

# sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

JULY 2007

## THE GREAT WAY IS NOT DIFFICULT, ONLY AVOID PICKING AND CHOOSING

The more I work with this poem, attributed to the Third Chinese Ancestor, the more subtleties I notice in the discriminating mind. When our mind judges something as “good” its opposite, “not-good,” is also present. A teacher once said at a panel discussion, “if, as you have been listening to the various speakers, you have been judging one better than the others, this is called suffering”. That was a powerful statement for me, that suffering is our habit of making judgments and having preferences.

Practice is to notice what we are doing, to notice our discriminating minds and the consequences of those discriminations.

Buddha paid close attention to how his mind created suffering.

Although his experience has come down to us as “life is suffering”, what he actually said was that all *samskaras* are suffering. *Samskaras* translates to conditioned experience, all the processes of the mind that create our reality, all the ways in which our consciousness puts together sense experience as perceptions, thoughts and feelings. All of this creates seeds of dissatisfaction, the contrast between how we see things and how we wish they were.

Our investigation starts with observing our inner dialogue, our private thoughts and feelings. Buddha’s formula for the making of our conditioned response to the world is known as the twelve-fold chain of dependent origination. These twelve steps follow a sequence although they can arise separately from this sequence.

We start by noticing the first moment we have a sense experience. Our eyes contact sights, the ears contact sound, the nose experiences smell, tongue knows through taste, and the body knows through hardness. Once there is contact between sense organs and their sense fields, there is *feeling*, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. And that leads to wanting or not wanting. Ultimately, wanting leads to clinging.

This is a description of how we become this particular self moment after moment. It’s helpful to observe this in yourself.

This poem *Trust in Mind* is talking about our senses being caught by appearances rather than that appearances are created by causes and conditions

The *Xinxinming*, Trust in Mind, says: “...to pursue appearances is to miss the source.” and “...When no discriminating thoughts arise, the old mind ceases to exist.”

Things in the world are value neutral in the sense that they are just what they are, free of the values we give them. Here’s a practice for you: take something that has an emotional charge for you, positive or negative, and see if you can experience the surrounding causes, as equally interesting or engaging.

As I reflected on this, I remembered many years ago, realizing that if I gave up thinking about things as good or bad, I wouldn’t know who I was. My identity rested on holding certain values, strong opinions about good and bad, right and wrong. That was a rather startling thought, My identity (my underlying value to myself) was pinned to appearing in the world as somebody who cared in a certain way.

How flexible can we be about who we think we are in the world? How aware are we of the attachments we have to our belief systems, to our values, to what we think is good or bad? Buddhist practice calls attention to our inflexibility, to the fact that our personality becomes very solid because our mind keeps remembering and thus reinforcing “who” we are. We feel we have to keep reinforcing or we might lose our sense of ourselves.

This is the kind of problem we can investigate because it is essential to understanding our discomfort and unease in the world. This poem can help us find a way out of discomfort, our sense of not fitting into this world. Because we have participated in creating ourselves to be a certain way, we’ve taken an identity that we cling to and we don’t know how to release it when it is no longer necessary.

The ego is the sense of ourselves we carry in the world. We feel defined by its definition of what matters. Dogen’s instructions for zazen say to put aside “our involvements and let the myriad things rest. Do not judge right or wrong. Do not think good or bad.”

The mindfulness text “*Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*” by Analayo has a footnote that says western meditators lag behind their Eastern counterparts in meditation because they get interested in the thoughts and feelings and reactions that arise instead of just letting them pass.

The recommended practice is to simply notice the thought and release it, because we’re not trying to analyze our psychology in zazen,

(continued on page two)

“... When no  
discriminating  
thoughts arise,  
the old mind  
ceases to exist.”

# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS IN SANTA CRUZ

(continued from page one)

we're noticing the *impermanence* and *insubstantiality* of our experience. We are noticing discomfort, pleasure or pain, impermanence, insubstantiality. Because we hang on to our experience, we give it substantiality. If our reactions don't pass easily or become obsessive, some investigation may be required.

The more energy we put into something the more we intensify the karma of a particular response. All of the choices we make arise from our conditioning. We're an impersonal locus of energies that arise and pass. We don't choose our reactions, habit or karma does. When we investigate our experience, we don't find an actor. In the book, *Thoughts Without a Thinker*, the author says there are thoughts and feelings arising but no entity called a self. You can discover this for yourself.

