

# sangha

NEWSLETTER OF SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 FALL 1990

## Discovering Our Common Ground

Practice continues to grow and deepen at the Santa Cruz Zen Center. With Katherine Thanas as our regular teacher for over a year, we are steadily coming together as a sangha, sitting and working, meeting ourselves and each other in new ways. During the last few months, we have begun to define an organizational structure to support our evolving needs.

In March 1990, we met to start formulating ourselves as a new community, attempting to blend the "old time" SCZC traditions with our more recent changes. We also discussed a group appraisal which had been done by a sangha member.

A unique Santa Cruz Zen Center spirit was evident in the comments gathered during the appraisal. "Old" and "new" members alike expressed that they valued our open, non-doctrinaire style of practice, describing the sangha as "down home", and having an "everyday generosity". The diversity, strength and independence of our sangha members were all mentioned as positive qualities.

The appraisal also revealed an affection for SCZC's physical structures—the zendo, caretakers' residence and garden: "I like the intimacy and sweetness of this little center. It resonates with some nice quality", one sangha member said. Another commented, "This place has soaked up a lot of zazen. This zendo really supports practice."

As part of this March 9 meeting, we began a discussion about structure. Some sangha members had expressed in previous months — and in the appraisal — a need for a more defined structure, especially to clarify the process of decision-making, and to have an active board of directors. Yet there was also a strong sentiment that we not become stifled by form, that we not impose strictures of unnecessary bureaucracy upon the sangha. Our consensus was to allow our structure to evolve in support of the activities that we do.

In the last six months, this "emergent structure" approach is how our sangha is proceeding. We now have monthly business meetings, with committed, active officers fulfilling clearly defined roles. We are currently revitalizing our board of directors. A newsletter group has produced this first issue of *Sangha*. A "practice clarification" group has been meeting with Katherine to refine some details of our ritual. The group ultimately will propose a consistent form for our ritual, blending the many practice variations represented by the different members in our sangha.

As can be seen in the work leader report, a lot of work on our physical structures has also been taking place this spring and summer. Maintaining the structural integrity of our zendo and providing a safe and comfortable home for our caretakers will continue to be a priority and a challenge, as our buildings are old and their needs are many.

Perhaps the most significant news is that this fall, Katherine has begun living part-time in Santa Cruz; this means we will be able to expand our practice. (Please note our new fall schedule in this newsletter.)

As we consider our future, we must of course also plan for ways to increase our financial stability. We want to open ourselves to the community and to new sangha members, as well as with the larger Buddhist community. (We invited several guest teachers to lecture at SCZC this summer. Paul Haller, Silas Hoadley and Ed Brown each came to Santa Cruz to speak with our sangha.)

The greater Monterey/San Francisco Bay area is particularly rich in opportunities for Buddhist practice. As we become part of this network, we invite any of you who are reading this newsletter to come and join us in practice, whether for an introduction to Zen Buddhism, a few days in our guest room, or as a more regularly attending member.

Santa Cruz Zen Center welcomes you to come and sit zazen, converse and drink tea, peruse our library, or just sit under the apple tree and enjoy a silent afternoon.

Cathy Toldi

## Treasurer's Report

I am happy to say that the Santa Cruz Zen Center continues to operate in the black, thanks to the continued support of members and friends. As we look toward the future we will be seeking additional funds for support of a resident teacher and some additional classes. Therefore, special fundraisers, as well as voluntarily raising our pledges, have both been suggested as ways to meet these additional expenses. An increase in the number of pledging members will also help to balance the monthly budget.

## A Word from Our Workleader

Since the October earthquake the Santa Cruz Zen Center has undergone some significant changes, including basic repairs, as well as a few welcomed improvements.

Along the line of repairs, we now have a new front door and a new front stairway. A beautiful bookcase was built by one of the sangha members and now stands where the old fireplace used to be.

Improvements include an enclosed tub/shower unit and a new heater. Both upstairs bedrooms have been sheetrocked and insulated. The main floor guest room has been nicely redecorated with new carpeting. The back yard workshop has been made clean and comfortable for the use of sangha members who may wish for some quiet reading and writing space.

As this goes to print I understand that we will be seeing a new roof on the zendo by the time of publication. All of these subtle yet profound projects would not have been made possible without the dedication of those sangha members who donated generously with their time and money. Thank you again for your support.

## Sunday Afternoon Classes

As part of our newly expanded schedule, we will be getting together for sitting and study Sunday afternoons. Our first series of six classes will be on the Heart Sutra and will be start September 16th. There will be a small fee to cover expenses. Please contact SCZC for details and sign-up.

