



# Wind Bell

Publication of San Francisco Zen Center Vol. 38, No. 2 Summer / Fall 2004

# Wind Bell

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ROSALIE CURTIS

*This issue of Wind Bell is dedicated to Suzuki Roshi's 100th Birthday, which was celebrated with a weekend-long series of events May 21–23, 2004.*

**COVER PHOTO**—Suzuki Roshi, with his family at the Haneda Airport in Japan, leaving for San Francisco. Left to right: Suzuki Roshi's daughter Yasuko Oishi, her husband Iwao Oishi, Suzuki Roshi's sons Otohiko and Hoitsu, Suzuki Roshi, his wife Mitsuo Suzuki, and Mitsuo's daughter Harumi Matsuno. 5/21/59



## *Happy Birthday, Suzuki Roshi*

**O**N THE WEEKEND OF MAY 21–23, we celebrated the 100th birthday of Zen Center’s founder, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, at City Center, Green Gulch Farm and Sokoji Temple. Throughout the weekend, it became ever more apparent what a great influence this unassuming priest from a small temple in Japan had on a large number of people—even many who had never met him. One indication of this was the world map displayed in the City Center hallway with stickers indicating the existence of zendos in Suzuki Roshi’s lineage. From Rinso-in, his home temple in Japan, to San Francisco, his teaching has spread across the United States (with approximately 50 centers), to Europe, and even to South Africa. The seeds planted by a mind of not-knowing in the fertile ground of things-as-it-is have flourished in ways that could never have been imagined when Suzuki Roshi first came to this country in 1959.

The event began on Friday evening with a reception at City Center. Next door at the conference center was a display of memorabilia: calligraphy by Suzuki Roshi (including the original “Tathagata” from the cover of *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* and the yucca leaf brush used to write the character), photographs from his life and the ongoing practice at Zen Center, temple documents and ritual objects. There were also videos of him shown throughout the weekend. (The professional quality of the exhibit was the work of Mimi Manning, who curated the show with impeccable taste.)

At one point in the evening, 100 sparkling candles were lit on a very large cake, co-abbots Linda Ruth Cutts and Paul Haller made welcoming statements, and we all sang "Happy Birthday."

The next morning we gathered, as we do every Saturday at 6:30, for zazen and service, celebrating our teacher's anniversary with our ongoing practice of his way. The regular Saturday morning lecture was given by Suzuki Roshi's son and dharma heir Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi. Hojo-san, as he is often called at Zen Center, has been a much loved friend and teacher to us for many years, often willing to travel from Japan to help us with ceremonies and his wise and gentle presence. His lecture is included in this issue of the *Wind Bell*.

Later that afternoon there was a formal ceremony in the Buddha Hall to commemorate Suzuki Roshi's anniversary. Abbot Paul Haller officiated, and was joined at the altar by Genko Akiba Roshi, the administrative head of the Soto School in North America, Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi and a number of Suzuki Roshi's early students, among whom were: Sojun Weitsman (Berekeley Zen Center and former abbot of SFZC), Jakusho Kwong (Sonoma Mountain Zen Center), Katherine Thanas (Santa Cruz Zen Center), Senior Dharma Teacher Blanche Hartman, Paul Discoe, Jane and Peter Schneider, Edward Brown and Phillip Wilson. The formal offerings were accompanied by cymbals and statements of gratitude from Zen Center's first generation.

Saturday evening many of us drove to Green Gulch Farm for Skit Night. Skit Nights are a long-standing tradition at Zen Center, often marking the middle of a practice period or monastic intensive. They give us a chance to show off our talents (or good intentions) and to poke gentle fun at ourselves, lest we take ourselves too seriously.

On Sunday morning, at Green Gulch, in lieu of the regular public lecture, some of Suzuki Roshi's original students spoke of their lives with him. And on Sunday afternoon a pilgrimage of sorts was made to Sokoji Temple in Japantown. It was the Sokoji congregation to which Suzuki Roshi originally came to minister, before he met the odd collection of beats and hippies who eventually settled down to become Zen Center. The current temple is a few blocks away from the original, which, after years of disuse, has been remodeled as a residence for seniors. We were welcomed by the Sokoji congregation (a number of whom had known Suzuki Roshi) with a ceremony and reception and a celebration of our common roots.

The final event of the weekend was a meeting of representatives of sanghas in Suzuki Roshi's lineage. Eighteen groups were represented, including ones from Illinois, New York, Washington and British Columbia, as well as several from the Bay Area, and a couple of sub-groups within San Francisco Zen Center (the People of Color group and the Meditation in Recovery group). Michael Wenger, vice president in charge of dharma group

support, chaired the informal discussion, emphasizing SFZC's desire to be of service, especially to newer groups and those without a resident teacher. Some of the topics addressed were: greater access to information about individual groups (through the electronic media and other forms of communication); fundraising; the importance of making dharma available without proselytizing; facilitating entrance to practice for a larger population; and ways to continue communication and assistance between groups. A tentative decision was made to continue meeting on an annual or bi-annual schedule. Michael's office will be taking responsibility for following through with this.

It was a weekend which gave a concrete example of the interdependency of all phenomena. Those who prepared the food, who cleaned the rooms for the many guests, who created the invitations and cards and memorial book, those who came from far away to attest to the influence of one man's practice on their lives—all of these many people and those many more who could not be with us, helped to create an event and celebration much greater than the sum of the parts. Things-as-it-is, in Suzuki Roshi's phrase, is the work innumerable labors. And the fruit of these labors is gratitude—for our founder, for our practice and for each other. ~

ROSALIE CURTIS



*The weekend-long celebration included a well-curated exhibit of memorabilia of Zen Center's life with Suzuki Roshi.*



*Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi gave the Saturday morning lecture and helped with the special birthday ceremony for his father.*

## *My Parents*

*Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi  
City Center  
May 22, 2004*

### *GOOD MORNING.*

Thank you for inviting me. Thank you very much for this ceremony.

It's very unusual in Japan, a hundred years birthday for a dead person. We do that for a very, very high priest, Dogen-zenji or Kaizan-zenji, a big, BIG teacher. The first time I heard about this ceremony—"Is it true?" Suzuki Shunryu is a very lucky man.

Suzuki Shunryu was born close to Tokyo, on Mount Fuji, midway up the mountain. His aunt said, "He was always a big talker." She said he woke up one morning and said, "When I grow up I will make a train from here to a zoo—with an elephant and a lion and a big park." This boy was unusual—always big talking. And he loved flowers and trees, a little bit different from other children. He's short and not so strong.

And he was very poor. But he didn't mind. He was born in a mountain village, and moved to Shizuoka temple. His master was a very strict teacher— not so much food or clothes, very poor. Little by little he grew up, but he was still poor. I think he was always poor.

When I was at university, he was here in San Francisco. But he didn't send me money. This was a big trouble for me. But he didn't mind. My father's friend gave me money and my grandmother gave me money. My uncle died in the second war, and the government sent money to my grandmother. This money she gave to me. Suzuki Shunryu didn't give me any money. Because of that, I say, "Thank you, my Uncle. Thank you, Grandmother."

Poor is a very wonderful thing. I think if he was rich, maybe he wouldn't have come here. Poor is a wonderful thing. If you're my father's disciples, if everybody is rich, they will not continue Zen practice. Dogenzenji says in Buddha's way one must study poverty. If you have many things, maybe you will lose the way. Thank you, Suzuki Shunryu. I am poor.

My father, Suzuki Shunryu, had many sides, many faces. Not just a wonderful face. Before he came to this country, he asked me "I want to go to America. Are you ok?" I said, "If you are ok, I am ok." And he came.

I had two sisters and one brother; one sister was in the hospital. My younger brother was maybe fifteen, a very difficult age. And the older of my two sisters was younger than me. I was a university student when he came.

I think everybody said he was unusual—one face was very cool, no compassion. The other side was very warm, very soft and warm. Sometimes he hit my back. Sometimes he was very strict. For other people, there was the soft, warm, quiet face, but inside he was very strict and hard. I didn't like. One day he threw me into our pond. My mother said, "What are you doing? This is your child." A quiet, soft, warm, tender face, but the other side of compassion was very strict. Short temper. Loud voice. [Yells.]

He had many faces. He left his family, his children, in Japan and came here. I think he thought about us, but he came anyway. Kichizawa-roshi was my father's life teacher, a very famous roshi in Japan. He was Nishiari Bokusan's disciple. When he met Bokusan-roshi he was a middle school teacher. He stopped teaching and became a monk and disciple of Nishiari Bokusan. He had a child and wife. After he became a monk, he left them because he wanted to practice the Buddha Way. Nobody thinks about the children. Nobody thinks about the family. Maybe always there is a family or children. To practice that way is very powerful. I think a big monk, a big priest, a roshi, maybe can cut off and take everything and go.

Now I thank you, Suzuki Shunryu, because I come here. You invite me. Thank you for Suzuki Shunryu. Thank you.

Did you see the picture and exhibit next door? I saw my mother's picture. My mother was very warm and she had a big heart. She was always thinking of me. When I was twelve years old, my mother was killed by someone. She was 42 years old. She said I am going. I can hear her voice,

her last voice, anytime. Maybe at the time my mother tried to say something to her children, but it was just "Mmmm. Mmmm."

Two years ago I had asthma. I couldn't breathe. Nobody was in the house, just me. I could not breathe and could not see. I thought I saw something coming. I thought, I think it's right now! "Help me! Somebody help me." Then somebody said, "Hang on." That voice was my mother's voice, and I "hung on." I came back here, to this world. My mother watched. For fifty years she watched me. Big surprise. My mother was like that.

I offered incense to Buddha and my mother. This was a true mind offering for my mother. This was the first time that I offered incense like that. As a monk, a priest, many times I offered incense to other people, in other houses, chanting and taking money. "Thank you very much." This was a true incense offering. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Maybe my mother is watching me now. I think, "Oh!" Sometimes I do a bad thing. Bad monk, bad person. She watches me always. "I'm sorry. I'm a bad boy." My mother's mind is like that.

Thank you. ~



EDNSHIN JUDY BUNCE

*Jakusho Bill Kwong greeting Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi in the City Center courtyard. In the background are Paul Discoe and Peter Schneider.*



# *His Students Remember Suzuki Roshi*

*Green Gulch Farm*

*May 23, 2004*

**Mel Weitsman:**

Today in honor of the 100th anniversary of Suzuki Roshi's birth, a number of his ordained disciples are going to say something about Suzuki Roshi. Suzuki Roshi had many students who felt that they were his disciples. I'm going to start with Ed Brown.

