Persian poet said:

One regret, dear world
That I am determined not to have
When I am lying on my deathbed
Is that
I did not kiss you enough.

I appreciate the way that Charlotte kissed this dear world and tried to help so many others do the same. The seeds of practice that she has planted with so much passion, trust and devotion in her students will continue to flourish.

About 25 years ago, I met Harry Roberts, an old friend from Zen Center who was a Yurok-Indian-trained shaman. Harry was a gruff, cut-to-the-chase kind of guy. Harry said the one and only Yurok law is, "Be true to yourself." When we are true to ourselves, we are true to everyone. And one day when I was a new Zen student, Harry asked me if I wanted to know what this Zen stuff was all about. I eagerly said "Yes!" He said, "The first thing you have to do—it's not the most important thing, but it is the first thing—is to stop all the busyness in your head. You can go sit outside on a log in the woods, or you can sit on a round black cushion. The next thing you have to do is find your song. And then you have to sing it." Charlotte was a master. She found and sang her song exquisitely.

Charlotte would often declare with great glee and gusto, "Every moment is a moment!" Her life and work were about finding and meeting the request of each moment. In one class, Charlotte said:

Every moment is a moment.
Every moment has a certain request on us.
The question is how we answer it.

Living this question is the legacy she leaves to all of us.

For more information about Sensory Awareness, contact the Sensory Awareness Foundation (**sensoryawareness.org**) or Lee Lesser (**leeless1@aol.com**).

PHOTO BY ROSAMIE CURTIS

Having returned to Zen Center, Wendy now manages City Center's bookstore.

A Year Between

To RG

Wendy Lewis

Wendy is a priest at San Francisco Zen Center. She took a sabbatical year to participate in a chaplaincy training program (CPE—Clinical Pastoral Education) at UCSF Medical Center in San Francisco.

THIS WAS A REMARKABLE YEAR for me—physically and emotionally challenging and rewarding. Sometimes I felt that I had never been so tired in my life; often I felt that exactly what exhausted me was what sustained me. I know that I didn't always get things right when I visited patients and I regretted it when I knew I had missed something. But I feel a deep confidence that what I offered was better than good enough.

A significant area of experience for me was being in the presence of people who were dying or who had just died, and their family, friends and the hospital staff who were caring for them. Although these experiences were not "easy" or "pleasant," to be there was, for me, to be in the presence of truth and the possibility of forgiveness, as well as to witness and participate in the love and sorrow that death evokes. There was also an enjoyment I felt in speaking with and spending time with the very elderly, people over 90 years old. Those I visited seemed to have a wide and even promising perspective on life and death. One over-90-year-old man said, looking up, "He is holding me in his hands." That simplicity was touching and inspiring.

Witnessing illness and death in people from infants to those in their 40s, 50s and 60s evoked in me sadness and regret for their short or shortened lives. I learned a lot from these situations about my own love of life and my desire to go on living even while I complain to myself or others about my difficulties, longings and griefs.

After three units (about nine months) on various floors and many days and nights on call, I felt that I had pretty much covered the gamut of

possible encounters—not in terms of specifics, but in a general way of what people expect and need or don't need from a chaplain. At the beginning of the last unit of CPE, I didn't have so much the sense that I knew what I was doing as I knew where I was. I made a vow to myself at the beginning of the last unit to take more risks on the emotional level. That effort moved to a more implicit level and I was willing to go with my intuition even when it seemed on the surface to move away from the feeling level. I found this extraordinarily rewarding as I met people who told me stories about themselves that indicated their trust and friendship.

One person I met was a woman in her 90s who started out telling me she would rather die, but then told me about her twelve years studying to be an actress when she was a young woman. I could have talked and visited with her all day. I met a woman in her 60s whose partner of many years had died a few years before of cancer. During one of our visits, she told me how much she appreciated my nonjudgmental presence and attitude.

This has probably been the most ethnically and culturally diverse year of my life since high school. I have enjoyed that, partly from the perspective of learning to negotiate my appearance as that of a white, middle class, middle-aged American woman while at the same time trying to hold the openness of common humanity in meeting people from a wide variety of backgrounds and of every age. This level of my experience extended through my relationships to staff, patients and families.

One teaching from Suzuki Roshi that is often quoted and that supported me through the mysterious unpredictability of being a chaplain is his comment: "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few." Keeping a beginner's openness of mind allowed for flexibility and creativity in my responses to circumstances. That included a willingness to take risks and to trust imperfection. In the Buddhist tradition, teachers and spiritual leaders are those who emphasize and support groundedness and fearlessness over technique. Techniques and guidelines are essential, but in my experience true availability and service arose out of confidence and compassion working together through my own necessarily limited being. The kind of risk I trusted arose not out of a wish to prove something, but out of a wish to learn something. I was always "scared" but I came to see that as a valuable quality, an indication that I was willing not to make assumptions about what I knew, but prepared instead to risk meeting whatever arose in my daily experience.

Overall, I would say about my CPE experience, I got what I came for. That is, I came to learn, to be challenged and with a willingness to be changed by my experience. My learning came through daily exchanges with patients, staff and the other chaplains and through the reflection afforded through our written and group work. The weekly seminars were also very helpful, covering a variety of topics from talking about death and

PHOTO BY JULIE BURTIS

Six practitioners received the bodhisattva precepts in a Jukai lay initiation ceremony at City Center on January 3, 2004. Their teachers (front row with whisks) are, from left: Michael Wenger, Abbot Paul Haller and Senior Dharma Teacher Blanche Hartman. Those who received the precepts are, from left: Jared Michaels, Cynthia Kear, Gabe Fields, Steven Tierney, Lien Shutt and Gary Morgan.

dying to healing touch. I especially enjoyed two presentations on children's spirituality because what the presenter offered was also applicable to understanding adult attitudes toward spirituality, such as the simplicity of God's love. The presenter said that children up to about the age of six or seven don't have a problem with the concept of a loving God. However, if that concept is presented to older children through adults who have not experienced it earlier in their lives, they have a very hard time accepting the concept of a loving God.

I would like to say a little about "religion" as that was a significant aspect of CPE. In our daily lives, and many patients said this to me, the significance of religion or spirituality is not always apparent. But when very good or very bad things happen to us or those close to us, the mysteries of health and illness, life and death, hope and despair, gratitude and loss can shift our perspective of reality. That is often what ritual acknowledges—recognition and/or celebration. Over my year as a chaplain, I was profoundly affected by the chaplain's role of "saying the words." I found my pastoral work deeply supported by prayer and my ability to pray with people—what a gift that has been. People often found their tears or a moment of peace when I prayed with them and I think that was because they were reminded of the spirituality that runs through their lives, whether or not it is acknowledged, and of the presence of what I think of as God's love. In Buddhist terms, that might be called interdependence which is the value and inclusion of every being and thing in this world of relationship. Prayer

allowed for mutuality, a meeting of human beings both or all subject to and a part of the human condition. I didn't try to figure this out, understand it, or rely on it, but it was available and accessible far more than I would have imagined.

