

# sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

JANUARY 2011

## WHAT IS YOUR ORIGINAL FACE?

In the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Ancestor*, one of the great classics of early Zen in China, the Sixth Chinese Zen Ancestor, Huineng, tells the story about how he received the Dharma robe and bowl from the Fifth Ancestor. Then he was pursued by jealous monks who chased him up into the mountains, trying to re-claim the Fifth Ancestor's robe and bring it back home. "Several hundred people came after me," Huineng says, "wanting to take the robe and bowl away." This is how things were in the old days, and still occasionally are today. "One monk named Huiming, formerly an army general, and a rough-and-ready kind of person, joined in the pursuit with extreme enthusiasm. He chased me down before anyone else."

Huineng put the robe on a rock and said, "This robe represents trust. Is it appropriate to struggle over it?" Huiming went over to the robe and tried to pick it up, but he couldn't move it. Then he said to Huineng, "I've come for the Dharma, not for the robe." I think this is one of the greatest moments of the story. He spent so much effort, days and days with a whole army of monks searching for Huineng in the mountains. But when he finally gets to this moment and hears that the robe represents trust, and tries to pick it up, he can't. Is it because suddenly the robe becomes heavy? Is it Huineng's magical power that makes it immovable? Or is it just because Huiming, who had previously been an army general but was now a monk, was practicing Zen for some reason, and maybe had forgotten why during this long chase? At that moment his mind suddenly clarified: "What am I doing?! I've come all this way but what am I doing here? This is ridiculous!" Something turned in him. How quickly it's possible to shift when encountering the truth of the immediate present. Huineng goes on, "Huiming came forward and said, 'Please explain the Dharma to me.'"

Huineng then said, "Since you have come here for the Dharma, you should let go of all mental objects, everything you're thinking about, particularly the robe and bowl, if you're thinking about them. Let go of all these objects and not conceive a single thought. Then I will expound the teaching for you." After Huiming was silent for a while, Huineng said, "When you don't think of good and you don't think of bad, what is your original face?" And at these words, Huiming was greatly awakened.

Not thinking good, not thinking bad, not thinking in these dualistic terms, letting go of all our usual assessments and judgments about

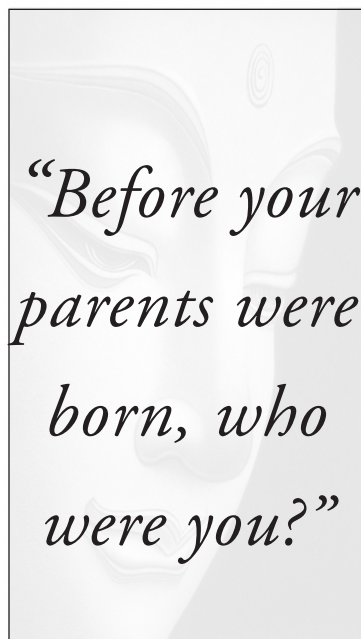
the world, at such a time, what is our original face? An expanded version of this meditative inquiry asks, "What was your original face before your parents were born?" The words "original face" already say it all, but just to clarify we can add in the part about "before your parents were born." If "original face" seems abstract, especially if you've heard it many times in Zen talks, or if you start to identify the words with something about this skin on the front of your head, one can say "before you were born," or even up the ante a little bit, and say "before your parents were born." Try to get hold of that! Before your

parents were born, who were you? This question is not meant to be a scientific one to be figured out; the point is that truly taking up such an inquiry with deep sincerity and beginner's mind may turn the mind back to its ungraspable nature.

We can look at this meditation instruction of Huineng as a two-part process. There are two aspects of Buddhist meditation: the calming, settling aspect, and the seeing, insight aspect. This brief instruction of Huineng's is a Zen version of shamatha and vipashyana, calm abiding and insight. "Do not think of good and bad. At this time, what is your original face?" These two sentences are a streamlined Zen version of the two sides of meditation. Not thinking good and bad is just temporarily letting go of our usual thoughts about the world—not just good and bad, but all kinds of dualistic thoughts and judgments that we produce all day long, to a greater or lesser degree. If "don't think of" feels a little too forceful or admonishing, we can say, "Just release these thoughts about good and bad, right and wrong, early and

late, cold and hot; relax the mind around all these assessments of the situation." The more we can just sit still, sit upright, breathe deeply, relax completely, the more we really let go of such thoughts, and the more the mind settles down, and becomes calm and still.