**Edward Brown:**

Good morning. As Mel mentioned, I'm Ed Brown. I've decided to be Edward. I'm actually becoming more myself. I'm going Ed-ward, always Ed-ward. In some ways I think this started when I met Suzuki Roshi. The first time I went to meditation at Zen Center I didn't know how to sit, and I sat there anyway, and the time passed by. The next thing you know it's forty years later. You think, like, it's hard to sit there for forty minutes when your knees hurt. Next lifetime. Anyway, at the end of the period we used to go out of the zendo through to Suzuki Roshi's office, and each one of us would bow to him. I was twenty, and I was worried about whether or not he would like me, what he would think of me. It became my turn to bow, and I looked at him, he looked at me, and we bowed. There wasn't a clue whether or not he liked me. I felt very reassured. Later I read in Dogen, "supreme unsurpassed enlightenment is like meeting somebody for the first time and not thinking about whether you like them or not." Sometimes when you don't notice somebody liking or disliking you there's a kind of impassiveness, like they're not there. But he seemed completely present. And my presence in front of him was not a problem in the slightest, one way or another. Which is quite a relief. Because most of us worry, are like-able or not?

So one thing led to another, and I continued to sit. I applied to be a conscientious objector. The FBI investigates you when you're becoming a conscientious objector. Many years later I got the file, and by golly, they interviewed all the people that I had done gardening for in high school. I don't know how they found these people. They talked to Suzuki Roshi, and he said that Ed Brown is a very sincere student, as demonstrated by his coming to early morning meditation at 5:30 a.m. day after day after day. So I thought, well, that's nice; he actually knew I was there. Trust or relationship develops over years. That was kind of a nice start, and over the years many things happened.

At one point when I was living at Page Street he said, I noticed you're

sitting in the back of the meditation hall, and after about thirty minutes you fall asleep, you start nodding. And he said, I'd like you to sit right in front of me, so when you fall asleep I'll get up and hit you. I felt extremely honored that he cared that much about my practice and I thought, oh, I don't want to disturb his meditation. But sure enough I would be sitting there, right in front of him, and I would start to nod after about 25 or 30 minutes, and he would get up and hit me. And I would wake up, momentarily.

On the other hand, at Tassajara I had a lot of problems sitting still. I shook a lot, involuntary movements. Then they used to say, cut that out, you're just trying to get attention, aren't you. I didn't know what Suzuki Roshi made of it. Years later he told me, if I had known you were going to do that for so long, I would have stopped you right away. I don't know what he had in mind. Sometimes he used to come, and I would be shaking, and he would just put his hands on my shoulders and I would get very calm and still, and then he would go away. And I asked him, what are you doing when you do that. He said, nothing, I'm not doing anything, I'm just meditating with you. That was also very nice. Again I felt, you know, honored, so to speak, or very grateful for someone to be there with me.

I'm also remembering one morning when he started talking during meditation. He said, you think that I'm the teacher and you're the student. That's a mistake. You think that you don't know anything and that I have things to tell you. You're wrong. Sometimes the teacher is the student, sometimes the student is the teacher, sometimes the teacher bows to the student, sometimes the student bows to the teacher. And he went on like this for a few minutes, and then he leaped up from the seat with his little stick and went over to the person nearest him along the wall and he said, who is the teacher—bam, bam—and then the next person, who is the student—bam bam—who is the teacher—bam bam—and after about five people he ran out of breath. So he stopped saying who is the teacher, who is the student, and continued hitting about 70 people—bam bam—twice on the right shoulder for each person. He got back to his seat a little bit out of breath, and sat down. I was kind of dismayed 'cause I thought maybe he could teach me something. But it turns out, of course, that this was part of the power of his teaching, that he gave that back to us. Our looking for a teacher he gave back so we could find the teacher in ourselves, in our experience; as he said, whatever happens study closely and see what you can find out. Thank you.

**Lew Richmond:**

Hello, I'm Lew Richmond. I'm honored to follow my dharma brother Ed. It's my opinion that Ed talks about Suzuki Roshi better than anybody, and he hasn't disappointed me today. Actually what I thought of talking

about today was to tell you about Suzuki Roshi's favorite movie. But before I do that, I feel like maybe I should say something about meeting Suzuki Roshi, or how it was for me—you probably want to know that.

I began sitting with Mel at the Berkeley zendo. I kind of thought Mel was the teacher there, and then one day I was doing zazen, facing the wall, and I heard somebody come in, robes rustling, and that person sat down, really close to me. And I heard the person breathing through the whole period. When I turned around it was Suzuki Roshi. That was the first time I'd ever met him. In Buddhism there are so many things to study, so many things to learn, so many things to talk about—but the actual way to learn Zen is like that. I continue to learn more from listening to Suzuki Roshi breathe than almost anything.

He's been gone for over 30 years, and you think, well, he's dead. But that's not exactly true. So his favorite movie, which some of you may have seen, is called *Ikiru*. It's a great Kurosawa movie made in 1952. Have any of you ever seen it? Tugetsu Shimura played the lead. He was also the head samurai in *Seven Samurai*. Shimura's a petty bureaucrat in a town in Japan. What he does is, people bring him pieces of paper and he takes out a seal



JULIE BURTONS

*Baby Kaya Pokorny, held by her mother Sarah Emerson, is being recognized as the reincarnation of Suzuki Roshi during the celebratory Skit Night at Green Gulch Farm. Charlie Pokorny played a monk searching for the special child.*

and stamps them and sends the paper on. That's his job. He's been doing that for a long time. He's a widower and his son is not with him any more, so he's quite lonely. Then he finds out that he's going to die of stomach cancer. At first he's very sad, and you see him sobbing under his blanket, looking at a picture of his wife. Then he tries to make contact with his son and that doesn't quite work out. He takes some money out of the bank and goes to the pleasure quarter and tries to enjoy himself and drink and everything, but that doesn't work. It's a Kurosawa movie, so things don't happen in a linear way. Basically, about halfway through the movie, the narrator says that he dies. The next thing is you see his wake, his funeral, everybody's around talking.

The rest of the movie is flashbacks and you find out what actually happened. What actually happened is that this group of women kept coming into the town hall to get a park for their children, and nobody pays any attention to them. This man doesn't pay any attention to them. At some point he just picks up the piece of paper that's their petition and he just decides he's going to make them a park. So he starts to do it. He goes through all the indignities and the difficulties of trying to get through the petty bureaucracy. He has a mission, and he's very clear because he knows he's dying, so he's fearless. And there's one wonderful moment where some local gangsters come—they have some interest in not having the park—and they try to intimidate him. They threaten him, and he just looks at them, and they just go away. This look is one of the most memorable moments in that picture. There's nothing that they can do against the power of that look. And then somehow the park gets built. There's one beautiful scene where he's in the park, and it's snowing, and he's by himself. He's on a swing, and he's swinging. And then he dies in the cold. If it was a western movie that would be the great ending. This man overcomes obstacles, he knows he's dying, he makes this thing. But this is a Japanese movie with a real Buddhist sensibility.

So what happens next is really what I want to talk about. Everybody gets together, all his co-workers, for a wake. They start to drink and they start to talk about him. Various things come up. Everybody tries to take credit for the park—he couldn't possibly have built the park by himself. Somebody else did it. Various things come up, and pretty soon you realize that what happened starts to get vague. The memories of people—as they drink more, as they talk more, as their small egoistic minds come up—it gets all confused. Toward the end there's only one man who stands up and says, well he did a great thing, he really built this park. Everybody just pushes him aside and laughs at him. The last scene shows the park with the kids in it and how wonderful that is.

I know lots of us are going to talk about our experiences with Suzuki Roshi. I'll take a couple of questions.

Q: Why was this his favorite movie?

A: I don't think I want to explain that. I just think there's something very authentic about practice in that movie. First of all, I don't think a young man can understand this movie. I think you have to be older. I understand Suzuki Roshi a whole different way now that I'm about the age that he was when he started teaching in America. I try in my own small way to pass on and teach what he taught me.

RENSHIN, JUDY BUNCE



*Co-Abbot Paul Haller, foreground, officiated at the birthday ceremony. Others, from left, are John Grimes, Peter Schneider, Katherine Thanas, Senior Dharma Teacher Blanche Hartman, who was ino for the occasion, and Phillip Wilson.*

I think that movie describes something about him that I can't quite explain, so I think I'll leave it at that, except to say that if you think that it's sad, that the funeral happens and everybody starts to distort what happened, and the truth gets very vague, if you think that's a bad thing, that's not quite right. It's a beautiful thing. And I think that Suzuki Roshi knew that, and knew something about us that we didn't quite know ourselves at the time. At Sokoji, the first temple he had, they showed Japanese movies; so I have a feeling he probably saw it in the temple. I never talked to him about it. I heard somebody say that when he saw the movie he cried. And I get a little choked up talking about it, 'cause I connected the movie to him, and I miss him. I think that he's not really gone for me, or for any of us. It's a curious quality of practice that it doesn't really seem to be embodied in a particular personality. It flows from one thing to another. It doesn't even really depend on people getting the story exactly right. Thank you.

### Jane Schneider:

My name is Jane Schneider. My husband Peter and I live in Los Angeles. We recently came up to Tassajara for a workshop of cleaning the stream as a way of giving back to Tassajara. When we got there, everyone said the stream was really clean and it didn't need all the work. So we cut blackberry brambles by the side of the stream for two days.



The first practice period at Tassajara, 1967

*Af us that in the fall*

Tassajara is a really strict place and yet the thing that always moves me about our practice is that there is so much laughter, and at the same time there's always a stream of seriousness underneath. There's very strict practice, and yet there's a light softness about everybody that comes down there.

When I first met Suzuki Roshi, the first thing that impressed me about him was a kind of open directness and a generosity to listen and to get to the point. For me, getting into practice was really difficult, because I feel like I was in a kind of mold that was so strong that I could not act in any way that made me feel that I was part of anything.

One of the stories that I remember was in the zendo. I was jisha, and I was sitting. Suzuki Roshi was sitting on the tan, and the seat for the jisha was right below. We were eating lunch, and right in the middle of lunch he dropped his chopsticks on the floor and they bounced really loud right in front of me. I was so fervent (about sitting correctly) that it never even

occurred to me to get up and pick them up (much less go out and get a new pair). I just looked at them wondering what was I going to do. And while I was thinking about it, Kobun Chino Roshi, who was sitting on the other side, leaned over and said in a loud whisper, "Pick up the chopsticks." And Suzuki Roshi sat there without saying a word the whole time. I picked them up and gave him the chopsticks. He took them and went right back to eating. I sat down again, but I thought about that a great deal afterwards and realized that all of the practice, from the very first moment that I met him, up until even now trying to do the same thing, is trying to stay out of a set way of thinking, and letting everyone be who they are without exception.

When I first went to Tassajara I thought the practice was to make everything perfect, to make the world just right. I had to learn to drop that idea, to stop trying to make myself perfect and trying not to expect perfection from anyone else. Suzuki Roshi made that very easy, because whenever I spoke with him I could just be myself, and his generosity made me feel that if he can do it, then I can do it, too. Every time I come up here, I feel this presence of Suzuki Roshi's practice and his love and just him everywhere. So everybody's practice inspires me as much as anything. Thank you all very much.