There was another, different connection than prayer I made with many people. I call it friendliness. Some of the most delightful encounters I had were with people who said they were atheists. I would say something like, "Okay, that's fine with me. So, how are you doing?" And off we would go, talking about religion or Buddhism or other subjects. A few people asked me to give them meditation instruction, so I did. Some wanted to come to Zen Center, so I gave them the information they needed to do that.

Only a very few patients or families were concerned or troubled about being ministered to by a Buddhist rather than someone from their own faith tradition, if that even happened to come up in the conversation. In those cases, I let them know other chaplains were available. When I thought about it, I realized that, in extremity, I would prefer to see a Buddhist priest because that is the tradition that resonates with my understanding of faith and therefore the "words" would resonate as well. I didn't try to figure this out—it just makes sense to me.

The challenges of CPE have been exhilarating and exhausting in turn and have involved aspects such as being on call and giving and receiving feedback from my peers and supervisor. I feel that I have been changed by my CPE experience, in ways that I can't even know yet. What I wanted was to become more grounded as a minister in my spiritual tradition, serving as a pastor and as a spiritual director in the community. I have learned skills in CPE that will serve me in those roles and in my daily community life. It

PHOTO BY JULIE BURTIS

Eleven people received the bodhisattva precepts from Teah Strozer in a jukai ceremony on January 17 at City Center. Front row from left: Lynne Drouin, Maria Matsukawa, Mary Morgan, Teah Strozer, and Liping Zhu; back row: Carol Dougherty, Zach Mided, Paul Richards, Bradley Voelker, Scott McDougall, Andy Danielson, and Peter Welch.

is clearer to me now what the basic needs are of people in challenging life situations. One of my intentions in doing the CPE training was to put together a collection of readings and prayers/invocations from my own tradition for use by Buddhist ministers. I have begun this work and used prayers/invocations with Buddhist patients at UCSF and in an end-of-life service I did for a patient at another hospital.

I have learned a great deal about practical compassion, definitely one of the primary things I "came for." Practical compassion basically is something that "works" where no ego is in charge—it arises in a situation of mutuality. When I wrote that sentence I felt a wave of what I did and saw every day and the people I met and learned to care for in a few moments—of how often I liked the people I met, even if they were not particularly friendly or welcoming. I couldn't help appreciating the variety and everyone's particular integrity and humanness—from doctors, nurses, custodial staff and other UCSF employees to all the patients and their families and friends.

Working with the other chaplains was very rewarding, especially the group of six of us who were in the training for the whole year. As I said to one of them, "I don't know how I would have made it through CPE without you." The sustained commitment and interest of the group helped to deepen my experience and gave it a wider perspective as I shared my experiences and heard theirs and realized how differently each of us ministered to others and yet how similar our intentions, challenges and joys could be.

At the end of my year working as a chaplain at UCSF, part of me feels very old, yet full of hope. Being constantly in company with illness and death and their concomitant sorrow, relief, guilt and pain, has changed my perspective, particularly my attitude about death. As one doctor put it, "Life or death is an emergency; death is not an emergency." What he was referring to was decision making and treatment, but it also applies to pastoral care. I have become more comfortable with illness and dying, and find that my comfort level informs my ability to accept people as they are, without making assumptions about how they might or could feel about their situation or what they might need from me.

I believe that I am basically a happy person—not jolly or telling jokes, but deeply happy in a way that allows me to care about others and offer them my support. Through all that happened this year, I kept a positive attitude, loving what I was doing even when I wanted to run away. I know I have a lot more to learn about pastoral care and about all the things I have mentioned in this article, and about wisdom, compassion and service. One day toward the end of the CPE year when some of the chaplains had been talking about what they were going to do "after," one of the newer chaplains asked me if I was looking forward to CPE being over. I said, "Well, for me it will never be over."

DAVID WHYTE

Body B

JON
KABAT-ZINN

CANYON SAM

RALPH STEELE

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER warmly invites you to attend our 2004 benefit lecture and workshop series, Body Breath Mind. Proceeds from the series will support Zen Center's public programs and its three practice centers: City Center, Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. This year, our series includes three lectures, three workshops, and an unusual one-woman performance piece.

Body, Breath and Mind, the title of this series, points to our meditation practice. When we sit zazen, we bring our attention to these three aspects of our experience. How does our experience of our body, breath and mind change and alter during our meditation practice? How is our experience of body, breath and mind different as we go about our daily activities? This year's speakers look at how our practice manifests in the world—each from a unique perspective.

Poet, writer, and marine zoologist **David Whyte** kicked off the series with a talk on Friday, January 30, "Everything is Waiting for You," followed by a workshop on Saturday, January 31, "The Three Marriages: Work, Self, and Other."

Jon Kabat-Zinn is internationally known for his work as a scientist, writer, and meditation

LECTURE SERIES 2004

teacher engaged in bringing mindfulness into the mainstream of medicine and society. Dr. Kabat-Zinn continues our series on Friday, February 13 with a lecture, "American Karma, American Dharma: An Evolutionary Perspective on How We Can Heal Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness." Dr. Kabat-Zinn will give a workshop on Saturday, February 14, "Coming to Our Senses: The Body Door into Shikan-taza and Clear Present Wakefulness."

Canyon Sam has been called a "master storyteller . . . whose work is universally relevant," by the *Village Voice*. She has performed her nationally acclaimed one-woman shows at Yale University, Smith College, Columbia University, the Walker Art Center in Minnesota, and The Asia Society in New York. On Friday, March 12, Canyon Sam will offer her one-woman show, "Capacity to Enter," as part of our benefit series.

Ralph Steele is an African-American Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who has practiced as a Theravada Buddhist teacher for more than two decades and led meditation retreats since 1987. Mr. Steele will conclude our series with a talk on Friday, April 2, "The Breath and the Body," and a workshop on Saturday, April 3, "Vipassana and Samatha Meditation: An Introduction." A special invitation is extended to people of color.

All lectures and the performance piece will take place at the Unitarian Center, 1187 Geary, at 7:30 pm. The workshops will begin at 10:00 am at Green Gulch Farm, 1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito (near Muir Beach)—except Ralph Steele's workshop, which will be at City Center, 300 Page Street, San Francisco.

Tickets are on sale now. For information, please call (415) 865-3790 or visit www.sfzc.org.