## More Blessed to Receive

*By Charles Atkinson*

*I've bent over them in the dark,  
straddling model train tracks—  
bright slivers of moonlight—and Bear,  
abandoned on his back, glassy-eyed.  
They don't know I come in  
to mend the broken track  
and return Bear to the pillow  
and to ask their forgiveness again—  
and still they come without fail  
at dawn, stumbling down the hall  
and into my bed to nest.*

*More than anything I care for you  
she said over the sink, and then  
I knew all those times I couldn't hear.  
It made me smile and start to cry.  
I cried into the waffle mix,  
in front of my children looking up  
asking why a man cries about waffles.  
What could be more perfect  
than arms around my neck  
and small ones clutching my knees?  
I couldn't give the love away  
and for once I didn't try.*

*So this is the truth: breath enters me  
as freely as crickets fill the field.  
The field waits and they do come  
and both are changed together. Crickets  
scrape, the ground holds their singing;  
breath rasps, the body holds a song.  
I will wait longer, to discover the poem  
that's always been so: I can do nothing—  
and am still made complete.*

## NOTES

### Book and Tape Lending Library:

With the generous help of a few sangha members, we now have a newly organized and cataloged lending library housed in a new and conveniently located bookshelf unit. Books may be borrowed by signing the library check-out sheet located in the bookshelf area.

Also, we are now taping the Wednesday night talks. Please contact Steve if you would like to listen to or borrow a tape.

### Guest Accommodations:

Santa Cruz Zen Center offers accommodations for guest students, for up to three nights at a time. The fee is ten to fifteen dollars per night, per guest (sliding scale). We ask each guest to contribute an hour of work, and to sit a period or two of zazen, each day as well. Please let us know a week in advance if you would like to stay with us.

### Zen Center T-Shirts for Sale:

Just a reminder: We still have a good selection of 'Just Sitting' and 'Santa Cruz Zen Center' T-shirts available in both the crew neck and French cut styles. The price is \$11.00 each. Please contact the Zen Center caretakers for purchase assistance. All proceeds benefit the Zen Center.



SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER  
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

**Coming next issue: A history of the Santa Cruz Zen Center.**

## New Zazen Schedule At Santa Cruz Zen Center

Daily Zazen continues at Santa Cruz. The morning sitting remains at 6:10 A.M. However, the evening sitting has been changed from 8:10 P.M. to 6:10 P.M.

Please note the new schedule:

### Morning

Mon-Fri

Zazen ..... 6:10

Service..... 6:50

Sat

Zazen ..... 7:00

### Evening

Sun-Fri (except Wed)

Zazen ..... 6:10

Wed

Zazen instr..... 6:30

Zazen ..... 7:10

Service..... 7:50

Lecture/discussion .... 8:00

You are always welcome to join us!

**CONFUSED SAGE SAYS:** *S/he who sits zazen seeking enlightenment will sit a long time. S/he who sits zazen not seeking enlightenment will sit a long time.*

## News from the Monterey Bay Zen Center

The Monterey Bay Zen Center group has been sitting zazen weekly since fall 1988. We currently meet on Tuesday evenings at the Cherry Foundation, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel.

Our Tuesday evening schedule is as follows:

7:00..... Zazen

7:40..... Walking Meditation

7:50..... Service

8:00-9:00 ..... Lecture/Discussion

Zazen instruction is available to newcomers on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:15 P.M. Longer sittings are arranged during the year.

For further information call Sara Hunsaker at 408/659-0132.

## Full Moon Ceremony

The Full Moon Ceremony will be celebrated on Wednesday, November 28th at the Santa Cruz Zen Center. The evening will begin with a period of zazen at 7:10 P.M. and end with tea and treats next door at the residence. Please join us as we celebrate this ancient tradition.

## One Day Sittings

Each month we set aside one day to practice more fully our sitting and walking meditation. Our one day sittings generally have five or six periods of zazen, walking meditation, a work period, and a lecture or discussion. Participants bring a bag lunch.

Our fall day sit schedule is as follows:

Sun, Oct 14th ..... Santa Cruz

Nov 18th ..... Monterey

Dec 9th..... Santa Cruz

Please call for date/time confirmation and sign-up. For Santa Cruz sittings call 457-0206/for Monterey sittings call 659-0132.

*"The main purpose of Buddhism is to form the habit of practice as a vow forever. This is just taking a journey in the universe, day by day, step by step. It is like walking in a mist. We don't know what the mist is, we don't know where we are walking or why; all we have to do is just walk. This is Buddha's practice."*

— Katagiri Roshi  
from "Returning to Silence"

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Please forward.

Address correction requested.