**Peter Schneider:**

I'm Peter Schneider and one of the things I'm known for at Zen Center is being Jane's husband. I originally came to Zen Center because of one of my friends, Dick Baker. I had been somewhat unhappy and hadn't had a job, and had gone to a friend of a friend who was kind of psychic and told me to stop smoking. So I had and it had worked. All of a sudden I had will again.

Then he had said, now start doing meditation. So I had begun meditating by myself down in Menlo Park. I was the only one of Dick Baker's friends who sat, so he was always trying to get me to come do it at Sokoji. So I started hitchhiking up in late '61 or early '62 and staying in Dick's apartment on weekends. I remember maybe a dozen of us sitting around the table in the Sokoji kitchen having Saturday morning breakfast. That summer, the week before I was to leave to take a teaching job in Michigan, I came up to do my first one-week sesshin and slept by myself in the zendo. We were very loose back then. Zazen ended after dinner, leaving me on my own from six until nine, and I would walk down to treat myself to a Blum's sundae.

One person who was sitting then was Grahame Petchey, a very serious student whose father was one of those who guard the front of Buckingham Palace. Grahame was very strict with himself. He could sit all day without moving. I was next to him and next to me was Dick, whose knees were way

up in the air but who also didn't move. So I didn't dare move either. It was hard of course.

On about the fourth day, I don't know what happened but I began to cry. So I went out into the entrance, and sat there at the top of the stairs that led down to the entrance, sort of sobbing, and Suzuki Roshi came out and put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Are you okay?" I said, "Yes." That was his kind of kindness.

Suzuki Roshi could be strict, but you always felt that his strictness wasn't based upon idealism, or some idea about strictness or toughness *per se* being good for you. He often talked about having a grandmother's heart. But he said that a grandmother's kindness was only for her grandchildren, while we should have a kind mind for everyone.

I was a Zen Center officer back in the early days of Tassajara, so I went to a lot of meetings. We were always arguing about how to do things right. Suzuki Roshi later said that he used to feel really bad listening to his disciples fighting, but when he decided just to accept it, it ceased being a problem for him anymore. I think that the best way to honor Suzuki Roshi's memory is to have an accepting heart.

Finally, my most vivid impression is that it was easier to be with Suzuki Roshi than with anyone I had ever met. Being with him just felt so natural.

#### **David Chadwick:**

I collect stories about Suzuki Roshi, and oral history, and would just like to encourage people to e-mail me anything you have to say. I think that a part of the genius of Suzuki Roshi in establishing his way here was to do it in such a way that everybody should feel empowered. Suzuki Roshi just sort of indicated to us that we find our own wisdom on our own. And that he really couldn't do anything for us, other than indicate the way that his teachers had taught him and try to be a good example. Not all teachers are good examples, nor do they have to be. But he was a very good example. I feel like he left us with, and we continue to have, a loosely defined community, sort of like concentric circles. There are people who live and work at the centers, those outside who come a lot, those who come less, and it spreads out to somebody who just reads the *Wind Bell* or others who only come to lectures. People have so many different roles and histories. There are people who have some history, you know, like I was ordained by him. But, you know, you can only get so much traction out of that because Zen Center's not a devotional community.

If you look on my website I have a report of visiting a heavily devotional community a few years ago. It's so nice to be involved with a community that isn't that way because we're not thinking about him all the time. Really there's a very low level of that. I mean it took Reuven Ben Yuhmin, Robert Front, who's living in Taiwan, to come up with the idea to





*Students sitting with Suzuki Roshi at Sokoji*

have this hundredth anniversary. He started lobbying for it a while back. So people brought it all together and we had this reception on Friday night. Basically we were schmoozing, people saying hi, eating hors d'oeuvres, looking at some pictures.

But anyway I really appreciate that we all know that someone who didn't meet Suzuki Roshi is at no disadvantage. People say to me, "Oh I'm so sorry I never met him," of course. But we know that's sort of on a superficial, relative level, and in terms of actual practice we're all basically close to his teaching. We all have equal access to it. Whatever questions we have, who am I, what is reality, etc., the only place to go for an answer is to our own wisdom. I'm really grateful for having run into that teaching. To me it's very clearly a perennial mind-only teaching. It doesn't depend on anything in the space/time realm. No fetishes. We have zazen, but there's really nothing to hold onto there.

So I was thinking of some funny stories about Suzuki Roshi. But really you know, in terms of teaching, what I remember is that there was nothing there. Like he wanted me to be moving a rock with him. I'd be creating, I'd be thinking, oh I'm close to Suzuki. Sort of magical thinking and after awhile it just doesn't work. You've just got to move the rock.

I fervently believe that the essence of spiritual practice is to drop all beliefs. We have a very media-driven idea of what religion is these days—everything is as simple and graphic and material as possible. Like movies on spiritual stuff, they need a being that has spiritual power that every-



Senior Dharma Teacher Mel Weitsman, left, and Reuven Ben Yuhmin aka Robert Front, who originally suggested the 100th Birthday celebration and came from Taiwan for the occasion.

body's trying to kill each other for. To me Suzuki Roshi's really a great teacher in the mind-only tradition. You'll find in Christianity, you'll find it everywhere, where really there's no absolute belief. Like you hear on TV, this person has deep faith because they believe firmly this stuff. And to me that's just the definition of idol worship, worshipping symbols. And there's a lot of Christians who say this, too. Anyway, that's what I think.

I'll tell a funny story now that I've gotten that stuff out of the way. They asked Bob Halpern and I both to leave Tassajara for one practice period because we were causing so much trouble, rather than asking one of us to leave, and so we just caused trouble in the city.

There were riots in the Fillmore—they were about racism and poverty and disenfranchisement and all that. All Bob and I could think about was it moving up to where we were, and we were worried about Suzuki Roshi and Okusan. We ran over to Sokoji and went upstairs. Suzuki Roshi, you and Okusan have to get out of here! There's rioting going on! He said, oh really, where? I said down in the Fillmore. He said, oh. I said it's really dangerous, they're breaking stuff, and we've got to get you and Okusan out of here, off to safety. He said, oh no, I think I'll go take a walk up to the Fillmore. No, please don't do that. He said, no, I have no trouble up there. Whenever I walk there, people are so much taller than me that they like to put their finger on my head. So finally we said, okay, if we leave will you promise not to walk up to the Fillmore? I remember that.

I think the essence of the relationship between master and disciple traditionally in Zen is playing with the absolute and the relative. But in terms of religious discussion we get in so much trouble because somebody will say something from the absolute side, like everything is empty, and then somebody else will interpret it on the relative side. In a lot of the old Zen stories, you could see they're playing back and forth; and when the disciple shows he can bounce back and forth and knows the difference, which is a hard thing to fake, then you know they get passed on the mantle of the teacher.

Phot's one of my pet peeves and I said it!  
 and I!?! - and me!

In the new book that Edward so brilliantly edited, *Not Always So*, there's a lecture where Suzuki Roshi talks about the moon landing. I read it recently. He said, oh this is not such a big deal. He said, I'm not interested in anyone who is interested in going to the moon. Now I actually am not interested in going to the moon. I never was. I've always felt we do that best by staying right where we are. I was studying Japanese intensively in Monterey at the time. And there was this very interesting, eccentric scientist who lived next door to me. He had bought a scale model of the moon landing rocket that came apart and you could see all the different stages. So I went back to Sokoji the next week and after the lecture I asked Suzuki Roshi if I could talk to him. He said yes. I said I wanted to show him something. He said, what? I said, a scale model of the rocket that took the astronauts to the moon. And he was absolutely fascinated with it. I showed him the different stages, and how they came apart and we played with it for a while. I was playing with him in a way and joking with him in a way, but I was also showing him that I knew what he said wasn't absolute. You should be able to play with your teacher, to go from absolute to relative and back. Not interested in going to the moon is emptiness and being interested in going to the moon is form. Sometimes I'd try to talk to him and he'd fall asleep, but on that day I kept his attention a little longer than usual. Anyway, that's a koan to ponder for today. Thank you very much.

**Mel Weitsman:**

Thank you David. The history of Zen Center is sort of like the history of the creation of the world. First there's the big bang. And everybody says oh, here's this thing. And then there's the chaotic period giving way to a more settled period. All the disciples here come from the big bang or the chaotic period. And David is our representative. You can't believe what Tassajara was like at that time. Everyone stood out as a character. Then at a certain point things became settled and more structured, and that's what we're experiencing today. That was a very creative time. Hearing everybody talk, it reminded me of so many things.

Ed was talking about how at our first practice place, Sokoji, we would bow to Suzuki Roshi when we left after zazen. We'd stand in line, and when our turn came and we bowed to him, we couldn't tell what he was thinking. Everybody would wonder, what is he thinking? Sometimes he would look at you and sometimes he would look over your shoulder. And you might think, maybe he doesn't like me. So one time I asked him, I thought I would test him out, I said, do you think I should keep practicing? And he said, oh, isn't this practice difficult enough for you? That became a turning point for me.

When I was in Japan last year it was the thirty-third anniversary ceremony of Suzuki Roshi passing away. And there was a dinner and afterwards

I gave a little talk about Suzuki Roshi. It's interesting that in Japan people around the temple, the *danka*, are not quite sure what Suzuki Roshi did. It's a kind of mystery to them. Why do all these Americans come to this temple? So I tried to explain it a little bit. I said that when Suzuki Roshi came to America, he really didn't do anything. He had nothing in mind. I've heard it said that when Suzuki Roshi was born 100 years ago, Zen Center was born. Which is true, I believe. And that Suzuki Roshi when he was young had wanted to come to America to introduce people to Buddhism, which I also think was true.

But the other side is that he was invited by the Japanese congregation, and it was an opportunity for him. He said that when he came to San Francisco he didn't study any map of San Francisco, he didn't read any books about San Francisco, He came without any idea about San Francisco in his mind. He just kept his mind open to whatever he would meet wherever he was. This is a kind of example of the essence of Suzuki Roshi's teaching and his practice. So when he came he didn't do anything, he just sat zazen, and somehow people found out that he was doing zazen, not in the zendo, but in the pews of an old synagogue, and coincidentally attracted many Jewish practitioners, not because of the synagogue, but because Suzuki Roshi had the qualities of an accomplished Jewish teacher. A Catholic priest who sat at Page Street in the sixties said that during sesshin he perceived Suzuki Roshi to have a classic Jewish face, and try as he might, he couldn't shake that perception.

For a number of years I had been seeking out a practice, and I was very attracted to Hasidic Jewish practice, but I couldn't find any teacher. But in 1964 when I met Suzuki Roshi, he was exactly that person for me. He had all the characteristics of a Hasidic Jewish master. So according to my projection, he became my rabbi. And it was in a synagogue. I truly believe that things work in strange ways. But Suzuki Roshi didn't do anything; he simply was himself. People came, and he let them sit zazen with him, and he encouraged those who came to settle on themselves in stillness.