The Monday Night Recovery Group

Kai Ji Rin Sho

FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS NOW a group of us, ranging anywhere from 25 to 60 people, has met in the City Center Buddha Hall on Monday evenings for meditation and discussion. What we share, aside from an interest in meditation and (in most cases) Buddhism, is our recovery. We are alcoholics, addicts, people with eating disorders, co-dependents. And we have been given the priceless gift of having our suffering become so overwhelming and so destructive that we have been driven to seek out radical solutions.

The evening begins with a short introduction to meditation, followed by twenty minutes of silent sitting. For many it is the first experience of meditation, or of meditation with a group, so twenty minutes is just about enough. After that, we introduce ourselves, some just with their names, and some as in a 12-step meeting: "My name is Bill, or Sue or Mary or Jack and I am an alcoholic, or an addict or . . ." And we offer each other our mutual pledge of anonymity and confidentiality, so that each person may feel safe to speak.

At this point, I offer a short teaching, usually employing readings both from the Buddhist tradition and from recovery literature. Sometimes the theme will be from the point of view of recovery (the 12 Steps, for example) with supporting material from the dharma. Other times, we start with Buddhism (the Four Noble Truths, the precepts) and examine how it may be mirrored in our recovery work. Then follows an open-floor discussion and a final five-minute meditation, dedication of merit and good night. The evening goes from 7:30 till 9:00.

A long-time practitioner at Zen Center, a priest, and a recovering alcoholic, I began this group basically to have someone to talk with about the two aspects of my spiritual life. Originally, a few friends met for talk and dessert once a month. Then I offered an eight-week class on Buddhism and recovery, which helped me to compile the material. And then, I got the idea of a drop-in group. The first night we met, I remember thinking, "I hope at least a few people show up." As I recall, that first night we had over twenty people. In the following years, the group has expanded and contracted, finally settling into a gathering of about 40 people.

I was somewhat surprised at our success at first and reckoned it a fluke. But the consistency of the numbers convinces me that we are onto something here. Basically, I believe that a deep hunger for spirituality underlies the disease of addiction. (In a letter to Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics

Anonymous, Carl Jung called alcoholism "the equivalent, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness . . . ") It is also clear that many people are estranged from the theistic religions of their childhood and are looking for some path that allows developing spirituality without belief in a deity. (A caveat here: "spiritual" is not really a word in the Buddhist lexicon, resting as it does on the assumption of duality—spiritual and physical, sacred and profane, etc. I use the word simply for lack of a better.)

For me, Buddhism is able to address the complex of beliefs, behaviors and emotional constructs of addiction because the addict is simply Everyman writ large. Clinging to the attributes of the self—the stories about who we are, the core of hurt which must be defended—is the first and ultimately most persistent addiction. Many people go through their entire life in a state of on-going, low-grade anxiety and discomfort (with spikes of acute suffering). Because this pain is both relatively bearable and relatively constant, they may never be driven to discover its source or its solace. The addict is one in whom this has reached the level of agony. It must be dealt with in some way—and for too many, this way is to follow the only relief they know to death.

In both disciplines, we are invited, as the entry fee, to relinquish to the best of our ability, denial and magical thinking. The Buddha said, "I teach suffering and the end of suffering." He did not try to explain away or sugarcoat the pain inherent in simply existing. In recovery it is the same. In order to begin the process of healing, we must first admit the depth of our sickness, our dis-ease.

Both traditions also require ethical behavior as the foundation for further progress—an examination of past behavior, avowal of our "ancient, twisted karma" and the resolution to behave in the future in ways conducive to liberation. We find that we cannot develop the calmness of mind necessary to the investigation of reality (Buddhism) or any degree of serenity (recovery) if our hand is still in the till and we have to remember which lies we told to whom.

Meditation is a specific practice in both Buddhism and recovery. This ability to sit with ourselves, to be the laboratory in which we test our feelings and thoughts, is an unparalleled tool. Those emotions that we have spent our entire lives running from are now confronted without being acted upon and we find that they will not kill us. Breathing in and breathing out, we can find the odd moment of peace, of surrender and little by little, are able to extend these moments to our daily life. This is the on-going work of awakening.

Every time we meet, I am impressed by the courage of the people who are willing to put themselves on the firing line of their recovery. The honesty and vulnerability I encounter are heroic. The sangha of recovering men

and women is one in which the bonds are those of a shared nightmare and a shared waking; we speak the language of people who have made the same trip to the same far country. I am very grateful to have these Monday evenings as a refuge, in the sense that I take refuge in the sangha, the community of those who practice together.

I usually end the evening with a dedication of merit like this:

We offer the merit of our practice together tonight for the benefit of all beings in the ten directions.
May all beings know serenity and forgiveness.
May all beings be awakened from the nightmare of greed, hate, delusion and addiction.
May we be happy. May all beings be happy.

Note: As well as the Monday evening groups, we also offer several times a year half-day, full-day and multiple-day retreats for people in recovery. Please call the Zen Center office or see the Zen Center website for details.

Ron Bluestein, left, and Jose Prieto, right, received the bodhisattva precepts from Michael Wenger, center, in a Jukai ceremony at City Center.

PHOTO BY ROSALIE CURTIS

For the past year and a half an environmental subcommittee of the SFZC Board of Directors has been working to clarify environmental concerns and policy at Zen Center. Goal five of the seven-point Vision and Strategic Plan for SFZC is specifically concerned with stewarding the resources of land, built assets and people.

In the last issue of the Wind Bell *(Summer 2003) an earlier version of goal five was printed, which did not include the more comprehensive version outlined in the following article by environmental committee member Wendy Johnson. In addition to working on the points detailed under goal five, the three practice centers of SFZC have each produced working environmental pamphlets and are establishing local environmental committees. (Green Gulch Farm has had a working stewardship committee for the last decade.) For more information about environmental practice at Zen Center please check www.sfzc.org.*

The Three R's of Environmental Stewardship

"When you find your place where you are, practice occurs."
—Dogen Zenji, *Shobogenzo*

AS A FRONT-LINE ORGANIC GARDENER and Zen meditation student of more than thirty years I confess that the word "environment" has never been one of my favorites. Maddeningly vague, especially when it is used to convey the complex, intimate relationship of land and people, the word "environment" derives from the Old French, meaning to encircle or surround an organism. Environment also refers to that complex of social and cultural conditions that affect the nature of an individual or of a community. Frustrated, I seek a single, raw word that does not vacillate or circle around anything but is instead the very relationship that is referred to.

