

sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

APRIL 2010

HARM IS NOT DONE

In our Zen tradition we have what are called the three pure precepts, which is the way of life for an aspiring bodhisattva, a person dedicating their life to awakening to how things are, for the benefit of all beings, and for the great happiness and peace that is awakening in Buddha's way. The Buddha's disciples through the ages have laid out this path of bodhisattva precepts for us, specific practices for us to contemplate and consider taking up and living. The three pure bodhisattva precepts are embracing and sustaining standards of conduct, embracing and sustaining good qualities, and embracing and sustaining living beings. Their source is some somewhat obscure Mahayana sutras, but they are most well known to us in the great Treatise on the Bodhisattva Stages by Asanga, who was a fourth-century Indian Mahayana yogi, writer, and teacher, and the founder of what we call the Mind-Only School of Buddhism.

These bodhisattva precepts are defined like this: embracing and sustaining standards of conduct, or we might say embracing the discipline and deportment of the Buddhas, often refers to monastic guidelines. There are a lot of standards for monastic bodhisattvas, but Asanga makes it clear that there is a lay bodhisattva path, which is an essential element of the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle, in Indian Buddhism that got passed along to us in the Zen tradition. Lay and monastic bodhisattvas – it's not so much the issue of what form one's life takes, but that one is embracing and sustaining the standards of conduct for one's particular life role. This precept is about letting go of our self-centeredness which often brings harm to others, and it is often associated with the ancient teaching of the Buddha called "refraining from all harm." And embracing and sustaining good, or wholesome, personal qualities is equated with the Buddha's teaching of "do all good." This includes embracing all kinds of mental factors such as generosity, patience, enthusiasm, and presence. Embracing and sustaining living beings is a particularly Mahayana interpretation of the Buddha's teaching of "purify the mind." In the early teachings of the Dhammapada, maybe some of the earliest teachings ever attributed to the Buddha, the Buddha said, summing up the whole path of practice: "Refrain from all harm, do all good, purify the mind – this is the teaching of all Buddhas."

I think it is quite wonderful how this first pure precept is worded in the Mahayana way, not as the negative "refrain from all harm," but in the positive as "embracing and sustaining, gathering together

and upholding, standards of conduct." In the Zen tradition, when the ancestors talk about this type of practice, they often pare it down to the essentials, saying things like, "just give up seeking for fame and profit" – those are the two they often emphasize. And this is the essence of the monastic precepts and also lay precepts in a somewhat different way. Seeking for more profit than we need, or taking advantage of situations to gain something for oneself, manipulating situations to increase our good reputation – just forget about such motivations, just let them go. It's not because fame and profit are bad, but just because it is a source of suffering to seek what we don't have. And, often when seeking for fame and profit, we end up harming others along the way. In the bodhisattva precepts, the emphasis is on not harming others, refraining from harming others through our self-centered activities.

Even though Dogen Zenji transmitted the precept of "embrace and sustain standards of conduct," he also wrote an essay called Refrain from all Harm, in which he tells a story of this Chinese Zen teacher named "Bird's Nest," who was called this because he lived up in a tree. There was a statesman and poet who was a student of Bird's Nest. And one time the statesman stood below his tree, called up to him and said, "Looks very precarious and dangerous up there," and Bird's Nest said down to him, "Looks very precarious and dangerous down there." Because that's how this life is, it's very precarious and it's dangerous to actually go about in the world outside of trees because it's so easy to get into causing harm and to forget about doing good.

One time this statesman came and asked, "What's the great meaning of Buddha's teaching?" In ancient China people were always asking this question. And his teacher said, "Refrain from all harm, do all good." And the statesman said, "Though this is so, even a three-year old child can say that." And the teacher said, "A three-year old child may be able to say it, but an eighty-year old person cannot practice it." And the statesman bowed in thanks for this response.