He watched Zen Center grow, and thought that this will last or survive, but he didn't direct—he didn't say that he was creating Zen Center, or introducing something special to us. He was like the root, the kernel, the seed, and from this seed somehow he embodied the way his mantra of "nothing special" made us aware of the truly special quality of everything we need. He encouraged us to treat everyone and every thing with respect. He always addressed our buddha nature.

I think we just went there to watch him tie his shoes—even though he never did tie his shoes, he always wore sandals. But that kind of quality of just planting himself, and the shoots that grew up around him from that seed, expressed what was really inside of him.

There was no Green Gulch in Suzuki Roshi's time. Green Gulch was the

creation of the second abbot, Richard Baker. Shortly after Suzuki Roshi died, Richard called the Board to a meeting, and he served strawberry shortcake, delicious strawberry shortcake, and he said, "I have this idea—there's a place in Marin that's been offered and I'd like to have it." Zen Center had no money or anything like that. Then he served us another helping of strawberry shortcake, and the Board couldn't resist. They said, okay, let's go for it; and here we are. But Suzuki Roshi did have a few desires. One was to create a place, a farm, for families. My understanding was he wanted to create a place where families could farm and practice and sit and so forth, a kind ideal community. He had a feeling for families, not just single people.

He also wanted to create a place together with Chogyam Trungpa in Vermont, the Tail of the Tiger, for rehabilitating people with mental illness or mental problems. That didn't happen [It happened but not with ZC]. The germ of Green Gulch, I believe, was originally Suzuki Roshi's idea and Richard expanded on it.

Suzuki Roshi's main characteristic and, I believe, the essence of his teaching, was 'no ego.' Whenever your ego arose, he would always point it out. And his son Hoitsu carries on that tradition very well. Whenever we're around him, he always points out our ego when it comes up. There is some pain in that. Suzuki Roshi was very careful to deliver a little punch whenever our ego would stick up. It didn't always hold, but we made an effort and

RENSHIN JUDY BUNICE



*This picture was taken after the ceremony at City Center celebrating the 100th anniversary of Suzuki Roshi's birth. Left to right: Jane Schneider, Phillip Wilson, Paul Discoe, Bill Kwong, Genko Akiba Roshi, Katherine Thanas, Blanche Hartman, Paul Haller, Peter Schneider, Mel Weitsman, Edward Brown, and Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi.*

kept returning to that simple practice of letting go and not being led by self-centeredness. Suzuki Roshi was a wonderful example of true humility, lack of pretension and simply dwelling in big mind. His excellent example is my constant reference point and continues to guide me in my imperfect practice to this day. ~



*San Francisco Zen Center sold 273 Page Street to our offshoot organization, Zen Hospice Project, on July 29th, 2004. Owning the building which they have used for so long will allow Hospice to better accommodate its residents' needs. We wish them well.*

# *Suzuki Roshi's Heritage*

*A Message from Zentatsu Richard Baker*

**SUZUKI ROSHI BROUGHT US SITTING-PRACTICE**, which he visibly, physically practiced—sometimes, even when he had specifically been asked to speak about practice, instead he just sat: visibly and physically. And for all of us who practiced with him, he presented practice first of all and thoroughly, and spoke, really, only when we had practiced enough to sit into his teaching.

Equally important, he also brought the soil of practice, the material stream of Buddhism in which practice often most fully roots and flourishes. It is in this stream of traditional forms that we can find our seat and, somewhat surprisingly, it is where our own personal practice often most fully finds its true form. Crucially, it is also in this material stream that the fundamental views of Buddhism are tangibly expressed and most clearly distinguishable from the taken-for-granted worldviews of our inborn and ingrown culture.

The relics, the enshrined, cremated bits of bones, of the Buddha represent, of course, impermanence; yet they also represent the physical presence of the Dharma—and the Buddha—and the continued presence of the teaching as it is embedded in the living presence of things. This continued presence of the Buddha and the Buddhadharmas as a material stream is articulated in many ways: in stupas, pagodas, bound copies of a sutra—as Suzuki Roshi kept a copy of the Prajnaparamita Sutra on the altar—and also in zafus, robes, teaching staffs, ways of lecturing, ceremonies, bows, face-to-face teaching and practice, eating bowls, dokusan, crossed legs, the four noble postures—walking, standing, sitting, reclining, statues of the Buddha, incense offerings, the form and practice of sesshin and ango and thus forth.

This is not a mental stream, but the material stream of the world that we are born into, the living presence of the world, in and as us. In this stream of being and nonbeing, Buddhas appear and the Sangha is formed. In this stream, the mind and body of this world becomes the authentic manifestation of the Buddha and Buddha Ancestors.

This writing and your standing or sitting, listening or reading, are all this relic stream continuing what Suzuki Roshi continued. Thus, especially, Tassajara, San Francisco, Green Gulch, and other centers continue this material stream that is the living presence of Suzuki Roshi. I know Suzuki Roshi would be pleased and content to know how you are continuing his practice and teaching. ∞

# Why I Came to America

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi  
September 16, 1969 San Francisco

**T**ODAY I will talk about my personal history—why I came to America, why I became a priest.

My father was a priest, and his temple was a very poor temple. We had a very difficult time. Even though my father wanted to give me some better clothing, he didn't have much money.

I remember my father made candles. When I came to America, I made candles with the wax of left-over candles. No one makes candles to sell; but he made a lot of candles and he sold them—not near my temple, but he went to Oiso City, maybe four or five miles from my temple. I can imagine how poor we were by that story.

Even children wear *hakama*. Do you know *hakama*?<sup>1</sup> When we have a celebration, we would wear *hakama*. But I didn't have any *hakama*, so I attended the ceremony at my school without *hakama*. I didn't feel so good, because I had no *hakama* to wear; but somehow he bought a *hakama* and gave it to me to wear for the ceremony. When I wore that *hakama* as my friend did, my father said: "That is not the correct way to wear it. You should wear it like this, and you should tie the *hakama* this way." No one tied the *hakama* in that way. It was too formal.

Even though our temple was very poor, there was a big gate. As soon as I got out of the gate, I untied the *hakama* and tied it as my friend did, not knowing that my father was watching me. He was very angry with me; he untied the *hakama* and tied it in the formal way.

I remember he was very short-tempered. I noticed he was running out of the temple after me with a stick or something, and I started to run. After a great effort, he bought a *hakama* for me, but I didn't appreciate his kindness so much and untied the *hakama* and changed the style. I think that was why he was so angry. I think I understand how he felt.

The background of this kind of difficulty for priests was the policy of the Meiji government. At the time my father was born, most Buddhist temples were destroyed, and the property which belonged to Buddhist temples was offered to Shinto shrines. Before the Meiji period, a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple were on the same site. A Buddhist was taking care of the Shinto shrine. But the policy of the Meiji government was to make Shintoism the national religion. What they did was to take away the property which belonged to Buddhist temples and make the property Shinto. Buddhists lost almost all their property at that time.





*Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, left front, with, left to right, his father Butsumon, his brother-in-law, his sister Tori Hino and her baby, the caretaker of Zoun-in, and his mother Yone. c. 1930*

My father told me what was happening in various Buddhist temples. For instance, there was a big shrine called Hattasan near my temple. And all the

property which belonged to the Hatta shrine had been the property of a small temple near the shrine, and that temple, a Tendai temple, was taking care of the Hatta shrine. Not only was the title of the property changed to Shinto, but also they destroyed the Buddhist gate for the building for the Shinto shrine. The Shinto shrine had a Buddhist gate which is built like a Buddhist temple. On both sides there were guardians of Buddhism—*Nio-sama*—two *Nio*<sup>2</sup> And that is not proper for a Shinto shrine, so they had to destroy that kind of gate. So after destroying those gates and throwing out the guardian for the temple, they made that temple into a Shinto shrine. That kind of thing happened in famous temples in Japan.

After throwing out those Buddhist symbols and images, the governor of the district burned it and told someone who was taking care of the shrine to make *ofuro*— a hot bath.<sup>3</sup> And he said, "It is nice to to have a bath made by Buddhist symbols." The old man who was taking care of the temple for a long time said, "It may be Buddha's mercy. Buddha is so kind to make an unusual bath for you."

The governor, Hayashi, was scared of the caretaker. And in one week he became a blind man. People said that was because Hayashi acted very severely towards the Buddhists. That is why he became a blind man.

He became afraid of the power of Buddhism, and he went to Aburayama

where there is no Shinto shrine. So he went to Aburayama to pray for his eyes. Every day he took hot baths and prayed for his eyes. This is a famous story which people told at the time.

As I was very young, I was very much impressed by that kind of story. My friend sometimes made fun of me, you know. I had no money to go to a barber and my father didn't have money to buy a clipper. So he would shave my head with his razor. Whenever I appeared with my shaved head, my friend would make fun of me, slapping my head, and feeling my head. So my life at school was not so happy. I would rather stay in the classroom than play with my friends in the schoolyard.

I think that is when I made up my mind to be a priest. I wanted to be an unusual priest—to tell people what is Buddhism and what is the truth. So I determined to be a good priest.

My teacher used to tell me how to be a great man. "Unless we have a difficult time, no one can be a great man." There was no great man there because the people in that area, Kanagawa Prefecture, did not like to go to Tokyo and study hard. People didn't have enough courage to go out of their country or state or prefecture.

My teacher said, "If you want to be successful, you should go out of this state or prefecture." So I determined to go out of the Kanagawa Prefecture. I decided to leave my home, and I was thinking about where should I go. Maybe twice or three times a year, a priest, my father's disciple, would visit my father. So I knew him pretty well, and I liked him so much. So I asked him to take me to his temple [laugh], and he was amazed. And he said yes. So I asked my father if I could go to Shizuoka Prefecture with him. My father agreed and I went to my master's temple when I was thirteen years old.

I had, of course, a very difficult time at my teacher's temple. I was too young to follow the training of that temple. When I arrived at my master's temple, one hundred days of training was going on. There were seven or eight monks, and they had their special training, getting up pretty early and practicing zazen, reciting sutras.

At that time I saw a famous Zen master—Oka Sotan—and his disciple Oka Kyugaku. I was fortunate to see them, even though I didn't know they were so famous. But the training was very strict.

Oka Sotan-roshi taught many noted scholars and monks and Zen masters. He is one of the most important persons in our Soto history of the Meiji period. Yasutani-roshi's grand-teacher is Oka-roshi. And my master's teacher is Oka-roshi. Professor Eto's teacher was Oka-roshi. And numberless powerful teachers appeared under him. So I think I was lucky to be there, and I was encouraged by them.

Although they didn't say "You should get up," because I was so young, I tried to get up anyway. Sometimes I was too sleepy, so I just lay in bed

and listened to them reciting sutras: *Kan ji zai bo satsu*. That was the first sutra I learned by heart: *Kan ji zai bo satsu gyo Hanya Haramita*.