Some people might take settling into this present, barely thinking, relaxed mind as the whole of zazen, but I would propose that this state is only the first aspect of meditation, the calm abiding side. Once we're settled into not thinking of good and bad and so on, then we can investigate: what is our original face? This inquiry is also called turning the light of awareness around to shine back on the source of mind, on the nature of mind. This aspect of zazen is a little different from just letting go of thoughts. It's a little bit more curious, intentional, investigative. It's actually turning awareness back and looking. We might even say the first step is *not thinking*, and the second step is *looking back at what it is that's not thinking*. Or, if there is some thinking, looking back at what it is that's thinking. And what do we find there? What we find is the unfindable,



# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

(continued from page one)

ungraspable nature of mind, totally empty of all characteristics, yet radiantly bright and aware. The nature of mind does not suffer when we suffer, does not feel happy when we feel happy. It is totally free, and never arises or disappears. When we are busy, it's never busy. By recognizing and appreciating the nature of mind, without trying to grasp it, we can have a completely different perspective on our busy life. Thus such an inquiring meditation practice is offered by our Zen ancestors.

Dogen Zenji says the essential art of zazen is to "think of not thinking," which can also be translated as "think of what is not thinking." First we practice "not thinking" by letting go of our usual obsessive, discursive thoughts, at least to some extent. Then we can "think of what is not thinking." That is, turn awareness around and look back at who it is that's not thinking. How do we turn awareness around and look? Not by using our usual thinking mind to figure anything out. Dogen calls this kind of inquiry "nonthinking" or "beyond thinking." This might sound a little abstract, but it's a straightforward, subtle practice that can be done. Such a practice seems easier to do, especially at first, during longer retreats or sesshins, when the mind can really settle down, but stay bright and alert as well. "Think of what doesn't think" is the same meditation as "What is your original face before your parents were born?" It seemed to work for Huiming. He was greatly awakened upon asking such a question!

After his realization, Huiming bowed and took leave of his new teacher. When he got to the foot of the mountain, he turned to the crowd of pursuers who had come with him to catch Huineng and said, "I just climbed up to the heights, but I found no trace of him. There's no point in looking any further for him here."

—from a talk by Kokyo Henkel



## SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER



### WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD

February 9-April 13

Practice Period is a focused period of time for a deeper commitment to zazen, individual and group meetings to explore practice, and Dharma study. This winter Practice Period will be nine weeks, including a 2- to 4-day Parinirvana Sesshin, a one-day sitting in March, a class series on "Mind-Only," and a 5-day Buddha's Birthday Genzo-e Sesshin. (See below for details of events.) For this Practice Period, participants are encouraged to attend at least three zazen periods a week at Zen Center, the 8-week class series, five Wednesday evening Dharma talks, and three of the ten full days of sitting offered.

### BUDDHA'S TEACHING OF MIND-ONLY: CHAPTERS 5-7 OF THE *SANDHINIRMOCHANA SUTRA*

Sunday evenings:

Feb 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 6:35-8pm

Kokyo will offer a class series on the central chapters of the Mahayana "Scripture Unlocking the Deep Mystery," the basis of the Yogachara or Mind-Only School of Buddhism, revealing the vision of the whole world as ungraspable projections of mind. (The main

translation to be used can be found in *Wisdom of Buddha* translated by John Powers). Suggested donation: \$80/class series for sustaining members, \$100 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. There will also be a tea and discussion group led by senior practitioners during zazen before class, 5:30-6:30pm.



### BUDDHA'S PARINIRVANA SESSHIN

Thursday, February 10-Sunday, February 13, 5:00am-9:00pm (ends 6:30pm Sun.).

Sesshin is a silent sitting retreat, with morning Dharma talks. Thursday and Friday are open to people coming and going for any part of the day; Saturday and Sunday are for people participating in the whole day only, and include oryoki meals. The sesshin ends with a ceremony to commemorate Buddha's entering Parinirvana. Suggested donation for weekend days: \$35/day for sustaining members and \$40 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### ONE-DAY SITTING (for SCZC and MBZC Sanghas)

Saturday, March 12, 8:30am-5pm.

The day includes a Dharma talk in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Bring a bag lunch. Suggested donation: \$12/day for sustaining members and \$15 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### GENZO-E SESSHIN ON DOGEN ZENJI'S "ONE BRIGHT PEARL"

April 5-9 (5 days), 5am-9pm.

