

# sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

JANUARY 2012

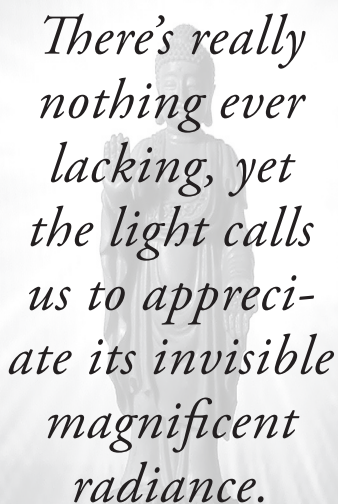
## ABSORPTION IN THE TREASURY OF LIGHT

What is light? The ordinary light we experience all the time is actually quite extraordinary. When light fills a room, we don't actually see it directly. We see it reflected off of things; unless it's completely pitch black, everything we see is merely a reflection of light. Light shines indiscriminately on every single one of us, so we can equally see each other and all things reflected in light. In the Zen tradition, we don't speak of transmitting the things light reflects on, but transmission of the light itself. Transmission of light is something that can't be seen and yet can be appreciated. When the sun comes up in the morning, especially if we're camping in the wilderness and have no artificial light source at all, we really appreciate it; the sun comes up, and suddenly the whole world is revealed.

It's so easy to take light for granted, since it seems so ordinary. It's ordinary in that anytime there's a light on or the sun is shining, we can live in the world of things. It's extraordinary in that while it illuminates everything, we can't see it at all. Because light is not actually some thing, like the things it illuminates, how can it be transmitted, how can it be passed along? That's truly impossible and yet we could say that a deep appreciation of the light can actually be conveyed from person to person. It seems to me that's what Zen is celebrating. We hear many stories of practitioners who weren't appreciating the light, and therefore they were really suffering. They were living in the light, of course – we're all living in it – but they didn't appreciate it. Sometimes in these stories a Zen teacher points out the light to them in a way that their heart opens to total appreciation of light. Zen stories are about the moments when people were converted from non-appreciation to total appreciation of light. We could call this "transmission of the appreciation of light." We call it simply "transmission of light," because when light is appreciated, that's when it's actually light. There's really nothing ever lacking, yet the light calls us to appreciate its invisible magnificent radiance.

Many people have heard of Dogen Zenji, the founder of this lineage of Zen in Japan. His disciple was Koun Ejo. The subject of light must have been important to Ejo because the one thing he wrote that has come down to us is called Absorption in the Treasury of Light, or the One-Pointed Concentration in the Womb of Light (Komyozo-zammai). This treatise culminates in a wonderful version of zazen instruction, a perfect summary of Zen meditation practice and inspiration for how to just wholeheartedly sit: "I humbly say to you comrades who have the same true aspiration, don't hold onto a

single state or device, don't rely on intellectual understanding, don't keep what you've learned in meditation. Cast your body and mind into the great treasury of light and never look back." This invisible but radiant treasury of light is waiting for us to throw body and mind into it. Well, where is it? What if we don't know where to cast this body and mind? It has no location, but there is no place where it isn't. We might be willing to let body and mind drop into the light, but then be tempted to look back and ask "how am I doing?" or "is this okay?" or "I wonder if this may be dangerous for my health?"



*There's really nothing ever lacking, yet the light calls us to appreciate its invisible magnificent radiance.*

Ejo goes on: "Don't seek enlightenment, don't try to get rid of delusion. Don't be averse to thoughts arising, but don't fondly continue thoughts." This is a challenging instruction for meditators. It may not be so easy to not be averse to thoughts arising, to willingly accept whatever comes to us, but how about also to not fondly continue thoughts – is this difficult? "If you don't continue thoughts, they cannot arise by themselves." That's a radical statement, and yet it sounds so simple as well. If you don't continue thoughts, they can't arise by themselves. Don't try to stop them! Don't be averse to thoughts arising, but don't just continue them either! We may say, "I'm not trying to do it, they're just arising." So there is a subtle instruction here about how to be with thoughts arising; is it possible that these thoughts are not created by "me," that they are not "mine" to create? The Sixth Zen Ancestor said, "No-thought is not to think even when involved in thought."