It is quite easy to recite a sutra if you listen to it when you are quite young. You don't need any instruction. Without telling you how to recite the Prajñāparamita Sutra, almost all of you can recite it.

At that time, laymen were my enemy—those who made fun of monks and Buddhists and young trainees. The policy of government at that time was to make Buddhism weaker, and to make Shinto powerful as the national religion. That was the fundamental religious policy of the Meiji government. Maybe that is why, under the Meiji government, we had pretty good priests. They were well-trained by the wrong policy of the Meiji government. Buddhists at that time suffered a lot, directly or indirectly. But until I understood the history and policy of the Meiji government, I was rather angry with people who treated me so badly.

I think that is the reason why I became a priest. And this also is the reason why I came to America. After I studied why we had a difficult time, I could let go of antagonism towards people. I had no more antagonistic feeling against them. But how to make them understand the Buddhist way was my next problem—which I found almost impossible. So I gave up. I almost gave up.

I decided to go abroad. If I could not go to somewhere like America, I thought I would go to Hokkaido, where there are not many people who know what Buddhism is. After I finished my schooling, I asked my master if I could go to America, and he said no. "Then how about Hokkaido?" I said. He was furious at me. I knew there must be some reason why. And I knew he loved me very much. So I thought I should give up my former notion of going abroad.

But my heart didn't change [laughs]. So after finishing what my teacher told me to do, I came to America. But I was already too old to come. I almost forgot all the English I studied at school.

Anyway, I arrived in San Francisco ten years ago. I feel very happy to be here, to have many students who don't know much about Buddhism [laughter]. You think Buddhism is something good—some good teaching, and that makes me very happy. If you have some preconceived idea about Buddhism, like some Japanese people, I don't think you would be a Buddhist because of misunderstanding.

Maybe I am very critical of the old style of Buddhism. I was always curious about why people do not like Buddhism. So I was also very critical of the Buddhist way. I have had very negative feelings about the Buddhist way on one side. But on the other hand, I know true Buddhism.

I have not had much time to study Buddhism in some scholarly way. I haven't had much time even to practice zazen. I was busy in the everyday activity of a priest.

What I want to establish here is Buddhism in some pure form. You will be happy even though it is difficult to study something pure and something original, forgetting all about the bad, demoralized, so-called "traditional" Buddhist way. The Buddhist way we have in Japan is the outcome of various elements like government policy. Some people have used Buddhist power for themselves. And some of the bad side of Buddhism is created by Buddhist rulers.

So there is no wonder why Japanese people haven't so much of a good feeling about Buddhism. But here not many people know what is the Buddhist way, so it is easier to restore Buddhism in its original form. Right now I regret that I didn't study Buddhism more deeply, more widely. But I think you will study our way more freely and more deeply and more widely. That is my hope. I don't think I can do it, but my successor will do it.

This is the kind of feeling most monks and priests of my age have. Not only me, but almost all the priests my age have it. And the feeling I have will be the feeling almost all the young priests will have, even nowadays.

I hope you will have various supporters. If you become sincere enough and pure enough to study Buddhism for the sake of Buddhism—not for the sake of yourself or the sake of fame or some gaining idea. If you study it for the sake of Buddhism or for the sake of truth you will have many supporters. Not only American people, but also Japanese people will support you. Even though you are not so successful right now, I think you will have many friends. I am quite sure. ~

- 1 Traditional men's full trousers in the shape of a split baggy garment.
- 2 *Nio* or *Nio-sama* ("good kings," "kings of compassion") are the two guardian figures placed on either side of a monastery or temple gate to banish evil spirits and thieves and to protect children
- 3 *ofuro* (Jap.): *o* (honorific) + *furo*, bath

MICK SORHO



*Green Gulch Farm residents celebrated the 4th of July this year with games and other special events, including a watermelon-eating relay.*

# *The Sangha Helps to Wash Away What Is Dark*

*Hyunoong Sunim*

*The following are excerpts from a talk given on August 11, 2004 at City Center. Sunim was born in South Korea and entered Songkwang-sa Buddhist Monastery at the age of twenty. After ten years of training in Zen meditation halls, he spent six more years in rigorous practice alone in remote mountain hermitages. Currently he is the resident teacher at the Sixth Patriarch Zen Center in Berkeley. ([www.zenhall.org](http://www.zenhall.org))*

**A**N INTERVIEWER RECENTLY ASKED, "If one wants to do Zen, what kind of preparation should one make?" I said, "You mustn't make any kind of preparation." But most people think in terms of having to make some kind of special preparation. But the more preparation you make, the more difficult Zen will be. Even though we sit, our mind and body should both be at ease. Zen is not something you make preparations for.

In the T'ang dynasty, a monk asked the Sixth Ancestor, "What does one have to do to follow the correct Dharma?" The master replied, "Don't think of evil and don't think of good." That was one of his main teachings.

Usually we dislike evil, but like good. However, the master said, "Don't think of evil and don't think of good." But ordinary people always have these two: a good mind and a bad mind. This becomes the source of our struggles. Evil is relying on Buddha nature and good is relying on Buddha nature. In our mind, is it evil or is it good? We like or we dislike. Is it Eastern or Western? That kind of mind is always creating attachment. No matter how evil someone may be, if they realize this, they become Buddha. If a good person becomes attached to their goodness, the result can be a turning to evil. So both good and evil are not truth. They are not our Buddha nature.

This world is made of duality. If we look inside our human mind, it is very complex. It is always a matter of "Is it this? Or is it that?" That's where our confusion begins. Everyone has a Buddha nature. But the Buddha nature is neither this nor that. If we are attached to this, that appears. If we are attached to that, this appears. They continually conflict. If we are always liking and disliking, the world becomes complicated and this is where many human problems begin.

We practice Zen in order to live without these problems. If we awaken to Zen, there is Zen within good and Zen within evil. We don't follow good

and we don't follow evil. Then we become free from both good and evil. If you do Zen then both you and I come alive. This is where love and compassion arises. If you become attached, this produces struggle and your wisdom will not grow. When we are attached, our wisdom stops. If we are not attached, the tree of wisdom, which we have always had, puts forth a sprout. All people have this. Through our attachments we've covered it all up. Yet still, while being covered up, the wisdom is still there. It has to break through.

It feels a little dizzy, confused. Wisdom can arise where our anxieties and worries appear. People think their anxieties and worries are their own and become attached to them. Still your wisdom is there. As long as you are attached to your anxieties and sufferings, then your wisdom will not arise. This is why, even though we always live with the Buddha, it feels as though we are very far away from the Buddha. If you experience your wisdom, you



JULIE BURRIS

*Standing from left, Richard Daquioaq, Siobhan Cassidy, David Haye and Seguin Spear received the bodhisattva precepts in a lay ordination ceremony on April 17, 2004 at City Center. Preceptors, from left, were Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Gaelyn Godwin and Teah Strozer. Jana Drakka, left foreground, assisted with the ceremony.*

will see it is neither good nor evil and wherever you are, the Buddha is there. Seeing and hearing are done through the Buddha.

Thinking itself is not bad. Zen is a direct relationship to you. One side of you is saying, "I can do this too." Another side of you is saying, "I wish I could do this right away." But as soon as you try hard to obtain it, then your foolishness comes forth. That's why in order to do correct Zen practice, you must not prepare anything. How can you do this without preparation? You must not create anything in your mind. If you create something, this produces foolishness. Zen is a path through which you experience what you already have. What can I do to do Zen well? If I look at the books of the ancient Zen master, they say to do this. Buddha said to do this. Christ said to do that. Often you have all those memories of what you read. You keep with you what is good and discard what is bad, You develop these habits. Our Zen won't go well if we do that. There's no need to create even good thinking, because you already have Buddha nature.

Zen is a process of realizing. Our realizing and our thinking are different. Realizing is something that comes up when our thinking is cut off. But thinking creates more and more thinking. It's difficult for us to make the distinction between the two. Realization occurs in a very short time. Thinking is endless. Because you can't distinguish between the two, you need to allow your thinking to take a rest. When your thinking takes a rest, it gives you the chance to have realization.

The spiritual path is very broad and there is no special method. It is a matter of experiencing what is covering up our Buddha nature. We can begin from anywhere. The Great Tao has no gate. In the West, materialism has been greatly developed so people can live comfortably. This culture has developed cars and airplanes and many things. It's hard to imagine just how convenient things are. To make these conveniences, humans had to direct their minds to material things. People then need to use them and they need to be attached to them. After the attachment, our mind needs to come back to us. Instead our mind goes to that attachment and stays there too long. It doesn't come back to our own nature. Then humans start to develop very busy minds. Every time the material things change, our mind goes there again. That is modern society. That's why Zen is difficult. But Zen itself is not difficult.

You should use material things, but use them without your mind. Material things themselves are not bad. When my mind goes to some material object then it stays there. Then I forget myself; that's a problem. You need to use material things without any thought of using them. Material things are to help people, but people need to be free from the material things. If you can do that, it will be the same today as it was in ancient times. I feel that there is no need to complain that your Zen practice isn't going well.

*Kosho McCall  
received Dharma  
Transmission from  
Senior Dharma  
Teacher Zenkei  
Blanche Hartman on  
March 20, 2004*



Only Zen can truly help this culture to recover. In today's modern society, people have become too independent, and it means that you've actually covered yourself up. Your words sound like an open mind, but your heart is not open. There is too much in your mind of what you like and dislike. Things are convenient or inconvenient. You want too much to find only good things. But it becomes extreme and produces anxiety that can turn into depression. Then all you can see is the clouds. There is no sunshine or happiness, only delusion. But within you the sun of your Buddha nature is always shining. You need to realize that clouds are just passing by. That's realization. You have to believe in yourself. Anxieties and worries are just passing by. You mustn't try to get rid of your thinking, because each thought is part of those clouds. Refrain from making the clouds even thicker.

Awakening comes in one moment from a very simple place. Usually, we approach it in the wrong way. We try to awaken too quickly. At the same time, you're not trusting yourself or your Buddha nature so your struggles go on for a long time. Don't try to obtain, don't try to awaken. You just have to trust yourself. You need to be a little bit lazy. Your thinking has to become lazy, and then you can encounter your nature. Then you can smile. Then you will become very tolerant.

I enjoy my monk life, I enjoy my Zen life, I enjoy reality. And I like people. There's nothing more precious and beautiful than human beings. Even human anxiety and suffering is beautiful.

I bowed three times. Why? To offer homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the Sangha, without giving rise to my own thinking. It's showing respect and belief in it. Then my habit of thinking stops.



Then faith grows, and that's Buddhism. We need to rely on the Sangha and we need to support Zen Centers like this. Support the Dharma, support the Sangha, support the Buddha. That's practice. If we try to do it intellectually, without that support, it doesn't work. How to support it? Come here and bow. Make donations so the Sangha can thrive. Respect the teachers and respect the Dharma.