Genzo-e is a concentrated study retreat on a chapter of Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo*. In this retreat we will examine "One Bright Pearl" (*Ikka Myoju*). (See April newsletter for details.)

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 Gene or Michael if you have questions about fees.



# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

## INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday, January 22&29, Feb 26, March 26, 10am-noon.

A monthly introduction to the body and mind of Zen meditation and the forms of practice at SCZC. The morning includes sitting and walking meditation, followed by discussion. The two consecutive Saturdays in January are an opportunity to learn about even more aspects of the practice; people can attend one or both of the days. Everyone is welcome, free of charge.

## SANGHA DAY

Saturdays January 15 and March 19, 9:15am-4:30pm.

Sangha Day 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.

## MEG COURTNEY'S LAY INITIATION CEREMONY

Meg Courtney, a student at SCZC in the 1990s, received lay initiation from Abbot Katherine Thanas in a joint ceremony presided over by Gengo Akiba Roshi and Rev. Ann Kyle Brown conducted at the Kumeido or Little River Zen Center outside Ft. Bragg on August 15. Ann is the Head Teacher at the newly established temple. Since leaving Santa Cruz, Meg has been living in Ft. Bragg. Her new Dharma name is Doshin Myokaku, "Way Heart, Subtle Awakening."

## "WARMING THE JEWEL" PROGRAM

SCZC is offering a new opportunity for those who have begun Zen practice and want to take the next step, and for experienced practitioners who want to refresh their wholehearted dedication to the Way. "Warming the Jewel" is a one-year commitment to the intention of bringing deep awareness of our present experience into our meditation practice and into our daily lives, for the benefit of everyone we meet including ourselves. It is based on making Zen practice in the sangha a priority, while recognizing that we live complex householder lives. The program offers a challenging array of practice opportunities and Dharma studies, but is designed to be sustainable and enlivening for a person with family responsibilities and a full-time job. Please see the full description at [www.sczc.org](http://www.sczc.org) on the "Deepening Practice" link if interested.

## RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS, BODHISATTVA INITIATION CEREMONY

Jukai ("Receiving the Precepts") is a formal ceremony, which will now be offered each fall at SCZC, in which participants publicly take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and affirm their intention to live ethically and with awareness, in accord with the Bodhisattva Precepts of our tradition. Please see the full description at [www.sczc.org](http://www.sczc.org) on the "Deepening Practice" link if interested.

## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS

SCZC is grateful to these new members who joined in 2010: Lisa Noble and Eric Zigman have taken on a steady Friday evening practice. Richard Wadsworth and Laurie McCann have become regular attendees on Wednesday evening. Bryan Bielefeld studied

meditation for many years at Mt. Madonna Center. Michael Hylton comes with a background in Rinzaï Zen. Rob Hoogner studied at San Francisco Zen Center and has started a term on our Board of Trustees. Their practice enriches all of us at Santa Cruz Zen Center.

## "ORDINARY RECOVERY" MARKS ONE YEAR IN SANTA CRUZ

We celebrate one year of Friday night meetings in Santa Cruz. The Ordinary Recovery group brings the healing nature and compassionate heart of sitting practice to areas of suffering in our lives. With meditation and mutual support we study our addictions, relationship problems, and difficult emotional states. All are welcome to join us in this practice each Friday evening, 6:45-7:45pm.

## "GLOBAL SANGHA" COOKS!

It's hard to believe that we've been cooking for the Homeless Garden Project for almost three years! This year we added another big soup to bring to the River Street Shelter. Like all practices, we are aware of the interconnectedness of the universe. The stir-fry starts with the earth, water and labor from the Garden itself. The cooks manifest the Treasure of Sangha as we incorporate donations from the Zen Center and from the UCSC Agroecology Program. Finally, we all share lunch with the trainees and volunteers from the Garden Project. Please join us any Friday morning at Zen Center, 9:15am.