Dogen comments on this story in his usual unusual way. Dogen is commenting on "refrain from all harm" in the Zen tradition and he says various things like: "Since the family of Buddhas arises from conditions, thus conditions arise from the family of Buddhas. It is not that harm does not exist, it's just that it is not done." The title of this essay is in Japanese *shoaku makusa*, which means literally "do not do all harm," but it could also be read as "all harm is not done." Dogen says, "It is not that harm does not exist, it's just that it is not done. Harm is not empty, it is not done, harm is not form, it

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(continued on page two)

SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

(continued from page one)

is not done. Harm is not not done, it is just not done.” In Zen we have the practice of non-doing, the *zazen* of non-doing, non-action, which doesn't literally mean that you don't DO anything, but just that YOU don't do anything. But in this case, it is that harm is not done; it is not created by itself or another. So if we don't do harm or make harm, it doesn't exist on its own. I think there may be religious debates about this topic – is there truly evil in the world? According to Dogen's understanding, there is not inherent evil in the world. If it isn't done, then evil doesn't arise.

So the practice is not doing harm, which might sound at first like trying to refrain from causing harm, but in this Zen way it is more a matter of understanding that harm is not done, it is not created, it is not made, and therefore don't make it. The Zen tradition emphasizes that by understanding that harm is not done, and doesn't really exist in any substantial way, only appearing by the creation of our own mind, then we actually live in the conventional world in such a way that harm is refrained from. This might be hard to follow, but this is the logic that will be woven through all the Zen bodhisattva precepts. There is a conventional practice of just stopping, just refraining from harm, when you have an urge to yell at somebody. And then there is this deeper level of actually returning to *zazen* mind, the mind that actually knows that harm is not a real, substantial force in the world, it is just a moment-to-moment arising, dependent on the mind. So if the mind does not make harm, harm is not made, harm is not done. The Zen approach to precepts is to actually understand that in the mind of stillness, the mind that is dropping off moment to moment in *zazen*, that harm is not done, and by realizing that, we don't cause harm in the world, because motivation for harm comes from belief in substantiality.

--from a talk by Rev. Kokyo Henkel

SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND SESSHIN

Saturday April 10, 9-10am. We will make offerings, chant sutras, and bathe the baby Buddha, amidst many spring flowers. Birthday cake will be served afterwards. Children are especially welcome. A five-day sesshin will follow (“gathering the mind” zen retreat), April 10-14, starting in the afternoon of Saturday April 10 (after Buddha's Birthday Ceremony), ending at 5pm on Wednesday April 14. This will be an “informal” sesshin: meals will not be offered and anyone is welcome to attend any part of sesshin. *Zazen* will be from 5am - 9pm. \$12 / 15 per day for sustaining or nonsustaining members.

ONE-DAY SITTINGS

Sunday May 23 and June 13, 8:30am - 5pm. There will be a lecture in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Bring a bag lunch. \$12 / 15 for sustaining or nonsustaining members.

LAY INITIATION CEREMONY OF RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS

Wednesday April 21, 6:30-7:30pm. Sally Aguirre and Brian Corser will receive the Bodhisattva Precepts from Abbot Katherine Thanas, along with a *rakusu* (Buddha's robe) they have sewn, and a Dharma name. All are welcome to attend the ceremony.

SANGHA DAY

Saturday April 17 and June 12, 9:15am - 4pm. This is a time to come together and help take care of the temple and grounds: cleaning the *zendo*, making candles, gardening, etc. Please bring something for a social potluck lunch.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday April 24, May 29, and June 26, 10am - noon. A monthly introduction to the formal postures of zen meditation and the forms of practice at SCZC. The morning includes sitting and walking meditation, followed by discussion. Everyone is welcome, free of charge.

ZEN AND PSYCHOTHERAPY: WORKSHOP WITH JOSEPH BOBROW ROSHI

Saturday May 15, 9am - 5:30pm. Joseph Bobrow Roshi is a Zen Master of Deep Streams Institute in San Francisco, which offers Zen practice and Buddhism and psychotherapy C.E. workshops. He is also a psychologist-psychoanalyst and author whose writings explore Zen, psychotherapy, and the interplay of Buddhism and psychotherapy in transforming suffering and helping us realize and embody our true nature. Joseph will describe how Buddhist principles and practices, in concert with those from psychotherapy and neuroscience, contribute to an integrated view of liberation.

\$55 / \$65 for sustaining or nonsustaining members. A vegetarian lunch will be provided. CEU credits are available for psychotherapists.

NAGARJUNA'S WISDOM OF THE MIDDLE WAY

Mulamadhyamakakarika, Chapter 1, with Kokyo Henkel. Six Sunday evenings, May 23 - June 27, 6:30-8pm, following evening *zazen* and service.