Student: When I worked as a community organizer my identity was constructed around being an organizer and doing social justice work. I sometimes felt that all I was was my activity but I see now that activity comes from my values. I am wondering if the instruction is to not be attached to these values or not be so inflexible to that as an identity.

KT: Certainly values such as peaceful resolution of conflict, responsiveness to the needs of all people, these are values that we should work to accomplish, and to see where in us there is a willingness to put our energy there or need it to be elsewhere. However, it's important to not reject people who aren't able to make that kind of effort right now, not make that a superiority thing, that you are more important or more valuable in the world because you are doing that. When we feel that doing certain work makes us better we just are perpetuating the superiority thing, reinforcing the ego's need to be recognized, admired.

Student: How do we stay engaged in work that defines one way of living as not as good as another way, without being attached?

KT: The first thing is to become aware when you feel righteous or superior to others. If that comes up for you it will ultimately be a drain on your energy. That's not a sustainable perspective. We can't truly meet if we're self righteous. How do you carry your values, your activity in the world without feeling superior?

Here is what happened with me recently: some young people moved into the other half of the house where I live. They were sitting on the back porch smoking and I had to close my window so the smoke wouldn't come in. I wondered what to do. I waited a few days, then asked if they could move to the other side of the house so their smoking wouldn't be right outside my window and he looked at me and said he would make every effort to do it.

He later told me that the reason he was able to hear what I asked was because I didn't make him feel guilty. That was helpful to know that I could talk about something I felt strongly about in a way that came across as neutral. They moved their whole outdoor event to the other side of the house so it doesn't bother me now. How do we think about and relate to people in a way that doesn't alienate them? Not easy, but good practice.

— edited from a talk by Katherine Thanas

## 32 PARTS OF THE BODY; UNCOVERING THE FIRST FOUNDATION OF MINDFULNESS

*A Retreat with Bob Stahl*

9:30am-5pm

Saturday, September 8

This meditation was introduced to the west by the late Taungpulu Kaba-Aye Sayadaw of Burma: "This meditation is one of the most eminent among all Satipatthanas. The meditation on the body is unlike any other kind of meditation. It is brought to light and taught only in the times when the Buddhas arise."



The methodical practice of the Thirty-two Parts of the Body Meditation can help one penetrate and understand the true nature of the body. Through it we can see impermanence and comprehend that the body is made from the four primary elements of earth (solidity), air (motion), fire (temperature), and water (liquidity). This methodical practice can build concentration, develop potentialities for healing, and allow us to taste deep freedom and ease.

This class will introduce the entire first foundation of mindfulness which includes the six distinct groups of practices: 1) the breath; 2) the postures of the body; 3) clear comprehension; 4) 32 parts of the body; 5) four material elements; 6) nine cemetery meditations. The last three practices are almost never taught in the west; most meditators have no exposure to them and are not even aware that they exist.

Bob Stahl lived in a Theravada Buddhist Monastery for over eight years and studied extensively with Taungpulu Kaba-Aye Sayadaw, Hlaing Tet Sayadaw and Pokokhu Sayadaw. He has a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religion with an emphasis in Theravada Buddhism and teaches mindfulness-based stress reduction in local medical centers. He has experience with 32 parts of the body, four elements and charnel ground meditations.

The class is being offered as a benefit for the Santa Cruz Zen Center. We recommend a donation of \$45-75 for the day. Register with Ino Kathryn Stark at 457-0206.

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## SANTA CRUZ WEEKEND SESSHIN JULY 13-15

Our annual midsummer weekend sesshin will be held at the Zendo and will begin with oryoki instruction at 6:30pm Fri., July 13, and will continue until 4pm Sun. July 15. We will follow our usual schedule of sitting and walking meditation from 5am-9pm Sat. and 5am-4pm Sun. There will be oryoki meals and a lecture each day. Oryoki sets are available to rent for \$10 or buy for \$45. Please register with Ino Kathryn Stark by July 3, 457-0206; fees will be \$60; \$50 for sustaining members.

In preparation for sesshin, there will be **training in zendo roles** from 9:30-11:30am on Sat. July 7. Sign-up on bulletin board.

# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS IN SANTA CRUZ

## CALLIGRAPHY CLASS CONTINUES IN SEPT. IN SANTA CRUZ

Our ongoing calligraphy class will continue on **Sundays** in September with master calligrapher Yoshi Shibata. We will meet from 9:30am-noon in the zendo **Sept. 2, 9, 16, 30**. Fee is \$15 per class and no experience is necessary, but pre-enrollment is required. Materials list is posted on [www.sczc.org](http://www.sczc.org). Yoshi has been studying this art since he was 5 years old and has won national competitions in his native Japan. He teaches brush art as a practice joined with breath and voice.



## PRECEPTS DISCUSSION GROUP IN SANTA CRUZ

Due to popular demand, we are scheduling an **ongoing discussion group** to continue our exploration of precept practice. We are meeting on Sunday evenings following zazen, from 6:35-8pm in the Zendo. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge, but donations are welcome. The discussions are being led by Katherine and the senior students. We will continue to work with *Being Upright* by Tenshin Reb Anderson, *Heart of Being* by Daido Looi, and *Mind of Clover* by Robert Aitken.

Sunday evening zazen is our usual time for parents and children to attend zazen, and chant the Metta Sutta. If children are old enough to sit quietly in the zendo and entertain themselves for the duration of the class, they are welcome to do so. If enough children are interested, we will try to arrange cooperative childcare in the Community Room.

## PRACTICING WITH PAIN

This Saturday class will be an exploration of practices for working with physical and emotional pain, including those offered by Zen teachers such as Darlene Cohen and Shinzen Young, as well as those brought forth by participants. We will work with specific practices and then discuss our experiences, building both our “toolkits” for skillfully being with pain and our actual body knowledge of the tools we are learning. Beata Chapman, who will be leading the experience, has worked with pain in Zen practice for over 15 years. Saturdays Sept. 29, Oct. 6, 13, 10am-noon in the zendo.

Suggested donation per class: \$11; \$9 for sustaining members. Please sign up at 457-0206.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT;

At Santa Cruz Zen Center, our daily schedule and seasonal offerings reinforce and fulfill our intention, described in this organizational statement from 1998:

*The purpose of Santa Cruz Zen Center is to embody and communicate the teachings of the Buddha. Our understanding of the non-duality of wisdom and compassion, practice and realization has been conveyed through the Soto School. The focus of our center is on integrating Zen practice and everyday life.*

The triple treasure is cultivated and nourished with each aspect of our practice together: zazen, lectures, classes, meals and working together to maintain our buildings and grounds. We leave our grounds on School Street each day, making great effort to enact our vow in the world. We ask ourselves individually and collectively, “What is our practice right now?” Again and again we set up circumstances in which we can meet our mind in the presence of a supportive and caring Sangha.

On the near horizon, with the leadership of Patrick Teverbaugh, we work to reinvigorate the Capital Campaign in order to build a garage as required by Santa Cruz code. Additionally we intend to make our abbot’s room a more pleasing and healthy environment. Within a year we will organize the election process for a new Board of Directors. We work to assure that practice in Santa Cruz is sustainable for many years to come.

We are very grateful for the many opportunities to practice together, allowing each of us, just as we are, to find our own way into the teaching. We are also grateful to be part of the Branching Streams, acknowledging our dharma position in the Suzuki Roshi lineage. Wouldn’t you like to get your feet wet? —Gene Bush

## INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

We continue our monthly introductory workshops in zazen posture and zen practice in everyday life which usually meet from 10am-noon the last Saturday of the month unless there is a schedule conflict. Upcoming dates are July 28, August 25, Sept. 15 in the zendo.

## GLOBAL WARMING

*When his ship first came to Australia,  
Cook wrote, the natives  
continued fishing, without looking up.*

*Unable, it seems, to fear what was too large  
to be comprehended.*

— Jane Hirshfield

— reprinted by permission from “After”, Harper Collins, 2006

# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS IN MONTEREY

## AWAKENING: STEPPING THROUGH A NEW GATE

### *Koan Workshop with John Tarrant*

In this workshop we will meditate and explore koans together, studying how koans function on our path to liberation.

The current great task for human beings is consciousness, and the issue of whether we can develop quickly enough to survive ourselves. At the heart of consciousness study is this question: Is it really possible to step out of our old attitudes (as if they were a suit of clothes) and become someone new?

Koans were developed long ago. They are used as can openers for the mind but are not just technology for awakening, they also connect with the creative possibilities in the imagination and integrate spiritual awakening with work and love. Koans work by throwing beliefs overboard. They reveal the deepest capacity of the human mind to be compassion and empathy.