I wish there were such a single word to convey this intimacy of person and place but I do not know of one. Nevertheless, over the last year and a half a small group of us have met regularly as a subcommittee of the SFZC Board of Directors to investigate what a healthy environmental policy might look like at Zen Center. Goal 5 of the Zen Center Vision Statement emphasizes the importance of the stewardship of resources of land, people and built assets so that the dharma teaching that arises from this care is available to a wide range of practitioners. How do we best express this practice of stewardship?

San Francisco Zen Center Vision and Strategic Plan

GOAL V: To steward resources of land, built assets and people to make the dharma available to others and to succeeding generations.

Objective 1: Establish environmental health and stewardship as fundamental principles of Zen Center.

Strategies:

- Utilize the work of those who have gone before us as we implement plans to achieve our goals.
- Organize and work from baseline environmental assessments for all practice centers; establish and monitor indicators of progress towards environmental health.
- Articulate, draft and implement environmental policies that balance resources, people, and the needs of the natural environment guided by our precepts and in compliance with government laws and regulations.
- Ensure that environmental health is a primary value embedded in processes for both operations and capital projects.
- Update and distribute Zen Center environmental pamphlets at each center to inform and educate residents and guests about specific environmental practices: land, food, water, waste, energy, buildings and infrastructure.
- Explore opportunities for infrastructure investments that create savings and, therefore, pay back the investment.
- Integrate the Farm Plan into this overall vision (the role of farming, its sustainability in terms of practice, the environment, finances/production and people).
- Integrate with regional planning in each locale and collaborate with wider community resources.
- Establish guidelines at each practice center for native habitat, ornamental landscape, and agricultural and horticultural plantings.
- Seek outside resources such as grants to fund projects that would serve as a model for other organizations and communities.
- Establish environmental committees at each practice place.
- Explore the creation and funding of a Zen Center-wide position of environmental oversight, research, education and outreach.

(This is a draft of the first objective of a three-point objective for stewarding resources at San Francisco Zen Center.)

Goal 5 is a grand goal for, like Zen practice itself, it depends on the dynamic union of engaged action and reflective meditation on behalf of the environment and can only be genuinely practiced when the real challenges of stewardship are included in its exploration.

I have a simple way to describe the work of environmental stewardship that comes out of my three decades of Zen practice and organic gardening experience at Green Gulch Farm. I find that there are three guiding principles or three R's of environmental awareness that form a useful foundation for sound stewardship. These are (1) rootedness in place, (2) recognition of relationship, and (3) taking responsibility for what we love and wish to cultivate and protect.

To be rooted in place is fundamental to the practice of environmental stewardship. I love to watch a young plant establish its root system and begin to grow. A muscular vanguard root pushes into new ground, opening the way for feeder roots to follow and establish themselves, anchoring the plant in the earth, while the green stem grows above-ground into the light, nourishing the invisible roots below. Rootedness in place depends on this dual practice of anchoring in the invisible body of the earth and manifesting above ground, in the light.

Place is both a noun and a verb. When we place ourselves on our home place, our lives are grounded in the richness of specific information and experience, and true practice arises from this fertile ground. It is small wonder that a long lineage of Zen teachers take their names and identity from the mountain and urban fastnesses where they practice. And while the Zen tradition honors the homeless "cloud and water wanderer," it also reveres a rootedness in place that recognizes being deeply at home in the broad body of the world.

"Settle yourself on yourself," Katagiri-roshi used to love to remind us, "and let the flower of your life force bloom." True settledness acknowledges the importance of growth and balance: to be overly rooted or settled in one place uses up the resources of that place and leaves one root-bound and depleted. Not to be deeply rooted enough is equally unsettling—you may topple over at any moment when you are not firmly anchored in the ground of your practice. Settling down with your breath and finding balance and rootedness in your place then becomes an art and necessity for environmental and personal health.

Once your breath becomes settled and rooted in place, the inter-relationship of the natural world all around you rises up to sustain your practice. Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that "in our former lives we were rocks, clouds and trees . . . this is not just Buddhist but also scientific. We humans are a young species. We were plants, we were trees, and now we have become humans. We have to remember our past existences and become humble."

PHOTO BY RENSHIN JUDY BUNCE

Tassajara

I have experienced vivid relationship with the wider world while sitting still in the Green Gulch zendo and listening to the sounds overhead on the old tin roof of the meditation hall. One summer night during the August sesshin many years ago my zazen was marked by the keen awareness of Lou and Blanche Hartman's cat, "Kibben," stalking a mouse on the zendo roof. In the core of zazen I heard the terrified scream of that small brown mouse overhead, the soft weight of the cat as she pounced on her prey, and the cracking of the rodent's translucent bones as Kibben feasted on her catch. I was also Kibben's captive prey that summer night, intimately related to her action through the stillness of my own body and breath.

Organic farming is a fine teacher of relationship, as well. Harvesting boxes of rhubarb chard for market I am related to the many un-named hungry people of the Bay Area who do not have enough to eat. Gleaning red kale and collard greens for the Marin County food bank before we disc in these last long rows of leafy greens, I am related to the many of us who are overfed and satiated with the material wealth of our own lives. Somewhere between those two realms of awareness, environmental stewardship based in the recognition of the inter-relatedness of all life, takes its place.

"Once there is seeing there is action. Otherwise, what is the use of seeing?" asks Thich Nhat Hanh. Relationship with the living world leads to responsibility for this world, like box and cover joining, like forward and backward steps. Rooted in relationship we see quite clearly that our world is in trouble. In a culture where children can recognize more than 1,000 corporate logos before they are ten years old and yet are unable to name even a dozen plants or animals from the natural world, and where there are

more shopping malls than there are high schools, it is time for us to take our place in the broken-open heart of the world and respond to the cultural and environmental crises of our times.

Shantideva, the eighth century scholar-saint, reminds us that to act responsibly for the well-being of others is as good a way to uncover no-self as to sit in silent meditation. Likewise, the intrinsic inter-relatedness of all that is reminds us that we are both responsible for and deeply included within the health of our world.

The effort to be environmentally responsible for how we live and for the resources we use is a vital key to balanced and sustainable stewardship. In the environmental committee of the SFZC Board we describe environmental health as the state of dynamic balance and relationship of all elements of the phenomenal world. Environmental stewardship is then the human responsibility to cultivate awareness of and commitment to work in accord with this dynamic balance.

Fortunately, when Zen practice is rooted in place, related to all that is, and responsible for not turning away from either the suffering of the world or the commitment to alleviate this suffering, practice occurs.

We have been given the rare opportunity to know and care for three extraordinary practice centers: Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, a monastery and summer retreat center deep in the Ventana wilderness of Central

Working in the fields at Green Gulch Farm

PHOTO BY MICK SOPKO

California; Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, a 115-acre organic farm and Zen practice place within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; and Beginner's Mind Temple, a thriving Zen Center in the heart of urban San Francisco.