The brilliant second-century Indian teacher Nagarjuna wrote one of the most profound and influential expositions of Buddha-Dharma, the Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way, elucidating the teachings of the interdependent arising of all things and emptiness of independent existence. The first chapter of this great work presents the unique view that will form the basis for the rest of the text, which has the potential to free the mind from fixations in *zazen* and in everyday life.

\$60 / 78 for sustaining or nonsustaining members for 6-week series. (There will also be a tea and discussion group led by senior practitioners during *zazen* time before class, 5:30-6:30pm.)



SCZC relies on fees and donations to continue its mission. If you can pay more, please consider doing so. If you cannot pay the fee listed, please pay what you can. Talk with the Ino or Treasurer if you have questions about fees. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR AND SEJIKI CEREMONY (OFFERINGS FOR HUNGRY GHOSTS AND DEPARTED ANCESTORS)

Saturday June 19, 11am-5pm. This year we are observing seijiki (also called segaki) ceremony not only during Halloween time, but in the summer as well, in the spirit of Obon, the summer holiday in Japan to remember departed family ancestors and friends. In this ceremony we call forth the restless, unsatisfied yearnings of our own life, inviting them to be known and released, as well as remembering departed ancestors and friends. The Japanese Cultural Fair will also include a tea ceremony and demonstration of Ikebana flower arranging in the Zen Center garden. Zazen instruction will be offered throughout the day. Other events will be held at Mission Plaza park.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

What seems hidden is immediately evident. Even as the silence of sesshin grows this week, the crabapple in full bloom shouts out for attention, dominating the spring garden. A little more quietly, just to the east of the crabapple, Kobun's flowering cherry awaits slightly longer days. And, whispering, the bamboo continues to escape its enclosure. This season brings many changes, both subtle and obvious.

The han and the densho now hang near the zendo doors. That han was left in the old shop by Kobun's students more than 22 years ago, and the calligraphy on it, "Great is the matter of birth and death ... Don't waste time," was done by one of Katherine's disciples. The densho bell was acquired in anticipation of Katherine's mountain seat ceremony 8 years ago. The rich sounds of these instruments remind us of our connection to the lineage.

Near the han and the densho, there are new hangers for their mallets, made with the last of the pine shelving recycled from our old library. The pegs of these hangers are made with manzanita from the Horse Pasture Trail near Tassajara. For me, just a glimpse of the reddish-brown leathery bark of these twigs evokes the early spring scent of that trail, moist grasses in yucca-laced soil. There it is on the porch of the zendo, written plainly for all to see: this history, present and future of SCZC. There they are, simultaneously subtle and obvious reminders that we are connected. This continuity itself is an echo of the teaching in Faith Mind, "You are already walking freely, undisturbed."

Gratefully working side by side with all of you,

--Rev. Eugene Bush, Administrator

GLOBAL SANGHA

Rev. Jana Drakka presented a very moving account of her practice with homeless people in San Francisco. The workshop on February 20 encouraged our own weekly meal program that Santa Cruz Zen Center has supported for almost two years. This winter we started cooking a Friday night dinner for 40 residents at the River Street Shelter. We will continue a weekly lunch at the Homeless Garden Project beginning April 9 as more Sangha members have stepped forward to participate in the cooking.

But making bigger meals has come with more expenses. Our weekly costs have more than doubled and we are cutting into our yearly budget at a much quicker rate. We receive vegetables from the UCSC Farm and Garden and the Homeless Garden Project, but staples such as beans, pasta, tomato sauces, and rice must be purchased. The Global Sangha wants to continue to support itself with donations from the Sangha members. We encourage your monetary and food donations to sustain this very appreciated charitable project.

--Rev. Patrick Teverbaugh, Global Sangha Leader

ORDINARY RECOVERY GROUP

Friday evenings, 6:45pm-7:45pm, in the zendo. A weekly meeting discussing Buddhist practice with addictions, emotions, and relationships. A short meditation, a Dharma reading, compassionate discussion and support.