In modern days, people only want to try and understand and try to obtain things. This is why they don't benefit from their practice. We need to have devotion. But in the West, the mind of devotion is rather small. Give and take. If you are to practice Buddhism, you need the mind of devotion. When members of the Sangha wear robes it means they have received the precepts: they protect the Buddha and the Dharma and they practice. Lay people must support them and be devoted. What do those people need? I can buy them a cucumber. I can buy them a set of clothes. I wonder, what do they need?

The Sangha is something that helps to wash away what is dark. If we don't have this kind of Sangha, then people can't gather together like we have today to hear a lecture. Without the Sangha, you can't hear teachings. You won't be able to hear that you are the Buddha. This is why the Sangha is very important. ~



*This picture was taken after the summer meditation intensive at City Center, which was led by Zenkei Blanche Hartman and Victoria Austin.*

# *The Joyful Presence of Water*

## *How to Save 101 Gallons a Day*

*Katharine Cook*

*AMONG THE NUMEROUS GIFTS* of Zen Center residency which I once took for granted were these:

- ✧ a chance to be in touch with life, to literally touch the life force of living things every day—washing, cutting vegetables in the kitchen, harvesting them from the farm, digging in that same earth, arranging its garden flowers for the altar.
- ✧ a chance to sit quietly with friends, learn the patterns of my own breathing, with those people of like minds and aspirations in a space crafted to exactly support and nourish that very activity: a zendo.
- ✧ a chance to reflect with these same friends as teachers on how to better live my life. We sat down together for meal times, enjoyed each others' company, stimulated each others' thinking, and met to study together.

When I moved from Zen Center, as one, into an apartment in a semi-urban neighborhood, what was given was work in home health care, gourmet cooking, garden care, garden design and teaching. While I now had more freedom to express my creativity than I had had as a Zen Center resident, there was no zendo as part of my abode, no friends automatically showed up at my meal table, and my apartment complex sponsored no study classes. From my window I saw a neglected landscape and no students practicing mindfulness.

In seeking the Three Treasures of monastic residency in my new circumstances, finding work was the easiest, and brought with it some elements of both Buddha and Dharma. Community and Sangha life had to be recreated from almost nothing.

In order to be in touch with life at home, living alone, I chose to study water: where it came from, how it entered my apartment, and where each of its uses spent her time in convenience appliances. I asked how much I needed or didn't need each. In examining these, which I had for a lifetime taken for granted. I came to feel how truly life-giving my relationship to



*Waterfall at Tassajara*

water was. Wanting to protect its life and continuation sprang naturally from that awareness. I wanted to know, how much could one human do to become a touchstone for water conservation, the need for which has become widely apparent.

Although nothing could bring me here the joyful splashing of the Tassajara Creek, or intricate melodies of Green Gulch water flowing through culverts after a winter storm, I could develop my feeling for water at home, and make being in touch with it a nourishment for every day.

Inquiring about and questioning the use of chlorine for "disinfecting" water, I developed a con-

versation with the lab scientist at the Marin Municipal Water District. Discovering I had a significant sensitivity to chlorinated and chloraminated water, I learned to test for its presence in the water coming through my home. Why did the water coming through my kitchen faucet filter consistently test free of chlorine, and that coming through my shower not? I learned about the biochemistry of water filtration from a pioneer in the water filtration industry. I became, and still am, interested in alternative methods for purifying water for drinking and bathing. Could we purify water, for example, with the distilled essential oils of eucalyptus, orange peel or ti tree?

The hot water heater, the bathroom sink, the shower, the bathtub, the washing machine and the toilet all came under my scrutiny. Heating water on the stove for dishwashing took only a moment or two. Where a full cycle dishwasher uses 15 gallons of water, I read, my dishwashing uses maybe 3 or 4. By washing my clothes in the kitchen sink, I save the time and money of a traipse to the washing machines and dryers. While my clothing hangs out, I appreciate their doing their drying there among my

plants and balcony sunshine. My relationship to them becomes more personal, more intimate. Washing one load of clothing in a top loader, I read, uses 40 gallons of water, never mind the electricity produced by the dam, and what it took to build the dam, and the costs to the natural world from its building and continued presence. I figure I wash my clothes in about 10 gallons of water, for a 75% savings. A little energy from the hot water heater and my two hands.

I use a shower filter and shower when the water tests clear of chlorine, for the sake of my lungs, hair and skin. A regular 5 minute shower, according to my water agency, uses 30 gallons. A wet-down, rinse off with a 2.5 gallon shower head uses 4 gallons.

These people say a regular toilet flush uses 3.5 to 7 gallons of water. At a recent water conservation committee meeting I heard this: "Why are we using water to flush away human waste? I'd like to see us bring back the composting toilet." Bravo! In that spirit I tried composting my own waste, but my study came to its limit there—the task of carrying out and composting my own waste proved unsustainable for me, too much! Accumulated, sawdusted shit and urine are heavy! And so I limit my toilet flushing to necessity, once every few days. I could not, however, not notice what a wonderfully rich, nutrient-filled substance human shit was, how ideally suited to manure our fields and gardens, if properly composted. And how good the feeling to know it could be reincorporated into the life process! Washing it away in water, with water, to a processing plant feels much too antiseptic to me, overly clean, and a use I would rather not put water to. It offends my sensibilities to use it so.

After my study, I settled into the practice of washing my dishes in hot water run through the filter Although not advisable for extensive use—for the sake of the filter—mine is holding up well with limited use. I often wash some of my clothes each day, especially linens, underclothes and fine fabrics, by hand in the kitchen sink, hanging them out to dry on a folding wooden rack. When the shower water tests chlorine-free, I shower. Otherwise I wait.

I recall the ancient definition of true practice as "chopping firewood and carrying water." That firewood cooked the food, that water quenched the thirst of the resident monks. How close to that am I regarding water thus in a one-bedroom, urban apartment?

Of course it pleases me to be doing "the right thing" for the earth—I like to know I am saving 101 gallons of water per day, especially if I can encourage others to follow suit But please know that I practice these ways for the sake of my own well-being, which I do not see as separate from that of water, Herself, or other lives. I enjoy the so-ordinary wholesome pleasures of caring for dishes I eat from and the clothing that protects and graces my body. Is it not very pleasant to don a hand-washed linen garment, fra-

grant with a touch of lavender oil, dried in sun-filled air? Did you, as I did, climb into bed between sheets your mother dried on long lines, hanging out in the wind and sun? I do. The smell and the experience of sunlit clean sheets are memorable! How those good wholesome smells restore the soul!

As the pleasures and benefits of residential life are no longer mine, it pleases me to work each day for their continuation by espousing the earth practices upon which all life, including monastic life, depend. Touching the earth within and without myself has become my life, the support at the base of my spine. I do this where I can, with whom I can, however I can.

Might not the Earthstore Bodhisattva be calling to each of us, and to us collectively, to relate with more care to this most precious of resources, that upon which life so completely depends.

*In olden times there were 16 bodhisattvas When it was time for the monks to wash, the bodhisattvas filed in to bathe. Suddenly they awakened to the basis of water. All of you Ch'an worthies, how will you understand their saying "Subtle feeling reveals illumination, and we have achieved the station of sons of Buddha." To realize this, you too must be extremely piercing and penetrating.*

—The Blue Cliff Record, Case 78 ~



Co-Abbot Paul Haller at the Buddha's Birthday celebration in Koshland Park across the street from City Center



JULIE SAURIS

## Avowal and Refuge

Paul Haller  
City Center May 26, 2004

**I** COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE the contrast between the lecture chant we just did and singing "Happy Birthday." Our usual chant has a deep settledness to it, like walking on the bottom of the ocean or being very settled in the heart of being alive. And there's something delightful about singing "Happy Birthday." It's a wonderful birthday present for me, to see the humor and the delight that came to your faces as you all started to sing "Happy Birthday to you." Thank you very much. Thank you, Blanche for making it happen.

Yesterday, in preparation for the ordination ceremony, I was looking up the Japanese translation of some words and discovered that in Japanese there are nine words for "peaceful."

There's calm-peaceful; there's at-ease-peaceful; there's harmonious-peaceful; pleasant-peaceful and so on. Seemingly peacefulness and its many attributes are of significance in the Japanese way of being.

I grew up in a big family, a big Irish family, a big Irish family in a very small house. So no wonder I was attracted to a practice that was cultivated in a culture that reveres peacefulness. Of course, I searched for peacefulness without quite knowing what I was looking for. This is part of the intrigue of following the Path. Why are we all here in this lecture hall? What brought us here? What is it to search without quite knowing what you're searching for?

As a child, my response to growing up at the epicenter of an intense environment created by sectarian violence was to seek a peaceful refuge. I got up early in the morning, before everybody else in my household, and spent time just being quiet. Now I've ended up in a practice that values peacefulness. My karma propelled me to practice and my karma taught me something about practice.

This afternoon, there will be an ordination ceremony called *zaike tokudo* which means awakening, or entering, the Buddha Way while staying at home. That is, entering the Buddha Way while staying connected to your roots, to who you are, to your family, to your life circumstances. Our karma brings us to the Path of the Buddha Way and our karma informs how we follow the Path.

We could say this *zaike tokudo*, entering the Way, is a religious activity; but more exactly it's expressing a commitment to a fundamental relationship to our human life. What comes to mind is a line in the poem "On Living" by Nazim Hikmet, where he says, "We must live as if we will never die." We can be so concerned we might die that we're afraid to commit to living. Zen practice is about getting to the heart of our being and exploring this dilemma. When we take refuge in Buddha, we take refuge from the suffering caused by our karma and we take refuge in our karma by embracing and learning from it. In my own life, through trying to take refuge from the intensity I grew up in, I discovered that to truly take refuge was to embrace it completely. Now I return to that intense city and help to promote peacefulness as an antidote to the sectarian violence that has been rampant for the last thirty years.

About a month or so ago I read an article in the *Chronicle* about a phenomenon happening in the Monterey Bay. The Bay has a very deep gorge and the water there gets very cold, which enables the plentiful growth of sea life. The orca whale frequents that area to take advantage of this abundance. Every spring, the grey whales migrate south from Alaska down to Baja. They are accompanied by their calves. The orca whales are predators and this spring, and maybe every other spring, they lay in wait in this deep gorge and attacked the grey whales as they swam by. They form a hunting pack that separates off a calf and attacks it. If they're successful, they kill it and they eat it. When I read this in the newspaper, I was chagrined. I thought, "How awful that those calves would be killed." Yet I also realized that I just can't know what this is like for the whales. This is beyond my realm of experience as a human. I'm a land creature and this happens underneath the water, in the great ocean. It's beyond picking and choosing as I know it and beyond assessing good and bad or right and wrong in human terms. When we hold the story of the whales with Big Mind, we don't get caught in who's right and who's wrong. "Let's shoot all the orca whales so the grey whales can go free." With Big Mind we know that all

judgments are relative, not absolute. There is suffering on land and in the ocean. The great matter of birth and death expresses itself everywhere. To ask who's right and who's wrong limits our appreciation and understanding of life. With Big Mind we realize the appropriateness of compassionately acknowledging suffering. How can we deny the orcas the hunt that keeps them alive or the suffering inflicted on the grey whale calves? Big Mind goes beyond our discriminations and then compassion appears as a more appropriate response.