"Just be like space, like a mass of fire. Breathe naturally in and out, and sit through everything without getting involved." Wonderfully straightforward zazen instruction. It's not that nothing's happening; we're just not getting involved in it. "Even if 84,000 thoughts arise and vanish, if one doesn't get involved with them, thoroughly relinquishing them, each thought will be the light of the spiritual power of wisdom." Thoughts are light, thoughts are a manifestation of the light, but it takes not being involved with them to appreciate that. "This doesn't apply only to sitting. Each step is the walking of light." In sesshin we usually sit for forty minutes and then get up and do kinhin, slow walking. That's walking of the light, then we sit back down. That's sitting of the light. Then food comes and we do eating of the light. Night comes and we do sleeping of the light. And the alarm goes off very early in the morning and we do groggy waking up of the light.

"Twenty-four hours a day, be like someone who has utterly died. There is no view of self and no false discrimination at all. Nevertheless the breath goes in and out." So it's a little different from being a dead

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*(continued from page one)*

person. "And with the nature of hearing and feeling being without cognition and discrimination, body and mind are one suchness in the unified light silently shining. Therefore one responds when called." This is not some kind of passive, apathetic, stagnation practice. It's totally alive, totally present and totally ready for whatever happens next. So we may be sitting really still, and then somebody says, "Can you ring the bell?" or "Come over here and help me serve the food." This light can respond when called. Throughout sesshin, and when we leave sesshin, we get called in infinite ways all day long. The light is very still and yet very dynamic and responsive, like someone who has utterly died and yet responds when called.

"This is the proof the light is not obstructed by activity. The empty luminosity shines by itself without exerting mental energy." This quote from the Third Zen Ancestor's Song of the Trusting Mind is the very heart of the practice and realization of zazen. "This empty luminosity has no abode. Though Buddhas appear in the world, it doesn't appear; though Buddhas enter nirvana, it does not enter nirvana. When you are born the light isn't born, and when you die the light doesn't disappear. It's not more in Buddhas, not less in sentient beings. It's not deluded when you're deluded; it doesn't become enlightened when you awaken. It has no location, no sign, no name. It is the totality of everything. It cannot be grasped or abandoned or attained." If we try to get ahold of that light, understand it with the conceptual mind, it can't be done. But it also can't be abandoned; we can't get rid of it, we can't escape it; we can't get it, and we can't attain it. It is the interdependent totality of the entire universe, beyond all our ideas, which doesn't come and go but just silently shines eternally. "While unattainable, it is in effect throughout the entire being; from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, it is just thus, complete and clear, the wondrously inconceivable spiritual light."

*- edited from a talk by Kokyo Henkel*



## SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER



### SESSHIN AND STUDY WEEKS IN 2012

*Put on your calendar now; see website calendar for more events*

February 9-13 (5 day) Buddha's Parinirvana Genzo-e Sesshin

April 4-8 (5 day) Buddha's Birthday Sesshin

May 31-June 3 (4 day) Genzo-e Sesshin at Jikoji Zen Center

June 21-25 (5 day) Summer Solstice Sesshin

Sep. 2-7 (6 day) Genzo-e Study Week at Tassajara Zen Mtn. Center (reservations through SFZC open in February; see [sfzc.org](http://sfzc.org))

October 11-15 (5 day) Denko-e Sesshin

December 6-12 (7 day) Buddha's Awakening Day Sesshin

### SHODO CALLIGRAPHY CLASS WITH YOSHI SHIBATA

Four Sunday afternoons: January 8,15,22,29, 2:30-5pm.

Learn the fundamentals of Shodo Japanese Calligraphy using traditional ink and brush. Shodo teaches us how to be present and express our inner strength in art and in life. In this workshop we will start with the meditation of making ink, then continue on to learn basic strokes using a calligraphy brush. No experience necessary.

Yoshi Shibata has been practicing Shodo, along with other traditional Japanese arts, since he was 5 years old, beginning at a temple in Japan. He has won a number of national calligraphy competitions. Over the years he has taught many classes and workshops in Santa Cruz.

Fee: \$20/class, plus materials (See website for materials to bring.)

### WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD

February 8-April 11

Practice period is a focused period of time, nine weeks this winter, for a deeper commitment to zazen, individual and group meetings to explore Zen practice, and Dharma study. This winter practice period will include a class series by Kokyo, a 5-day Genzo-e Sesshin study retreat, a one-day sitting, and end with a 5-day sesshin to celebrate Buddha's Birthday. Participants are encouraged to attend at least three zazen periods a week at Zen Center, the 7-week class series, five Wednesday evening Dharma talks, and five days of sesshin.