## THE SUBTLE ENERGY OF COMPASSIONATE AWARENESS AND THE FIELD OF BIG MIND: A WORKSHOP IN EXPLORING THE SELF (for SCZC and MBZC Sanghas)

*A talk and participatory activity offered by Katherine Thanas and Anna-Lisa Adelberg, Energy Medicine Practitioner*

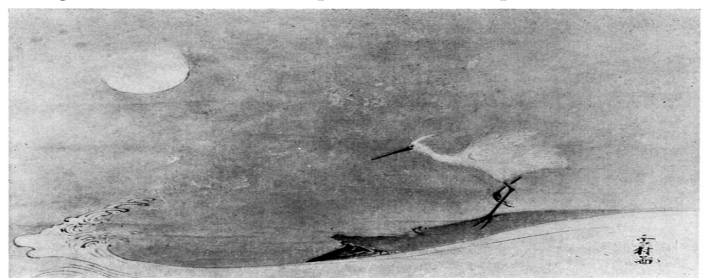
Thursday March 3, 6:30-8:30pm

In this workshop we will learn how to feel our own energetic body as well as that of others. We will experience blocks in the energy body that represent trapped consciousness and we will practice ways of releasing these blocks and the frozen consciousness stored there.

Working in a group can deepen our relationship to ourselves and others. Resting in compassionate presence we will meet a larger self outside the definition of our small minds and experience previously unknown possibilities of healing and self-awareness.

Anna-Lisa Adelberg is co-founder and teacher of the Luminous Body-Integral School of Energy Medicine. She brings 17 years of experience with healing work, a highly trained level of attunement to subtle energy and heart dedication to liberate awareness and reduce suffering.

Carl Cherry Center for the Arts, 4th and Guadalupe Sts., Carmel. Sliding scale: \$40-\$25; some partial scholarships available.



# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

## MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

### CARMEL VALLEY SITTING GROUP

Our Carmel Valley meditation group continues to meet 7-8:30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. We do a 30-minute period of zazen, followed by a silent period of tea and cookies, a brief Dharma talk and discussion. For more information, please call Patricia Wolff at (831) 659-3042.

### WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD

Winter Practice Period will begin with a weekend sesshin, February 4-6 at Villa Angelica, Carmel, and end with an all-day sitting on April 9. During these ten weeks we have the opportunity to deepen our practice and study of the Dharma both individually and as a group. We'll meet Sunday mornings for classes with Katherine Thanas, exploring Dogen's radical fascicle "Time-Being" (*Uji*) and Katagiri Roshi's commentary, *Each Moment Is the Universe*. The focus of group tea/discussion will be the experience and study of mindfulness and precepts in our daily life. We will join Santa Cruz Zen Center for an all-day sitting, have a mindfulness walk in Garland Park, and a half-day sitting. Our many new friends who have come to practice through Brown Bag Zen and Ordinary Recovery are especially invited to join the practice period. Application forms are available at the practice locations. Information: Susan McDonald 601-7590 or [soozmcdonald@gmail.com](mailto:soozmcdonald@gmail.com).

### MBZC PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MBZC sent out its annual fundraising card in November. To all of you who sent in donations, Thank You. The gifts received by MBZC in response to this annual mailing have historically represented about one-third of the income needed to fund Monterey Bay Zen Center. As such, the generosity of our Sangha members at this time of year is vital to MBZC's ability to provide Soto Zen teaching throughout the year. Many MBZC events are self-sustaining or even help raise funds to support general expenditures. These programs, such as Brown Bag Zen (a noon time, informal meditation and discussion group), Ordinary Recovery (a Buddhist approach to addiction issues) and workshops featuring a variety of teachers are part of MBZC's mission to carry Zen Buddhist teaching and practice opportunities into the community. These programs are also often the gateway for new practitioners into our Soto Zen tradition.

Our most formal and primary weekly activity is Tuesday evening zazen, with service and Dharma talk—also our most expensive single budget item. Expenses include payments to Dharma teachers (\$4800), rent (\$3000 – which includes use of the Cherry Center for a minimum of 4 weekly activities and storage of Zendo supplies), and Zendo supplies (\$330 – candles, charcoal, incense, and other meditation supplies). Other teacher and teaching expenses are also supported from the general fund to make access to practice affordable to the community. Scholarships awarded based on financial need make it possible for participation in weekend sesshins, workshops and classes by those who could otherwise not afford to attend.

If you would like to know more about MBZC's expenses and fundraising efforts, monthly Treasurer's reports are included in the Minutes binder in our storage area at the Cherry Center. Check it out next time you come to the Zendo.



Again, as President of MBZC and on behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your support over the last year, and I look forward to seeing you at the Zendo.