Each of these practice centers presents us with great gifts and blessings as well as with true environmental challenges. Tassajara asks us how we can live more lightly within the rugged mind of wilderness and continue to minimize our impact on the untamable landscape of Zenshinji. Green Gulch Farm asks us to remember the original intent of our donor and benefactor, George Wheelwright, and find a way to fully farm the rich coastal valley of the Redwood Creek watershed as well as support active Zen training. In this challenge is also included the greater challenge facing agrarian and conservation land use today: "The question we must deal with is not whether domestic and wild are separate or can be separated," writes Wendell Berry, "it is how, in the human economy, their indissoluble and necessary connection can be properly maintained." And Beginner's Mind Temple in San Francisco asks us how to care for this active city meditation center most ecologically while maintaining a clear commitment to serving the neighborhood that surrounds our urban practice. Finally, all three practice centers are investigating how best to purchase sustainably and locally grown organic produce to serve in our Zen Center kitchens.

We are engaged with the challenges presented by our practice as it is rooted in place, related to all that is, and responsible for turning toward the world with a mind that welcomes the difficulties, gifts, and environmental challenges of our times.

PHOTO BY LEE LIPP

Spirit Rock's Diversity Council has been meeting with representatives of San Francisco Zen Center's Diversity and Multiculturalism Committee in a continuing collaborative effort to diversify our sanghas.

Zen Center's Financial Picture: An Update

Jordan Thorn, Treasurer

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER'S MOST RECENT FISCAL YEAR was an awkward and difficult one. Expenses exceeded income, by about $130,000. (See details on next two pages.) The fiscal year for Zen Center runs May through April, and last Spring, while preparing the budget for the next (current) fiscal year, the fact of our approaching loss for the fiscal year May 2002–April 2003 became clearly evident.

This loss in our annual budget financial report was widely understood by the Board and staff of Zen Center as unacceptable, deeply problematic, and not to be repeated.

In response to the negative financial statement for the year just passed, a wide-ranging examination of our operating and staff assumptions was undertaken at the local practice center level, and at the Board of Directors level. Expenses for the next fiscal year were cut, income projections examined for accuracy, and staffing was restrained as much as possible.

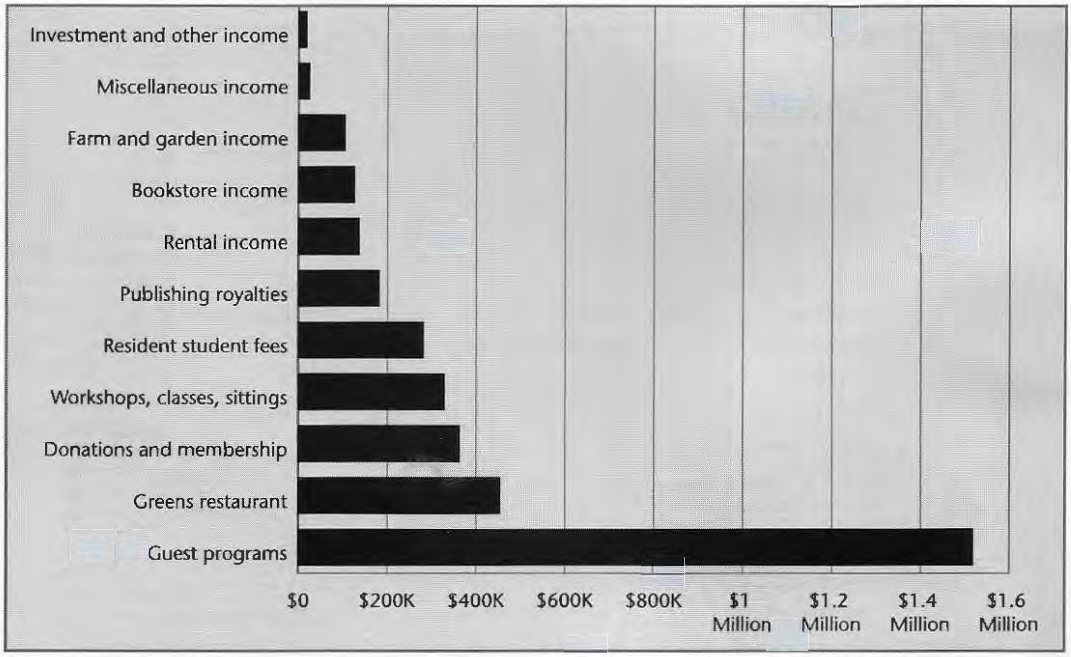
Through the efforts of the Finance Committee, Officers and Directors, and most especially the hard work and support of Zen Center's staff at all three practice centers, I am pleased to report that a balanced budget for our current fiscal was brought to the Board, and approved.

Regarding this current year's budget, at about the half way point in the year things are looking better. (Income is exceeding budget, expenses are below budget, but this all is still on a thin margin.)

If anyone would like to discuss in more detail the budget, please write me at Zen Center's main office, or email me at jordan.thorn@sfzc.org. Your questions are welcomed.

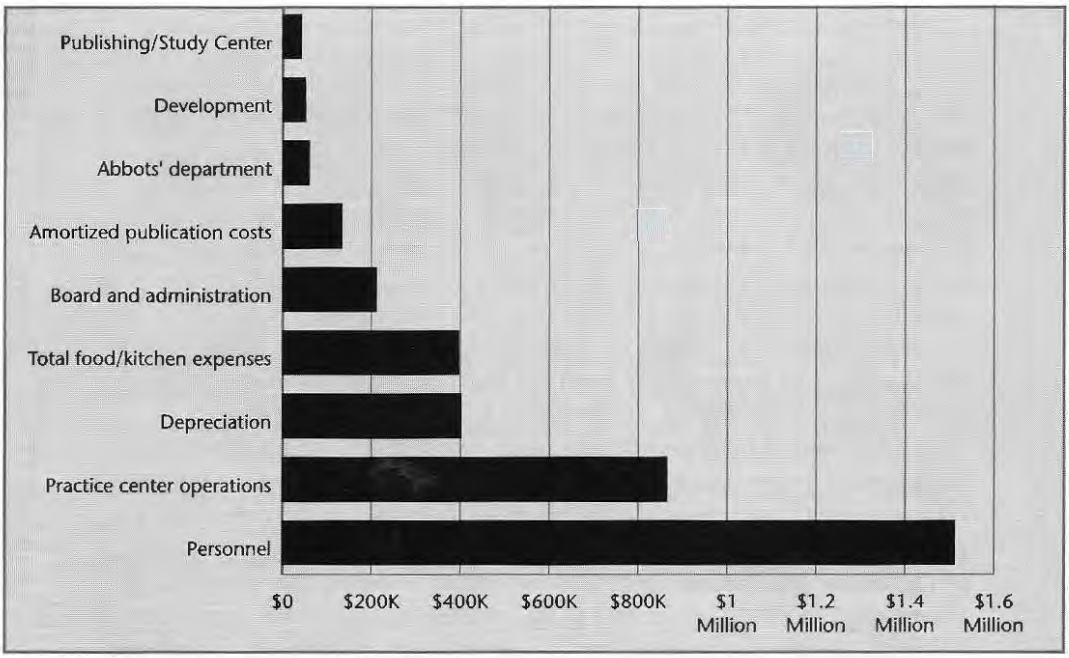
Graphs and figures showing revenues and expenses are on the next two pages.