### GENZO-E SESSHIN ON DOGEN ZENJI'S "VALLEY STREAMS, MOUNTAIN COLORS"

February 9-13 (5 days), 5am-9pm (ends 5:30pm Monday)

Genzo-e is a concentrated study retreat on a chapter of Dogen Zenji's Shobogenzo. In this retreat we will examine "Valley Streams, Mountain Colors" (Keisei Sanshoku). Each day will include morning and afternoon teachings and discussion with Kokyo, as well as zazen and formal oryoki meals. Sesshin ends with a ceremony to commemorate Buddha's Parinirvana at 5pm. Please plan to participate in at least two full days of sesshin.

Suggested donation: \$35/day for sustaining members and \$40 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### MIND, TRANSFORMATION, AND BUDDHA NATURE: THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

Seven Sunday evenings:

February 19,26; March 4,11,18,25; April 1, 6:35-8pm.

Kokyo will offer a class series on Red Pine's new translation of the Lankavatara Sutra, an essential scripture of the Yogachara or Mind-Only School of Buddhism, revealing the vision of the whole world as ungraspable projections of mind, as well as introducing the teaching of Tathagatagarbha, or Buddha Nature.

Suggested donation: \$10/class for sustaining members, \$13 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. (There will also be a tea and discussion group led by the shuso during zazen time before class, 5:30-6:30pm).

### TILE POLISHING ZAZEN: A WORKSHOP WITH ISSHO FUJITA SENSEI

Saturday, March 3, 2-5pm

Masenkai is the name of Rev. Issho's unique zazen gathering which he has been leading at his temple in Japan. "Masen" means polishing a tile, a metaphor for zazen in which we polish our life. "Kai" means a gathering. The afternoon starts with an hour of exercise to loosen up the body-mind for zazen. This exercise is designed to make a smooth transition from ordinary body-mind to

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zazen body-mind. Then after Issho's detailed zazen instruction, we will do two 30-minute periods of zazen, followed by Q&A.

Issho Fujita was ordained as a Zen priest by Kosho Uchiyama Roshi at Antaiji Temple in Japan at age 29, later receiving Dharma Transmission from him. He was head teacher at Pioneer Valley Zendo in Massachusetts, and currently works for the Soto Zen Education Center in San Francisco. Before becoming a priest, he also studied child psychology at Tokyo University.

Suggested donation: \$25 for sustaining members and \$30 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

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## ONE-DAY SITTING

With SCZC and Monterey Bay Zen Center Sangha  
Saturday, March 10, 8:30am-5pm

The day includes a lecture by Kokyo in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Please 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.

*SCZC relies on fees and donations to continue its mission. If you can pay more, please consider doing so. If you cannot pay the suggested donation listed, please pay what you can.*

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## INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday, January 28, February 25, March 24, 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. Everyone is welcome, free of charge.

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## SANGHA DAY

Saturdays, January 21 and March 17 (9:15am-4pm)

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 potluck lunch.

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## 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.

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## SHUSO CHUCK OVERLEY

The shuso, or head student, for winter practice period is Seigen Shoka (Clear Eyes, Encourage & Transform), Chuck Overley. Chuck has been practicing at SCZC since 2005, received the precepts from Abbot Katherine Thanas in 2008, and lives with his wife Nannette, who was shuso for fall practice period, on an organic farm in Davenport. The role of the shuso is to offer oneself to the sangha by attending as much zazen as possible, leading discussion group on Sunday evenings, giving Dharma talks, and answering questions in a Dharma Inquiry Ceremony to close Practice Period.



*Shuso Nannette Overley cannot give away the dragon staff in the Dharma Inquiry Ceremony on Dec. 8.*

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## NEWS

Harry Jackson received the Bodhisattva precepts from Rev. Taigen Leighton at SCZC on Nov. 22. Harry's new name is Hogan Ankaï, Dharma Vow, Peaceful Realm.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

I am pleased to introduce the newly seated Board of Trustees: officers Chuck Overley as Vice President, Edie Brown as Secretary, Michael Bashista as Treasurer, and members at large Rob Hoogner, Lisa Noble, Sally Aguirre, Jeffrey Sherman, Chris Davidson, Liz Milazzo and Brian Corser. Gene Bush is the leadership liaison and a nonvoting member of the Board. With the faithful sangha practice of these devoted folks, the Board guides Zen Center and provides financial management and oversight. The past Board took up a formal strategic planning process that many of you have been part of over the past few years. The sangha gives input to this plan in many ways, but especially at the annual All-Sangha meeting in November.