Arousing Big Mind is one aspect of avowing our karma and taking refuge. In Buddhism and in Zen we say that taking refuge initiates the entry into the path of Awakening. So, how do we take refuge? What do we do after we take refuge? How do we stay true to taking refuge? These questions are answered by how we practice with the particulars of our human life. That is to embrace the paradox of the karma of being human. Nazim Hikmet points this out in his poem when he says, "We must live as if we'll never die." While fully acknowledging the inevitable karma of birth and death, we vow to live the Way of liberation

Big Mind is enabled by our karma-mind. We awaken through the contrast. Practice is always showing us the enormity of life and the particularity of this experience that we call our own life. We like it, we don't like it, it frightens us, it disappoints us, it angers us; it confuses us. We always have a response, but when we pay attention to our response, that awareness alludes to the vastness of interconnected existence. This, I hope, makes some sense to you. This is taking refuge in Buddha, in being awake.

We take refuge in the teachings and practice, however we understand them, be it from a humanistic or religious perspective or any other perspective. We take refuge in the interconnectedness of all life. That we are all in this together.

I just returned from Belfast a couple of weeks ago, where I was trying to bring peacefulness. In doing so, I lead workshops with many different kinds of groups. One group of women belonged to one side of the sectarian divide. They live in a very tense part of town that has just come through a set of circumstances that stirred deep sectarian bitterness and resentment. Even though the area had calmed down about six months ago, the aftermath was still palpably present.

In Northern Ireland, the organized sectarian violence has mostly dissipated and stopped, but part of the residue is suicide, drug addiction, domestic violence and crime by juveniles. Many cars are stolen and burnt. There is no insurance coverage if your car's burnt. Often it's the women, the mothers, who are left holding the pain in a very tangible way. A member of the group, a single mother with four young children, had her car stolen and burned twice. The last time it was filled with possessions for her newborn baby. Many of the women in the group were suffering from panic



WINTER ANGO  
YEAR OF MONKEY 2004



# ZENSHINJI



STUDY OF DOGEN ZENJI'S  
BENDOWA

SHUSO

SHIZAN DOAN  
ROBERT THOMAS

WITH THE GREAT ASSEMBLY OF MONASTICS:

|                    |                   |                    |                  |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| JOHN AMERAL        | GREG FAIN         | MARK KAPP          | KAYA PORCANY     |
| NADIA ARBORELI     | LINDA GALLIAN     | DALE KENT          | JUDITH RANDALL   |
| ANDY BAKER         | SONSAGARDENSWARTZ | MELISSA KENT       | GRAHAM ROSS      |
| MICHAEL BEEBE      | RYAN GINN         | SHANNON KLONR      | SAMUEL SEVENHIA  |
| PAUL BOYLE         | TOVA GREEN        | SOREN LEAVER       | TIMMY LIEN SHUTT |
| RENSHAN BRUCE      | KATE GREEN        | BARBARA MAERTINGER | NANCY SIMMONS    |
| ADRIAN CAMPBELL    | JEN HAGAR         | MIKE MAHN          | ALIYA TURAKI     |
| CAROLYN CAWAGAH    | DAVID HAYE        | ANNA NALO          | DANA VELDEN      |
| CONSTANCE CUMMINGS | MARIA HIRANO      | KATE MCANALESS     | MARK VOSEBEL     |
| JANE CELKO         | DAVID HOLT        | ERIN MERK          | HOWARD WADE      |
| STEVEN DAVIDOWITZ  | LUKE IWAZUCHI     | SAMIE MEYERHOFF    | MENYA WUNDER     |
| KATHY EARLY        | JOHN JAKUBOWSKI   | MICHAEL NEWTON     | ALEX WHITE       |
| ANDRE ELSEN        | LESLIE JAMES      | JAMES PERCULT      | EBRETT LISCAL    |
| SARAH EMERSON      | NOAH JENNINGS     | CHARLIE PORCANY    | DAVID ZIMMERMAN  |

PRESENTLY ABIDING

RYUSHIN  
ZENJO





*Judith Randall, Joan Amaral and Mako Voelkel were ordained as priests on September 18, 2004 at City Center. Darlene Cohen, Paul Haller and Blanche Hartman were their preceptors. Pictured, from left, are Judith, Darlene, Paul, Blanche, Joan and Mako.*

attacks—a symptom of post-traumatic stress. I talked to them about peacefulness: being centered in your body, connecting to your breath and releasing the tension and anxiety in your mind—teachings that you hear here at Zen Center everyday. But to them it was like receiving water while thirsting in the desert. They were relieved and appreciative. In fact it was poignant to hear their response. They said, “When are you coming back?” I informed them that it would not be until next year.

Immediately they had a solution. They suggested that I go to a community radio station right away and make a tape of the guidance that I had just given and they would practice each Tuesday while listening to it. Inspired by their eagerness, I did it. I was struck by the intensity of their karma and their response to it. Their very human wish to not suffer convinced them to readily and completely take refuge in Dharma.

From a usual state of mind, our karma frustrates and disappoints us. It fills us with yearning and frustration: If only I had this; if only that would stop. From the point of view of practice, our karma is a precious and fortuitous event. Of course from the perspective of our small mind we can't see it as that. We just see our karma as a limitation or burden and we respond by attempting to fix it with aversion or grasping. The Big Mind of taking refuge helps us to see the path of liberation. The paradox of practice is that the Big Mind is not enabled by avoiding our karma, but by entering into it completely.

These women in Belfast lived under intensely difficult, painful, and restricted conditions. Whether they liked it or not, they were immersed in their karma and out of that immersion came this willingness to take refuge. The practice of awareness shows each of us that we're always immersed in our karma. Maybe we're trying to fool ourselves that it can be otherwise. In the poem, "On Living," by Nazim Hikmet, after describing a variety of situations, he concludes: "You must live entirely now." There is something in us that knows this, and this knowing is activated by taking refuge.

How amazing that these women in this part of Northern Ireland, living where being Catholic or Protestant is the most significant descriptor of your identity, were able to not only sit there and listen but to participate in the odd suggestions that were presented. "Pay attention to the sensation in your shoulders. Notice the thoughts that arise in your mind." I marvel at these ladies and how indomitable this human spirit is. There is something in us that wants to live. There is something in us that wants to take refuge and experience Big Mind rather than just be lost in the small preoccupations and distractions that can captivate us. Before I went to talk to that group of women, someone in the Zen group there advised me not to go to that neighborhood because of its history of conflict. I have to confess, that made it all the more interesting. Practice has taught me that you don't have to be afraid of intensity, that there is something precious about our passion, even when it seems to have gone astray and initiated its destructive capacity. Its capacity for healing is often not far away. For us to remember this about ourselves and each other is important. Taking refuge can heal our hearts, our minds and our communities.

This willingness to engage practice is the fruit of avowing our karma. When we avow our karma, and touch the immensity and intensity of being alive, then quite naturally it quickens and ripens us for practice. It brings us into relationship with the challenge and the blessing of what's going on. Many wonderful people we've met have guided, inspired and instructed our lives. They've brought us here and their teachings support us to be here.

In this afternoon's ceremony, before we avow our karma, we will honor our teachers and their teachings. This is a beneficial act because even in the midst of our lives, difficult as they may be, we have received teachings that have turned us towards practice. By constantly enlivening and empowering these teachings, they continue to influence our lives. If we forget them, they become sterile and inconsequential. In the ceremony we say "Invoking the wisdom and compassion of our teachers . . ." To invoke is to enliven and empower the teachings that have blessed our life.

In the same way, we can empower our karma to keep alive what hurts us, causes resentment, disappointment and discouragement. In contrast, we can keep remembering and rekindling the teachings that inspire and encourage us in practice. When we start to pay attention and to notice how

we're directing our energy, we begin to see what values and influences we invoke and empower. Spiritual practice is to intentionally bring forth that which nourishes life and enables awakening. Through wholehearted participation in ritual and ceremony we invoke the wisdom and compassion of our tradition.

By avowing their karma and choosing to take refuge throughout their years of practice, the ordinands have been constantly entering the Buddha Way. The ceremony is a formal confirmation of this activity.

As a process of initiation, each ordinand sews a rakasu and gives it to his or her teacher. The teacher transforms it into Buddha's robe, that will clothe them and embody their vow to practice, and returns it to them. Through this giving and receiving, the power of avowal and taking refuge is activated and human life becomes the Buddha Way. This awakening through the avowal of karma reveals Dharma and offers the support and guidance to live in a way that does not compound suffering but enables liberation. Taking refuge in Dharma, we wholeheartedly engage its guidance. We take refuge from our suffering and in the integrity and interrelatedness of what we are, which is intrinsically compassionate and wise.

How do we stay true to this truth? The formulation is quite simple: don't do harmful things; do good things. Can we really know how to do this? Maybe and maybe not. However the ideal of non-harming and doing good can guide our actions and relationship to others.

The third part of taking refuge is to take refuge in Sangha, in the fact that all of our lives are interconnected. They always have been and always will be. The life of the orca and the life of the grey whale are interconnected. As science enables us to communicate more easily, this becomes more evident. There is a group in Northern Ireland that collaborates with a professor at Stanford who studies the process of reconciliation. Together they work in conjunction with groups in South Africa, Sri Lanka and Palestine. They visit each other's countries to learn about reconciliation. Even though it's Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Arab, Tamil Tiger and government forces, and each situation has its unique particulars, the process of discrimination is the same and the process of reconciliation is the same.

Compassion leads us to realize how interconnected our lives are. There isn't really any us and them. It's just us. This is the other expression of Big Mind. It's all us. So when we cause harm, we're harming us and when we do good, we're doing good to us. This is to take refuge in Sangha. So quite naturally, when we take refuge in sangha an attitude of not harming and doing good makes sense to us.

The last part of the ceremony is what we call the grave or prohibitory precepts. These are about how to enter into the world. How to express our lives in relationship and activity in ways that don't diminish and restrict others and ourselves. From a Zen point of view, these precepts are questions

more than prescriptions. From having taken refuge and cultivated Big Mind, each grave precept becomes an exploration of how to live. Taking refuge provides a basis for this investigation.

Some years ago, someone came here receive to lay ordination. A couple of days before the ceremony he went to a bar and unexpectedly met an old friend. Without intending to, he ended up quite drunk. In his shame and regret, he assumed that this made it impossible for him to be ordained. Acknowledging the prohibitory precept not to intoxicate mind or body of self or other had exposed the inappropriateness of his behaviour, but his sincere avowal of this had renewed his commitment to the path of practice, had renewed his vow to take refuge.