NEWS

Starting April 21, Wednesday evening lecture and discussion will begin an hour earlier at 6:35pm, following usual 5:45pm zazen, so that the evening will not end so late. Zazen instruction will be offered once a month as "Introduction to Zen." The SCZC website now has audio Dharma talks available for free downloading or listening, as well as a page on Facebook with photos, information about upcoming events, etc. New sutra books with more texts for chanting are now being used for daily services, and are also available for purchase. A founder's memorial ceremony for Kobun Chino Roshi is now celebrated every other month, in addition to the memorial ceremony for Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. We are thinking about offering a weekly Saturday morning program, to eventually replace the Wednesday evening program. This would include zazen instruction, zazen, service, lecture/discussion, soji, and lunch. We would appreciate any feedback on this idea.

MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

TEY ROBERTS PASSES ON MARCH 1

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our long-time friend and fellow student Tey Roberts. She was among the group of early students who founded and shaped the MBZC from 1988 to the present. She was a regular presence at Tuesday evening zazen/lectures, classes, practice periods, and sesshin. She also attended practice periods at Green Gulch Farm, and traveled to China on a trip led by teachers from the SF Zen Center.



She was much appreciated by her fellow students for her generosity and helpful spirit as well as her capacity to think impartially about practice questions. She graduated from the Monterey College of Law in 1986 and was admitted to the State Bar in 1988. Over the years she took on more and more responsibility at the Zen Center, serving on the Board of Directors, as vice-president, treasurer and Ino. In 1993 she received lay initiation and the Dharma name *Inconceivable Cauldron, Endless Effort*.

SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

Several months ago she began to experience episodes originally diagnosed as flare-ups of multiple sclerosis. In December her doctors reconsidered the diagnosis, considering it rather to be ALS, otherwise known as “Lou Gehrig’s disease”. She was lovingly attended by her husband of 50 years, Elliot, during the last few months, as well as by her three children and many friends. Shortly before the end, she was given lay entrustment by Katherine in a simple private ceremony attended by five fellow students and family members. Her quiet passing leaves an enormous hole in our community and in our hearts.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

A class on Zen meditation and teaching is scheduled for Saturday morning April 17 at the Cherry Center. There is no charge for this class. Free of charge. For information contact Susan McDonald, (831) 620-1195.

ORDINARY RECOVERY

The ordinary recovery group meets on Saturday mornings from 9-10am at the Cherry Center. This group explores the teachings of Buddhism and the twelve steps of recovery through meditation, talk and discussion. This group is open to anyone interested in looking at the addictive mind. For more information please call Robert at (831) 920-8303.

BROWN BAG ZEN

Friday noon sitting in Monterey at St. James Episcopal Church at the corner of High Street and Franklin. The event includes a 20-minute meditation, tea and cookies, a ten-minute Dharma talk and discussion. For information call Kathy Whilden (831) 375-7826.

HALF-DAY SITTINGS

We have monthly half-day sittings in Monterey at 98 Via Campana from 8:30 to noon. The spring sittings will be April 25, May 16 and June 27. Call Kathy for information (831) 375-7826.

LAY ENTRUSTMENT IN MONTEREY APRIL 27

Our first Lay Entrustment ceremony will be held on Tuesday April 27 at MBZC. Lay entrustment is a new recognition created to acknowledge students who have served as head student in the past, for their maturing practice and developed ability to share their understanding with others. Tey Roberts was to have received entrustment with Susan McDonald and Patricia Wolff but because of her rapidly deteriorating health, Katherine gave Tey her new rakusu and entrustment authorization the day before she died.

In the Soto lineage brought to us by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, there is only priest or monk ordination and priest Dharma transmission available, but in this country as men and women, lay and priest, practice together, this entrustment authorization was created to recognize the practice of laity and their important role in the transmission of Zen in America. Susan was lay ordained in 1993 with the name *Earth Ancestor, Complete Penetration*. Patricia received the Dharma name *Pure Wind, Unfabricated Nature* in 1995.



Head Student Anne Muraski with Teacher Katherine Thanas

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

Saturday May 1, 9:30am - 4pm at the Outcalt Chapel, Community Church of the Monterey Peninsula. There will be two follow-up classes on Thursday evenings, May 6 and 13 from 6:30 to 8:30pm. Mindful communication is making peace with conflict using NVC principals: hear each other with compassion and respect; clearly speak your truth without blame or judgments; separate needs from requests and requests from needs; learn powerful practices of listening and translating hard to hear messages. This workshop is facilitated by Jean Morrison, MA, certified trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communication since 1989. Please register by calling Patricia Wolff (831) 659-3042. Requested contribution for workshop and classes \$160-\$130. CEU credits are available for MFC and LCSW.