Zen koans emerged in China over a thousand years ago in response to an urgent need: How can we be free in unfree times? How can we help heal a devastated country? They challenge us to uncover the steadiness, inventiveness, and willingness to respond which are the true expressions of spiritual practice.

John Tarrant, Roshi, is Director and Senior Faculty for Pacific Zen Institute and Senior Teacher for Desert Lotus Zen Sangha in Phoenix, Az. He is the author of *Bring Me The Rhinoceros & Other Zen Koans to Bring You Joy*, (Harmony Books) and *The Light Inside the Dark: Zen, Soul & the Spiritual Life* (HarperCollins). He has a PhD in psychology and for many years practiced Jungian psychotherapy. He helped design and develop the consciousness component of the Fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. He teaches physicians at Duke Integrative Medicine and works with executives in health care systems and innovative organizations. John's life work is centered on the transformation of consciousness and he is one of the foremost koan teachers in the United States. [www.pacificzen.org](http://www.pacificzen.org)

Lecture: \$10; Friday, Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m.

Workshop: \$65; (includes vegetarian lunch)  
Sat., Sept. 29, 10am-4pm

Location: The Carl Cherry Center for the Arts  
4<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe, Carmel.

For information/reservations: 831-624-7491



## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE HEART SUTRA

*"...and thus the mind is without hindrance."*

“Without Hindrance,” a four-part class exploring the central themes of the Heart Sutra, begins Sat., Sept. 1 at the Carl Cherry Center.

Taught by senior students from Monterey Bay Zen Center, the class is intended to provide an overview into classic Mahayana Buddhist themes from the perspective of Soto Zen. Through meditation, talks and discussion, the class will investigate emptiness and form, the five skandhas, suffering and end of suffering, self and no-self and the place of meditation in the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures.

Dates and time: Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22; 10:15am

Location: The Carl Cherry Center for the Arts  
4<sup>th</sup> & Guadalupe, Carmel

Suggested donation: \$10 per class

## MBZC ACTIVITIES

### *Koan Literature Study Group*

Meets every other Thursday at noon for an hour at the Cherry Center. We are studying the literature of koans from the Book of Serenity. If you are interested in joining us call Kathy Whilden for information, 375-7826.

### *Earthbound Farms Benefit*

This is our annual fundraising event at the farmstand in Carmel Valley. This year we will start at noon with a gourmet organic vegetarian lunch. Farmer Mark Morino will then lead a walk through the fields as we harvest fresh produce for home use.

Saturday, July 21, 12 noon. Reservations, 375-7826.

Adults, \$35; children 12 and younger, \$15.

### *Precepts Class with Katherine Thanas*

The sixteen precepts will be explored in this four-part class. Integrating our everyday practice with Buddha's precepts is fundamental to the path. Buddhism teaches that human experience is characterized by basic unease, impermanence and a nonabiding self. Even though we lack a permanent abiding self, we are responsible for our actions and thoughts. Working with these two perspectives will be the emphasis of this class.

July 7, 28, Aug. 4, and 11. 10am to noon, Cherry Center.

For information/reservations call Tey Roberts, 624-5725.

*Summer butterfly*

*one-meeting-one-lifetime*

*deep valley*

Summer 1982

Tassajara

Mitsu Suzuki

“Temple Dusk”

Parallaz Press, 1992

DAILY SCHEDULE



Morning:

Monday-Friday:

Zazen 5:45  
Service 6:25

Saturday:

Zazen 8:30

Evening:

Sunday-Friday (exc. Weds):

Zazen 5:45

Wednesday:

Zazen  
Instruction 5:45  
Zazen 6:45  
Walking Medit. 7:25  
Lecture/discuss. 7:35

Cont. Precepts Class	Sundays	6:35pm, Zendo
Zendo closed	Weds. July 4	
Sesshin Roles Training	Sat. July 7	9:30-11:30am, Zendo
Weekend Sesshin	Fri. July 13-15	6:30pm Fri-4pm Zendo
Intro. To Zen	Sat. July 28, Aug. 25 Sept. 15	10am-noon, Zendo
Full Moon Ceremony	Sun. July 29	5:45-6:25pm, Zendo
Suzuki-Roshi Memorial	Fri. Aug. 3	6:25am, Zendo
Sangha Day	Sat. Aug. 11	9:15am-4pm
Calligraphy	Sun. Sept. 2, 9, 16, 30	9:30am-noon, Zendo
32 Parts of the Body	Sat. Sept. 8	9:30am-5pm, Zendo
Kaz Tanahashi Lecture	Weds. Sept. 12	7:35pm, Zendo
Full Moon Ceremony	Thurs. Sept. 27	5:45pm, Zendo
Practicing with Pain	Sat. Sept. 29, Oct. 6, 13	10am-noon, Zendo