At its last meeting, the Board established three strategic imperatives: optimize our strengths (in property, ceremony, community service, outreach, for example); create invitations and opportunities for people to connect, contribute and learn new skills (through, for example, sangha-led events, enhancing public relations, and being willing to think in new ways); freely delve into Zen Center's relationship with its property (including what would best serve the sangha now and in the future. A subcommittee has been chartered by the Board to explore this question and bring information and data to the Board so that it can give due consideration and make strong decisions).

These general imperatives, along with your input, will guide the new Board in determining what new initiatives will best support the sangha. For example, the Board is undertaking the launch of a Zen and the Arts program. The vision is that SCZC, residing in and serving a community rich in the arts, become a center for Zen practice and expression through various arts. Sally Aguirre and Chuck Overley are leading this effort and we hope you will find opportunities in which to participate. This program has been received with enthusiasm, and we want your ongoing input and feedback as we kick off this exciting new offering.

In gratitude for your deep and continuous practice,  
Beata Chapman, President



## MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER



### MEDITATION AND TEA

Saturday, February 25, 10:30am-3pm (includes lunch) at the Cherry Center.

Meditation with Sara Hunsaker will accompany Introduction to Japanese Tea with Gerow Reece, who trained in the Urasenke School and lived in Kyoto. Gerow currently lives at Jikoji Zen Center in the Santa Cruz mountains. Donation of \$15-25. For information or to reserve, call Sara (831) 659-1552.

### ANNUAL WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD

February 3-April 1.

Practice Period creates an opening in our busy lives to make personal and collective commitment to intensify and widen our practice. There will be opportunities for meditation, classes, workshops, half-day and full-day sittings. Please complete the Practice Period form and return to Susan McDonald at (831) 601-7590.

### WEEKEND SESSHIN

February 3-5.

Once again we will be having our annual weekend sesshin at Villa Angelica in Carmel Highlands. Kokyo Henkel will lead the sesshin. We are limited to the number of spaces for participants and encourage anyone who is interested to contact Susan McDonald at (831) 601-7590. Preference will be given to Monterey Bay Zen Center participants.

### SUNDAY CLASSES WITH KATHERINE THANAS

Sundays, February 12-April 1, 10am-noon.

Katherine Thanas will teach a series of Sunday classes commencing February 12. She will announce the topic of Study in January.

### STEP BY STEP

Mindful walking in the winter morning, turning senses inward, practicing awareness of body/mind. Meet at the visitor's center Garland Park, Carmel Valley. Donations to MBZC welcomed. Information: Susan (831) 601-7590.

### MEDITATING WITH THE BODY

Four classes with Dr. Patricia Wolff

Saturdays, March 17,31, April 7,28, 10:30-12:30

How can we truly know ourselves and engage wholeheartedly in each moment? Tired of the incessant chatter in your head? Perplexed by your relationship with food? Aware of a continual sense of dissatisfaction in your life? Meditating with the body provides a

way to meditate with our un-lived lives – not just the life lived from our heads. Combining Zen meditation with other ancient spiritual wisdom techniques, we find tools and visualizations, which help illuminate what is hidden. By cultivating this clarity, we can start to recognize and unravel our habitual symptoms and patterns and begin to harvest the deep nourishment and guidance which our universe freely offers.

Dr. Patricia Wolff is a lay transmitted teacher in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Immersed in the healing arts for over 30 years, Dr. Wolff has also been exploring Tibetan Dream yoga, Qi Gong and shamanic traditions.

At the Cherry Center. Suggested donation: \$25/class or \$80/series. MFT CEUs are available. Information: Patricia (831) 659-3042.

### PRECEPT CLASSES

With Robert Reese

Saturdays, January 14, February 18, March 10, 10:30-noon.

Studying the precepts heightens awareness of how they can inform and enliven our daily words and actions, assist us at work and in our interactions with friends, family and the wider world. The precepts are an expression of our inmost nature, rather than rules or an abstract code of ethics. Through talks, discussion, journaling, reading and meditation we will explore practicing the precepts with ourselves, our communities and with all of life.