We practice despite our karma and because of our karma. It both hinders us and supports us. They cannot be separated. This is what makes practice so challenging. We turn our karma and learn from it and go forward from there. This is the deep compassion of practice that we can offer to ourselves and everyone. It's not that we're going to do this and then be perfect. It's more that through doing this we get in touch with some deep way of being alive. Commitment to this way of living is the heart of this ceremony—walking in the middle of our own life with the courage just to be totally open to it. Thank you. ~

MICK SOPKO



*Bridge the Gap, an after-school touring program organized by Bob Hunter, pictured at right, visited Green Gulch Farm. Such tours, which are arranged by Sukey Parmelee in her role as outreach coordinator at Green Gulch, happen frequently.*

## Related Zen Centers

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

### WITHIN CALIFORNIA

- Arcata Zen Group**, 740 Park Ave., Arcata 95521. Contact: 707-826-1701.  
[www.arcatazencenter.org](http://www.arcatazencenter.org).
- Back Porch Zendo**, 3533 Hillcrest Ave., Sebastopol 95472. Contact Elizabeth Sawyer, 707-874-1133 or [esawyer@ev1.net](mailto:esawyer@ev1.net). Co-facilitated by Ken Sawyer, Tony Patchell and Elizabeth Sawyer. [www.cuke.com/backporchzendo/bpz-recent.htm](http://www.cuke.com/backporchzendo/bpz-recent.htm)
- Berkeley Zen Center**, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. Contact: 510-845-2403.  
Sojun Mel Weitsman, abbot. [www.berkeleyzencenter.org](http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org).
- Crystal Springs Sangha**, Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Dr., Burlingame. Contact Darlene Cohen, 415-661-9882. [www.darlenecohen.net](http://www.darlenecohen.net).
- Dharma Eye Zen Center**, 333 Bayview St., San Rafael 94901. Myogen Steve Stucky, teacher.  
[www.dharmaeye.org](http://www.dharmaeye.org). Contact: 415-258-0802.
- Empty Nest Zendo**, 54333 Two Hills Rd., North Fork 93643. Contact Grace or Peter Shireson, 559-877-2400, or [grace@emptynestzendo.org](mailto:grace@emptynestzendo.org). Website: [www.emptynestzendo.org](http://www.emptynestzendo.org).
- Everyday Zen Foundation**, [www.everydayzen.org](http://www.everydayzen.org). Zoketsu Norman Fischer, teacher.  
Contact: Elizabeth Sawyer 707-874-1133 or [esawyer@er1.net](mailto:esawyer@er1.net),  
3533 Hillcrest Ave., Sebastopol CA 95472.
- Fresno River Zen Group**, Unitarian Church, 4144 Millbrook, Fresno. Contact Grace Shireson, 559-877-2400 or [grace@emptynestzendo.org](mailto:grace@emptynestzendo.org). Website: [www.emptynestzendo.org](http://www.emptynestzendo.org).
- Hartford Street Zen Center**, 57 Hartford St., San Francisco 94114, 415-863-2507.  
[www.hartfordstreetzen.com](http://www.hartfordstreetzen.com)
- Iron Bell Zendo**, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento 95825, [www.ironbell.org](http://www.ironbell.org).
- Jikoji**, in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga. Ryan Brandenberg, director.  
Contact: 408-741-9562. [www.jikoji.org](http://www.jikoji.org).
- Kannon Do Zen Center**, 292 College Ave., Mountain View 94040.  
Keido Les Kaye, abbot. Contact: 650-903-1935. [www.kannondo.org](http://www.kannondo.org).
- Monterey Bay Zen Center**, meets at Cherry Foundation, 4th and Guadalupe, Carmel.  
Mailing address P.O. Box 3173, Monterey, CA 93924. Katherine Thanas, founding teacher.  
Contact: 831-647-6330 or [wildini@aol.com](mailto:wildini@aol.com). [www.zendo.com/-mbzc](http://www.zendo.com/-mbzc).
- Mountain Source Sangha**, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1123 Court St., San Rafael; St. James Episcopal Church, 4620 California St., San Francisco; and St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 30 Brighton Ave, Bolinas. Taigen Dan Leighton, teacher. Contact: 510-649-0663.  
[www.mtsource.org](http://www.mtsource.org).
- North Peninsula Zen Group**, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1600 Santa Lucia Ave, San Bruno.  
Contact Darlene Cohen, 415-552-5695.
- Northridge Zen Center**, 9325 Lasaine Ave., Northridge 91325  
818-349-7708 (3-5 p.m.) or [www.northridgezencenter.org](http://www.northridgezencenter.org).
- Occidental Sitting Group**, Sebastopol Community Center, 425 Morris St., Sebastopol.  
Contact Bruce Fortin, 707-874-2234.
- Peaceful Sea Sangha**, 75 Sequoia Road, Fairfax 94930. Contact Ed Brown, 415-485-5257.  
[www.yogazen.com](http://www.yogazen.com).
- Salinas Sitting Group**, Contact: 831-647-6330.

**Santa Cruz Zen Center**, 113 School St., Santa Cruz  
95060. Katherine Thanas, abbot,  
831-426-3847. Contact: 831-457-0206.  
[www.sczc.org](http://www.sczc.org).

**Sonoma Mountain Zen Center**, 6367 Sonoma  
Mountain Rd., Santa Rosa 95404.  
Jakusho Kwong, abbot.  
Contact: 707-545-8105. [www.smzc.net](http://www.smzc.net).

**Vallejo Zen Center (Clear Water Zendo)**,  
607 Branciforte, Vallejo 94590.  
Contact: Mary Mocine, 707-649-2480.  
[www.vallejozencenter.org](http://www.vallejozencenter.org).



*Bodhidharma by Denis Rodriguez*

## OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA

**Ancient Dragon Zen Gate**, Chicago, IL. Contact Roger Thomson, 312-576-3582 or  
[rftomson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rftomson@sbcglobal.net). [www.ancientdragon.org](http://www.ancientdragon.org).

**Ashland Zen Center**, 246 4th St, Ashland, OR 97520.  
Contact: 541-552-1175. [www.gmrdesign.com/sangha](http://www.gmrdesign.com/sangha).  
Website: [www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Fuji/4024/clearspring.html](http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Fuji/4024/clearspring.html)

**Austin Zen Center**, 3014 Washington Square, Austin, TX 78734. Seirin Barbara Kohn, teacher.  
Contact: 512-452-5777 or [kohnbarbara@netscape.net](mailto:kohnbarbara@netscape.net). Website: [www.austinzencenter.org](http://www.austinzencenter.org)

**Belfast Meditation Centre**, [www.belfastmeditationcentre.org](http://www.belfastmeditationcentre.org).

**Chapel Hill Zen Center**, Use mailing address to request information—P.O. Box 16302, Chapel  
Hill, NC 27516. Meeting location: 5322 NC Hwy 86, Chapel Hill NC 27514. Taitaku Patricia  
Phelan, abess. Contact: 919-967-0861.

**Elberon Zen Circle**, 1032 Woodgate Ave., Long Branch, NJ 07740.  
Contact Brian Unger, 732-870-9065. [www.zencircle.org](http://www.zencircle.org).

**Eugene Zen Practice Group** Contact Gary McNabb, 541-343-2525 or [garymcnabb@2west.net](mailto:garymcnabb@2west.net)  
Hoko-ji, Taos, NM. Contact: 505-776-9733.

**Houston Zen Community**, 1244 Heights. 712-869-1952. Teacher, Gaelyn Godwin.  
[www.houstonzen.org](http://www.houstonzen.org)

**Mansfield Zen Sangha**, 158 Lexington Ave., Apt. 4G, Mansfield, OH 44907-2639,  
419-774-8957 or [zeninmansfield@msn.com](mailto:zeninmansfield@msn.com).  
[www.community.webtv.net/zenronin/mansfieldzensangha](http://www.community.webtv.net/zenronin/mansfieldzensangha).

**Minnesota Zen Meditation Center**, 3343 E. Calhoun Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55408.  
Contact: 612-822-5313. [www.mnzenctr.com](http://www.mnzenctr.com).

**Nebraska Zen Center**, 3625 Lafayette Ave, Omaha, NE 68131-1363.

Nonin Chowaney, abbot. Contact: 402-551-9035 or [nzc@aol.com](mailto:nzc@aol.com). [www.prairiewindzen.org](http://www.prairiewindzen.org).

**New York Zen Circle**, Ordinary Mind Zendo, 272 W. 86th Street. [www.nyzc.org](http://www.nyzc.org).

**Northeast Ohio Zen Group**, meets at Namaste Yoga Studio, 4183 Streetsboro, Richfield.  
Contact Nancy Wolf at [buddhagirl54@hotmail.com](mailto:buddhagirl54@hotmail.com) or  
Jennie McMullen at [jennie@peacefulwarrioroga.com](mailto:jennie@peacefulwarrioroga.com) or 216-939-9117.

**One Pine Hall Zazen Group**, Seattle, WA. Contact Robby Ryuzen Pellett, 206-720-1953.

**Silver City Buddhist Center**, 1301 N. Virginia St., Silver City, NM 88061-4617.  
Contact Dr. Paul (Oryu) Stuetzer, 505-388-8874 or 505-388-8858.

**Silver Mountain Ranch, Zen Retreat**, 51 Turkey Creek Rd, Gila NM 88038.  
Contact Shawn (Ryushin) Stempley, guestmaster, 505-535-4484.



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# SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

300 PAGE STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

Nonprofit  
U.S. Postage  
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Permit 8459

## Preserving Our Dharma Treasure for Future Generations

**T**HREE YEARS AGO, San Francisco Zen Center introduced a program to encourage our members, practitioners and supporters to help ensure that Zen Center will continue for future generations.

This program, called the Dharma Lamp Circle, is a Planned Giving Program, a term that covers all kinds of charitable gifts such as bequests, trusts and gifts of retirement benefits. Planned giving helps you to leave a real legacy with lasting, positive impact that continues far beyond your lifetime.

If you decide to leave a portion of your estate or retirement benefits to Zen Center, your donation will go into a special fund, the income from which will help provide Zen Center with a measure of long-term financial security. The planned giving fund is currently earmarked to support two main areas:

- ⇒ Long-term maintenance and capital improvements at our existing practice centers—City Center, Green Gulch Farm and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center
- ⇒ Dharma outreach activities

*It is also possible to designate a planned gift to benefit a particular practice center or project.*

We already have over 100 members of our Dharma Lamp Circle. We hope you will consider leaving a part of your estate to Zen Center to ensure our future.

For more information please contact Rita Cummings, Director of Development, at 415-865-3790 or via email: [giving@sfzc.org](mailto:giving@sfzc.org). Thank you.