Revenues



Guest programs	$1,518,094
Greens restaurant	453,726
Donations and membership	363,120
Workshops, classes, sittings	328,839
Resident student fees	281,537
Publishing royalties	181,459
Rental income	136,326
Bookstore income	125,618
Farm and garden income	104,155
Miscellaneous income	24,000
Investment and other income	16,834
TOTAL INCOME	$3,533,708

Expenses



Personnel	$1,511,956
Practice center operations	864,282
Depreciation	401,523
Total food/kitchen expenses	396,336
Board and administration	210,506
Amortized publication costs	132,491
Abbots' department	59,172
Development	50,839
Publishing/Study Center	41,251
TOTAL EXPENSES	$3,668,356

Become Who You Are

Abbess Jiko Linda Cutts

It is a beautiful day out, wouldn't you agree? It's the day after the summer solstice, that day of the year, in this hemisphere, where the sun stops in its southward direction, where the "sol," sun, "-stice" or stops; "armistice" is the stopping of bearing arms. The day with the most light was the 21st, and now it is going to start getting darker and darker, day by day. So the solstice holds everything; it has the dark and the light right there. It's the full light, as light as it's going to get, and the dark is right there too, and that's the way it always is with everything.

Right while I was getting my robes on for the lecture the phone rang. It was my daughter Sarah calling from the East Coast. She was about to participate in a ceremony for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a ceremony to send off a team of three people, she being one of them, who will be going to Columbia, South America to live in a very small village, a peace village. (The only way to get there is an hour-and-a-half walk, or by mule.) This is a community that has declared itself neutral in the conflict that is going on in Columbia, and has been going on for almost 50 years. The people in the village want to live in peace, and so are not helping any of the armed participants, neither the guerillas, nor the paramilitary, nor the army. And consequently all three of those groups feel that the peace community is suspect and have targeted it. So this village has asked for help, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation is sending some people down to accompany the members of the community. My daughter will be there for a year. This ceremony is to help inaugurate the continuing of this project. It is an ecumenical service and she was offering the meditation on loving-kindness, which is a kind of Zen adaptation of the Metta Sutta, or the Loving-kindness Sutra. She was asking me what is this about exactly, how is it used? And so, as I was getting my robes on, the bell was ringing and my husband was holding the phone next to my ear and I'm saying to her, "Well, you know, there is wisdom and compassion, and then in the activity you express that, through your activity, and that's loving-kindness . . . " and meanwhile I'm tucking and tying. Anyway, I think that's a good question: What is loving-kindness? What is nonviolence? What is compassion? What is an armistice?

Three of the bodhisattvas that are mentioned quite frequently are Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, the great enlightenment being of infinite compassion; Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom, who sits in the zendo; and then there is a third, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, the enlightenment being of great activity, or enlightened action, or action not based on greed,

hate, and delusion. Action not even based. Expressing wisdom and compassion combined in one activity is Samantabhadra. Great wisdom, compassion, and activity, how is this studied? How do we realize this? How do we realize our birthright of great wisdom, compassion, and activity?

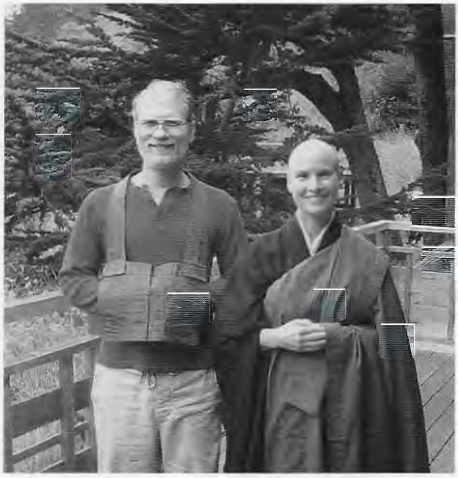
Recently I opened Senior Dharma Teacher Norman Fischer's new book, *Taking Our Places,* which is about maturing, about how to become a mature individual. I just opened to a page and read that Bantu tribesmen (tribes people?), it is said, in the night whisper in their children's ears, "Become who you are, become who you are." What a wonderful practice to whisper in our own ear, whisper in our children's ears, in our friends' ears, "Become who you are" and really wanting ourselves and all beings to become who we really are, realize who we really are. So who are we really? And as we set forth on this path of becoming who we really are, we may find that there are no signposts exactly. So which way to go? When our friends and our children and our partners and our teachers become who they are and step on their path, we may get nervous. "Well, yes, I want you to become who you are—I've been whispering that to you for years—but I didn't mean that."

One way of becoming who we are is the practice of precepts, zazen and precepts, or zazen-precepts. This afternoon we will be having a bodhisattva initiation ceremony, a ceremony in which two people will be receiving the

There are now five small children in four families living at Green Gulch Farm. The parents participate in a dharma study group for parents with Abbess Jiko Linda Cutts. Seated in front row from left: Olivia and Nancy Leonard, Lucas and Leslie Thiele, Jacob, Rick and Iva Sloan; back row from left: Daniel Leonard, Michael and Lyla Thiele, Abbess Linda Cutts, and Jeremy, Meg and Elizabeth Levie.

PHOTO BY JUDITH KEENAN

bodhisattva precepts. This is part of becoming who we are. To realize: I want these precepts to be central in my heart, central in my life, and to have my great activity be expressed through precept expression.



Gaelyn Godwin, right, received dharma transmission from Senior Dharma Teacher Reb Anderson last August at Green Gulch Farm. With her is Dave Johnson from the Houston Zen Community, where Gaelyn is now the resident teacher.