ROBERT REESE TO RECEIVE PRIEST ORDINATION

The Monterey Bay Zen Center is pleased to announce the upcoming priest ordination of Robert Reese from 2-4 pm on Saturday May 22 at the Cherry Center. Robert is a founding member of the MBZC and as Executive Director of the Cherry Center, has helped bring many outstanding Buddhist teachers to the Monterey area. He also created Ordinary Recovery, a weekly group meeting, to discuss personal issues of addiction and recovery. Everyone is welcome.

VERSES FROM THE CENTER: A WORKSHOP WITH KOKYO HENKEL

Saturday May 29, 10:15am - 4pm at the Cherry Center. The brilliant second-century Indian teacher Nagarjuna wrote one of the most profound and influential expositions of Buddha-Dharma, the Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way, elucidating the teachings of the interdependent arising of all things and emptiness of independent existence. This workshop will begin to look into the meaning of these teachings, how they helped form the basis for the Zen school in China and Japan, and how they can deeply inform the practice of freedom in everyday life.

By donation (dana); teacher's donation and contribution to MBZC. Please register by contacting Robert Reese, (831) 624-7491; yblnwj7965@sbcglobal.net

LOTUS SUTRA CLASSES CONTINUE IN MAY AND JUNE WITH KATHERINE THANAS

Continuing classes on the Lotus Sutra will be offered by Rev. Katherine Thanas on Sunday mornings from 10am to noon at 98 Via Campana in Monterey May 23, 30, June 6, 13. We will continue working with chapters 15 and 16 of the sutra as well as various commentaries that extend our understanding of the historical and spiritual reach of this important text.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Morning:



Monday-Friday:

5:45am Zazen
 6:25am Service (chanting)
 12:00pm Zazen
 5:45pm Zazen

Wednesday Evening:

6:35pm Lecture/discussion
 7:30pm Informal tea

Saturday Morning:

8:30am Zazen

Sunday Evening:

5:45pm Zazen

LIBRARY OPEN

During tea after Wed. Lecture



Buddha's Birthday	Sat. April 10	9-10am
Five-Day Sesshin	April 10-14	5am-9pm most days
Sangha Day	Sat. April 17	9:15am-4pm
Lay Initiation Ceremony	Wed. April 21	6:30-7:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. April 24	10 to noon
Precept Renewal Ceremony	Thur. April 29	5:45-6:30pm
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. May 4	6:25-7am
Zen & Psychotherapy	Sat. May 15	9am-5:30pm
One-Day Sitting	Sun. May 23	8:30am-5pm
Middle Way classes	Sun. May 23,30	6:30-8pm
Chino Roshi Memorial	Wed. May 26	6:25-7am
Precept Renewal Ceremony	Thur. May 27	5:45-6:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. May 29	10 to noon
Middle Way classes	Su. Jun 6,13,20,27	6:30-8pm
Sangha Day	Sat. June 12	9:15am-4pm
One-Day Sitting	Sun. June 13	8:30am-5pm
Japanese Cultural Fair	Sat. June 19	11am-5pm
Precept Renewal Ceremony	Fri. June 25	5:45-6:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. June 26	10 to noon

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We meet Tuesday evenings, Monday and 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 831-375-7826 or go to our website: www.montereybayzencenter.org.

Introduction to Zen	Sat. April 17	10:30 to noon, Cherry Center
Half-Day Sitting	Sun. April 25	8:30 to noon, Cherry Center
Lay Entrustment	Tues. April 27	6:30pm, Cherry Center
NVC workshop	Sat. May 1	9:30am-4pm CCMP
NVC Classes	Thur. May 6 & 13	6:30-8:30pm
Half-Day Sitting	Sun. May 16	8:30 to noon, 98 Via Campana
Ordination Ceremony	Sat. May 22	1pm, Cherry Center
Lotus Sutra classes	Sun. May 23, 30	10 to noon, 98 Via Campana
Verses from the Center	Sat., May 29	10:15am to 4pm, Cherry Center
Lotus Sutra classes	Sun. June 6, 13	10 to noon, 98 Via Campana
Half-Day Sitting	Sun. June 27	8:30 to noon, 98 Via Campana

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