--Jana Clark, President of Board

### EXPLORING THE NEW RESEARCH: PAIN AND THE BRAIN

*A workshop with Katie Milano, Physical Therapist and Yoga Teacher*  
Saturday, January 22, 2011, 9:30-noon

This workshop includes a presentation, discussion, meditation and movement for changing brain patterns. New research on pain and anxiety shows us how suffering becomes our reality. Researchers are demonstrating how movement and meditation physiologically change the brain, and how such changes in the brain patterns can reduce and/or eliminate physical pain.

Katie Milano, RYT, DPT, is a skilled Orthopedic Physical Therapist and Yoga Instructor on the Monterey Peninsula. She merges western science and eastern understanding of body, mind, and spirit. Katie recently traveled to London for specific training in the newest research from all over the world on how we experience pain.

\$35 (scholarships available). St. James Church, Corner of High and Hellam Streets, Monterey. Reservations/information: Kathy Whilden 375-7826 or [wildini@aol.com](mailto:wildini@aol.com).

### BROWN BAG ZEN: ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Brown Bag Zen, an informal Zen meditation group, has now been meeting every Friday from 12:15-1:15pm for the last year. The weekly sitting was started as an experiment to see if there was interest in a noontime weekday sitting. And indeed there is interest. This group is open to new and experienced individuals who want to sit meditation with others. There is no charge and donations are gratefully accepted. Information: Kathy 375-7826.

### ORDINARY RECOVERY

Ordinary Recovery continues to meet on Saturday mornings at the Cherry Center in Carmel, from 9-10am, to explore the teachings of Buddhism and the twelve steps of recovery. Robert: 624-7491.

### MBZC IS ON FACEBOOK



Sign up to be a fan of the MBZC page for current information on what is happening at MBZC.

## DAILY SCHEDULE



## 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:

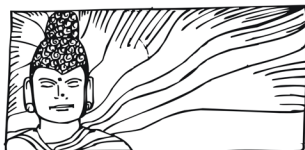
8:30am	Zazen
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## Sunday Evening:

5:45pm	Zazen
6:25pm	Service

## LIBRARY OPEN

During tea after Wed. Lecture



Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. Jan. 4	6:25-7am
Sangha Day	Sat. Jan. 15	9:15am-4:30pm
Precepts Renewal	Thurs. Jan. 20	5:45-6:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jan. 22,29	10-noon
Chino Roshi Memorial	Wed. Jan. 26	6:25-7am
Parinirvana Sesshin	Feb. 10-13	5am-9pm (6:30pm Sun.)
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Feb. 18	5:45-6:30pm
Mind-Only class series	Sun. Feb. 20,27	6:35-8pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Feb. 26	10-noon
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Fri. Mar. 4	6:25-7am
Mind-Only class series	Mar. 6,13,20,27	6:35-8pm
Mahapajapati Memorial	Wed. Mar. 9	6:25-7am
One-day Sitting w/MBZC	Sat. Mar. 12	8:30am-5pm
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Mar. 18	5:45-6:30pm
Sangha Day	Sat. Mar. 19	9:15am-4:30pm
Chino Roshi Memorial	Fri. Mar. 25	6:25-7am
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Mar. 26	10-noon
Mind-Only class series	Apr. 3,10	6:35-8pm
Genzo-e Sesshin	Apr. 5-9	5am-9pm

## MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

PO Box 3173, Monterey, CA 93942

831-375-7826

## 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 Meditation	7:10
Service	7:20
Lecture/discussion	7:30-8:30

## Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen	7am
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(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](http://www.montereybayzencenter.org).

Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jan. 15	10:15-noon, Cherry Ctr.
Pain Workshop	Sat. Jan. 22	9:30-noon, St James, Monterey
Sesshin	Fri-Sat. Feb. 4-6	Villa Angelica, Carmel Highlands
Half-day Sitting	Sat. Feb. 12	8:30-noon, St. James, Monterey
Katherine Thanos Class	Sun. Feb.13-Apr. 3	10-noon, 98 Via Campana, Monterey
Practice Period Teas	Sun. Feb.13-Apr. 3	9-10am, 98 Via Campana, Monterey
Mindfulness Walk	Sat. Feb. 12	9:30-11am, Garland Park, C.V.
Exploring the Self	Thurs. March 3	6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Ctr.
One-day Sitting w/SCZC	Sat. Mar. 12	8:30am-5pm, SCZC

Santa Cruz Zen Center  
113/115 School Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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