Instead of expressing opposition to precepts we now have our action and precepts in alignment and put the precepts central in our lives. In Zen Center right now we have many ceremonies in which the precepts are recited. At the monthly full moon ceremony, very new students who do not even know what they are saying, might just happen to participate and recite the precepts along with everybody. One may have practiced reciting them, or thought about them casually for awhile. However, the precept ceremony, the bodhisattva initiation ceremony, comes from the student actually asking to receive the precepts in a more formal way. The ceremony deepens that request and the response to that request, together in a public way. The initiate receives a new name, new clothing—a miniature buddha's robe that's worn around the neck, the precepts themselves, and then a lineage paper which shows that the new initiate is now in the lineage, in the family line of those who have put the precepts central in their heart, central in their life. On that lineage paper it says, "The preceptual vein" because the precepts are thought of as blood, or lifeblood, family lifeblood, precept blood. "The perceptual vein of the bodhisattva precepts is the same, single great causal condition of the Zen gate."

Receiving the precepts themselves, taking up the precepts, is the same, single, causal creating condition for liberation through the Zen gate. So precepts and Zen practice are not apart from each other. Precepts and sitting zazen are not two things. One of our ancestors, Huang Po, says, "If you think you can practice zazen and not follow the precepts, it's like trying to make rice by steaming gravel. All you get is hot stones." To think that we can practice zazen and sit—when I say sit I mean practice zazen and zazen mind brought into our everyday activities—to think zazen will be realized without precept practice is like trying to steam gravel to make rice; all you get is hot stones. There might be a lot of activity there, but you can't eat it,

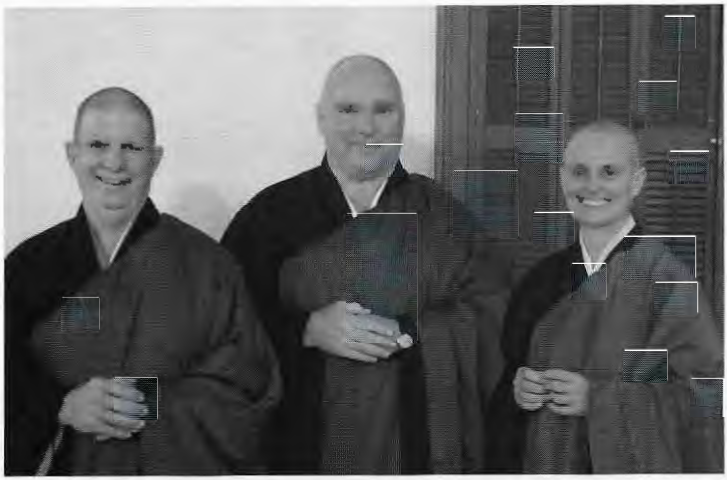


PHOTO BY ROSALIE CURTIS

This fall at Tassajara Bruce Fortin and Jordan Thorn received dharma transmission from Zoketsu Norman Fischer, and Teah Strozer received dharma transmission from Sojun Weitsman.

you know? The precepts are becoming what we are, becoming what we are in the widest sense.

I recently had some conversations with some people in formal interview, listening and talking with one another. Each of them were feeling out of alignment with their life. They had convictions, they had spiritual hunger or an eagerness to practice, but somehow their lives were going another way. They were getting caught up and involved with things that they really did not want to spend energy doing, and feeling their lives unraveling and their strong conviction and inner resolve beginning to dissipate and become confused. I don't think that is so uncommon. There is a line from one of the poems that we chant in morning service, "Turning away and touching are both wrong, for it is like a massive fire." Turning away from the fire and touching the fire are both wrong, for it—the "it" meaning the inconceivable, our inconceivable life—is like a massive fire.

Picture yourself facing a massive fire. We are drawn to the fire, we are drawn to the warmth, the energy, the activity of fire, and yet if we get too close, and touch it, we get burned or destroyed or hurt—if we grasp, if we grab. If we turn away and say, Forget about it, you can have it! we get cold and turn into cardboard people and just go through the motions of living. So how do we relate to such a thing as a massive fire?

There is a koan or story in a new collection of koans that Dogen Zenji collected. There is no commentary, just a collection of 301 koans.

This morning, thinking, what kind of koans did Dogen collect? I opened the book to a perfect koan for a precept ceremony today. So I wanted to tell this little story.

When Zen Master Somitsu was sewing . . . now part of the ceremony is to sew your own Buddha's robe. This baby robe that you receive is sewn by

hand. Each student sews their robe with help, in a way that has been passed down through the ages. And we have been lucky enough to have received this lineage of sewing. Sewing is part of the ceremony. The ceremony begins with the asking to receive the precepts. Then you are in ceremonial space for however long it takes until you receive them. However long it takes to sew. This is all part of the ceremony. So, when Zen Master Somitsu was sewing, Master Tozan (who's also one of our favorite ancestors, Tozan Ryokai—the same "to" as in "Soto Zen") asked, "What are you doing?" Master Somitsu said, "I'm sewing." Master Tozan said, "How is your sewing?" Master Somitsu said, "In sewing, almost every stitch is the same." Master Tozan said, "Even though we have been traveling together for twenty years, is this all you can say, doesn't anything else come into it?"

And Master Somitsu said, "What do you think, Acharya?" ("Acharya" means great teacher or venerable.) And Master Tozan said, "The whole earth seems to burst into flames."

When we're sewing, hand sewing, any kind of sewing, we make an effort for each stitch to be the same. When we are sewing buddha's robe, the effort is for each stitch to be just about the same. With a presence and clarity and attention to detail, stitch after stitch after breath after vow after stitch after vow. As you are stitching, one practice is to take refuge in buddha, dharma, and sangha. Stitch, stitch, breath, life, morning, evening,

Sandy Taylor and Marc Lesser received tokudo priest ordination from Senior Dharma Teacher Zoketsu Norman Fischer at City Center on November 17, 2003.

PHOTO BY ROSALIE CURTIS

PHOTO BY RENSHIN JUDY BUNCE

Diana Gerard was shuso for the Fall 2003 Practice Period at Tassajara, which was led by Senior Dharma Teacher Reb Anderson. At left she is shown on her way to bathe Manjusri, a day-off ritual. At right, in front of the shuso cabin, she is dressed for her traditional practice period job of taking care of the compost.

stitch, stitch. Each stitch is just about the same. And each stitch, each breath, each person we meet, each word, is completely fresh, is completely unmanifested until stitch, stitch, breath. You know, I don't think the two masters are arguing actually, or that one is right and the other is wrong. They are manifesting together our life. Tozan says, "The whole earth seems to burst into flames." Each moment is right in the middle of the fullness of our life, the heat, the massive fire. It may seem, with our karmic life, with our habit mind, with our usual way, with our conditioning, that the next moment is predetermined. As if it's going to go this way and there is nothing much I can do about it. That is a kind of cardboard life, a life of just going through the motions. But actually the teaching is that our life (and you can test this out for yourself) at each moment is completely, utterly, free. We have our karmic life, which we have to be extremely present with, aware of, and include. We cannot leap over our karmic life as if it is not going to matter. Karmic life is present in each moment as well, but it doesn't completely determine our next action. It doesn't say, you must do that. No one can make you think in a certain way. Karma is action that is volitional action of body, speech, and mind. So each stitch is almost the same and the earth bursts into flames with each moment. This is precept ceremony. This is receiving the precepts, understanding how to help our-

Ed Sattizahn, center with fan, was shuso for the Fall 2003 Practice Period at Green Gulch Farm, which was led by Abbess Jiko Linda Cutts. With him, from left, are Abbot Paul Haller, Lew Richmond and Marc Lesser.

selves actually realize that each stitch is almost the same and at each moment the earth bursts into flames.