Cherry Center in Carmel. Information: (831) 920-8303 or e-mail Yblnwj7065@sbcglobal.net. Donations to MBZC are encouraged.

### BROWN BAG ZEN TEA PARTY

Brown Bag Zen is having a tea party on Saturday afternoon at 1:30 at Nancy Peden's home, 526 Dutra St., Monterey (behind Colton Hall). Anyone interested in Brown Bag Zen is invited to come.

### BUDDHISM AND SCIENCE: A WORKSHOP COMPARING INSIGHTS

With Kokyo Henkel and Gene Barnes, Mar 24, 10:30am-1pm.

Buddhism is considered to be an ancient spiritual path and science is thought to be a relatively modern approach to understanding the natural world. However, the roots of science go back two thousand years to Archimedes, and Buddhism is deeply concerned with nature and all beings in the present. Both disciplines employ careful observation, logical reasoning, and the reduction of human error and illusion, as well as an openness of thought which values not only the experience of the past, but welcomes new insights as well.

Dr. Gene Barnes received a B.S. degree in physics from the California Institute of Technology in 1956, an M.S. degree in physics from the University of Illinois in 1957, and a Ph.D. degree in physics from the University of Oregon in 1967. He is the author of the book, "What Then Is Truth?" and currently teaches at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

**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

Sunday Evening:

5:45pm                    Zazen  
 6:25pm                    Service

**LIBRARY OPEN**

During tea after Wed. Lecture

**ORDINARY RECOVERY**

Friday evenings at 6:45 pm



MBZC AND SCZC ARE ON FACEBOOK: you can "like" the two Zen Centers Facebook pages

for current information on what's happening there, photos of events, and more.

Prajna Paramita Chanting	Sun. Jan 1	10am-afternoon
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Wed. Jan 4	6:25-7am
Calligraphy Class	Sun. Jan 8,15,22,29	2:30-5pm
Precepts Renewal	Mon. Jan 9	5:45-6:30pm
One-day Sitting	Sat. Jan 14	8:30am-5pm
Sangha Day	Sat. Jan 21	9:15am-4pm
Chino Roshi Memorial	Thurs. Jan 26	6:25-7am
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jan 28	10-noon
Shuso Entering & Talk	Wed. Feb 1	6:35-7:30pm
Precepts Renewal	Tues. Feb 7	5:45-6:30pm
Open Practice Period	Wed. Feb 8	6:35-7:30pm
Genzo-e Sesshin	Feb 9-13	5am-9pm
Buddha's Parinirvana	Mon. Feb 13	5-5:30pm
Lankavatara Sutra class	starts Sun. Feb 19	6:35-8pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Feb 25	10-noon
Tile Polishing Zazen WS	Sat. Mar 3	2-5pm
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Mon. Mar 5	6:25-7am
Mahapajapati Memorial	Thurs. Mar 8	6:25-7am
Precepts Renewal	Thurs. Mar 8	5:45-6:30pm
One-day Sitting	Sat. Mar 10	8:30am-5pm
Sangha Day	Sat. Mar 17	9:15am-4pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Mar 24	10-noon
Chino Roshi Memorial	Mon. Mar 26	6:25-7am

**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  
 (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).

Precept class, R. Reese	Sat. Jan 14, Feb 18, Mar 10	10:30-noon, Cherry Ctr
Brown Bag Zen Party	Sat. Jan 14	1:30pm, 526 Dutra, Mty
Japanese chanting practice	Tues. Jan 17,31	5:30pm, Cherry Center
Meditation, S. Hunsaker	Sat. Jan 21	9-12:45pm, C Valley
Mindful Walking	Sun. Jan 22	10-11:30am, Garland Pk
Half-Day Sitting	Sat. Jan 28	8:30-noon, St James
Weekend Sesshin	Fri-Sun. Feb 3-5	Villa Angelica, Carmel Highlands
Practice period	Feb 3-Apr 1	Susan, 601-7590
K. Thanas classes	Sun. Feb 12-Apr 1	10-noon, 98 Via Campana, Mty
Tea Ceremony Intro	Sat. Feb 25	10:30-3pm, Cherry Ctr
Day Sitting with SCZC	Sat. Mar 10	8:30-5pm, SCZC
Meditation with the Body	Sat. Mar 17,31; Apr 7,28	10:30-12:30pm, Cherry
Science and Zen	Sat. Mar 24	10:15-1pm, Cherry Ctr

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

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