LIBRARY HOURS

Wednesday: 5-6:45pm and during tea after lecture

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We meet Tuesday evenings, Monday & Thursday mornings at the Cherry Center, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel.

Tuesday evening schedule:

Zazen 6:30  
Walking Medit. 7:10  
Service 7:20  
Lecture/discuss. 7:30-8:30

Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen 7am (followed by service and soji)

Zazen instruction is offered the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. Everyone is welcome. For further information call 831-647-6330 or go to our website: www.montereybayzencenter.org.

Precepts class	Sat., July 7, 28, Aug 4, 11	10am- noon Cherry Center
Study Group, Koans	Sat. July 12, 26, Aug 9, 23, Sept. 6, 20	noon Cherry Center
Half Day sitting	Sat., July 14	8:30am-noon 98 Via Campana
Earthbound Farm Benefit	Sat., July 21	noon- 3pm, Carmel Valley
Half day sitting	Sat., August 18	8:30am-noon, 98 Via Campana
Mindful bird walk	Sun., August 26	10am-noon, Carmel River
Heart Sutra class	Sat., Sept 1, 8, 15, 22	10am-noon, Cherry Center
John Tarrant talk	Fri., Sept 28	7:30pm, Cherry Center
Tarrant Workshop	Sat., Sept 29	10am-4pm, Cherry Center
Lewis Richmond talk	Fri., Oct 26	7:30pm, Cherry Center
Richmond workshop	Sat. Oct 27	10am-4pm, Cherry Center
Fall Practice period	Oct 6-Nov. 18	info, 375-7826

MBZC BOOK GROUP continues to meet on the last Friday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30pm in members' homes. We read short essays, poetry and fiction. Feel free to join us. Info, 375-7826.

**“The rise** *in atmospheric and ocean temperatures is dramatic, is accelerating, and threatens in some way most life on Earth. The science is nearly unanimous and very compelling that rising air and ocean temperatures caused by manmade greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide is causing dramatic and devastating impacts for a great many lifeforms already and will only accelerate over the next several decades and beyond. Already the insurance industry is paying out larger claims due to more severe storm activity and Pentagon planners are modeling worst-case scenarios. While the type and sequence of consequences is as yet unclear, the certainty of consequences is not.*”

www.earthdayenergyfast.org

## ENERGY USE AWARENESS

Katherine recently heard a talk by Dr. J. Matthew Sleeth who gave up his career as an emergency room physician to devote himself to helping save the planet by adopting a simpler less materialistic lifestyle. An entertaining writer and speaker, Dr. Sleeth is an evangelical Christian whose passion for healing the planet is inspiring and contagious.

His book is *Serve God, Save the Planet* published by Zondervan. Here are some excerpts:

When people feel as though the world's problems are too big for

them to tackle, they often overlook the decisions they can make to build a better world. What can you do to regain a sense of control and significance? Name three actions you could take this week that would make you part of the cure rather than the problem.

Can you think of any possessions in your house that could be put to better use by someone of lesser means? What are at least three ways you can “lighten up”?

Take an energy audit of how much electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, propane, wood you or your family use. Suggestions for making a 10% reduction next year: change light bulbs; vacation close to home; carpool to work; hang laundry on a clothesline in the summer.

Some places to start:

- pick up and throw away any trash I see on the ground
- turn off the faucet while brushing my teeth and shaving.
- turn my thermostat up three degrees (in summer) or down 3 degrees (in winter)
- wash my dishes by hand, or if I use the dishwasher, run it only with a full load, and not use heat for the drying cycle
- wash my clothes in the coolest water possible
- turn off the lights, TV, radio and stereo when I leave the room for more than 60 seconds
- give something away
- spend at least ten minutes quietly in nature

“These are just a few of the suggestions in this book. There are many others,” says Katherine.

*If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 831-457-0206 and leave your name and address. This will help reduce our operating costs. Thank you!*

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