So if we are living in such a way that our own fire does not have enough oxygen, we begin to feel like we are not living fully, like we are not becoming who we are at each moment, like we are turning away somehow, covered up in some way. Staying in the right relationship with fire takes skill.

There is a poem about this from David Whyte that I want to read.

David Whyte is a poet, and a practitioner, and he also has done a lot of hiking, kayaking, and mountaineering. This is a poem that he wrote after being in the ocean in a kayak when a storm came up. He was miles from shore, riding these huge waves by himself, and he was very frightened.

He was fighting this storm for hours in a kayak, far from land, terribly frightened, caught on those huge shoulders of water lifting him up. And right in the middle of that he discovered within himself some kind of spark, or fire, some resource he didn't know he had that he was able to access.

And he became part of—he was storm. He was kayak in the storm and he became alive right in the middle of that situation. Here is part a poem he wrote called "Out on the Ocean."

the blades flash
lifting veils of spray as the bow rears
terrified then falls

with five miles to go
of open ocean
the eyes pierce the horizon

the kayak pulls round
like a pony held by unseen reins
shying out of the ocean

and the spark behind fear
recognized as life
leaps into flame

always this energy smolders inside
when it remains unlit
the body fills with dense smoke.

When we are not truly living our life, it is not that there is no spark of vitality and flame. It is not that there is no life, but that it is not getting oxygen. It is covered and not being given the oxygen it needs. What is covering it are often our fears. "Covering" in Sanskrit is *avarana,* our *karma avarana,* the covering of karmic activity based on ignorance: actions based on clinging to self, self-concern. This is karmic activity, karma avarana, the covering of karma. What fuels that kind of activity? The afflictions or the *klesa avarana,* the next covering.

The actions have afflictive emotions that are present and are conditioning them. Those klesa avarana, the afflictive emotions are things like greed, hate, and delusion, pride, jealousy, resentment, doubt, covetousness, aggression, all that fuel. Lots of energy and fire. Then, even beneath klesa avarana are the predispositions, the *jneya avarana,* or the thought coverings, that are often unconscious, that we cannot even point out. To uncover these we need compassion, the practices of compassion. So part of working with karma avarana, klesa avarana, and jneya avarana are precepts, wisdom and concentration or *sila, prajna,* and *samadhi.* Precepts, or ethical practice, meet karmic life completely. The precepts point to the ways that our karmic life creates suffering. Putting the practice of the precepts central in our heart, the practice of not killing, not harboring ill will, not being possessive, not lying, not slandering, and so forth, is a very, very conscious way to take up our smoldering life, a body filled with dense smoke, and fan this flame that is always there into a steady, burning light.

When things get hot, when we get too close to the fire, please remember to ask for help. Bring this fiery, burned, suffering self, bring it forth to your good friends and teachers and ask for help. You will be helped. In fact you are being helped and supported to practice with your life, to become who you are. [Whispered] Become who you are.

Thank you very much.

BUTCH BALUYUT, a resident practitioner at City Center and Tassajara for a number of years, died in September 2003. He took many wonderful photographs, including the ones shown here, and generously let us use them in our publications for many years. His specialty was portraits and he published a book of portraits, *Baluyut.* Near the end of his life he received tokudo priest ordination from Sojun Mel Weitsman and spent his last days at Berkeley Zen Center being cared for by his family. We will miss him.

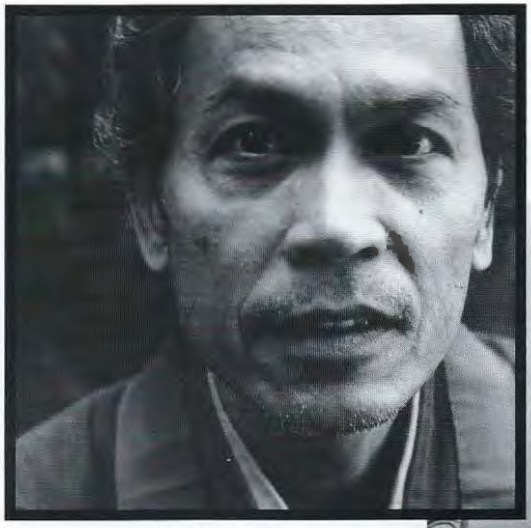
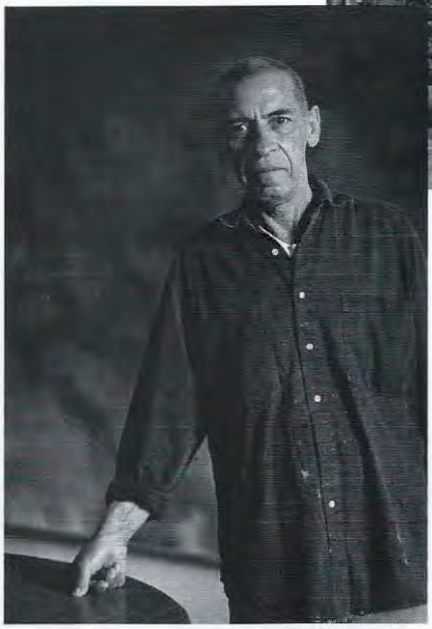


PHOTO BY RENSHIN JUDY BUNCE

Butch Baluyut

Jerry Fuller, at Green Gulch, not long before his death



Idilio Ceniceros

Perennial rooftop smoker Hal Papps (now deceased) taking a break at City Center

John King leading a meditation group for ex-prisoners at City Center

Anna Mallo, Lucero Dorado, and Jamie Meyerhoff

Tony Patchell and Darlene Cohen

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For information about Beginner's Mind Temple or Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, please contact Zen Center at 415-863-3136, 300 Page Street, San Francisco CA 94102. You may contact Green Gulch Farm at 415-383-3134, 1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito CA 94965.

Information about Zen Center programs at all three centers is available at our website: **www.sfzc.org**.

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