

sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

APRIL 2015

NOT MOVING IS THE WAY

In preparation for the Spring newsletter, today, March 17, 2015 – coinciding with Katherine's birthday – I write with deep gratitude for her life so completely lived. The following article, originally published in this newsletter in 1996, captures Katherine's style so well. She is at once speaking directly to the participants in that sesshin, weaving in her serious academic study, and bringing forward examples of her own ordinary life. Honoring her memory and meeting her way, I have elicited a few responses from currently active sangha members – as it is in interaction that her teaching truly comes alive. -- Gene

When I was younger in practice, when I would feel hopeless about being able to understand, I longed for someone to “just tell me what to do.” I thought there was a “way” and that I just couldn't find it. Now years later, I know that practice is the process of realizing there is no “way”, that each of us IS “the way”. Therein lies the mystery.

In the Genjo Koan, Dogen Zenji says, “Here is the place, here the way unfolds. When you find your place where you are, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point. When you find your way at this moment, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point.” The precise moment of readiness is unknown. Finding your place where you are is the heart of the path. Not moving is the way.

This may sound like a contradiction, but a teacher waits for a student to develop confidence in her self, to find what her self is. I had to discover and confess to my self my own judgments and opinions before I could learn that discriminations are illusory. Sometimes we hesitate to name our opinions and values. I had to be willing to own a self before I could drop it.

My earliest aspiration was to be extraordinary. At the same time, I aspired to be ordinary. I came to practice with both aspirations; they co-existed. The vision of an ordinary simple human life, going to work everyday, being a responsible citizen, maybe a parent, was deeply embedded. Simultaneously, the vision of an extraordinary me was also inside. Being extraordinary meant being better than others; being ordinary meant being one with others.

It has taken a long time to realize that practice is not about proving one or the other, but about becoming whole, finding the integration of the two. Once a teacher told me: “Do the job but take yourself out of the situation.” How do you take care of your child and yourself at the same time? How do you carry the responsibility and take

yourself out of the situation? How do you go to sesshin for seven days and be invisible, while being head of the kitchen, or directing the meditation hall or serving? How do you do things in a way that makes space for everyone?

A number of people this sesshin have been dealing with doubt and resistance. How do you not resist either one? How do you not get taken in by either one? Can you practice letting those feelings roll in with the tide and roll out again?

Whatever arises invites our attention. We trust sitting because what has brought us here is something deeper than any of us knows. We sit together in fellowship, and feel safe enough to become friends with ourselves. We make a big space in our mind and body so we can feel our heart deeply and not deny it. We hear our own mind clearly. If our mind is raising a ruckus, we listen to that too, allowing all of it in without reservation.

That may mean noticing that your heart is broken. That you can't breathe in the lower part of your body, that your shoulders are crunched, that your lips are tight, that your jaw is jammed. The backward step listens deeply: we were hurt, we were scared, we feel betrayed. Let those energies in; let them go. The nature of mind is movement. You have to let the thoughts in, in order for them to move.

I'm sitting here and can only see the room from this perspective. Those of you who are sitting there can't see the room from here. It's inevitable that we will all have partial views. That's what we call being a self. We experience according to a limited self. Our practice for sesshin days is to keep witnessing limited self. Gradually I learn that even though I can't see from any perspective but this one, I can include other perspectives, understand that others have their own perspective, and each is just as true and real as mine, even if we're having a disagreement. That's a stretch of the heart muscle. Practice is always on the fulcrum between wanting to get out of deluded self and seeing it arise more and more clearly. As I have quoted Uchiyama before, “Practice is not to get out of the self, but to study the delusions of the self.”

Sitting here with difficulty we may learn more than sitting here in bliss. Anyway, we don't have a choice. That's what is called a good practice opportunity.

-- adapted from a 1996 lecture by Katherine Thanas, founding teacher of MBZC and first abbot of SCZC

*Finding your
place where
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path.*

SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

(continued from page one)

Arriving, arriving, arriving

Arriving in moments of time and space.

Am I ready to greet this moment - and the next?

Does it matter?

This moment arrives in time and space

Arriving and meeting arises.

Can we fully meet in this moment?

No introductions or pre-requisites required.

Are you and I ready to accept the invitation to arrive

In this moment and the next?

-- Edie Brown

I met Katherine Thanas only once not long after I started coming to SC Zen Center. After a dharma talk, when everyone had gathered in the garden for tea, I went over to introduce myself. I spoke with her for two minutes but her welcoming was complete. There was such a penetrating look from her as though she already knew me. Her looking was both "ordinary and extraordinary". I felt it was such a simple gift. She died three weeks later.

This excerpt from her talk, Not Moving Is The Way is another gift from her to us all. Everything is right here and practice is just learning how to see, to watch what is coming up....how to observe my thoughts and feelings...how to notice what is here along the path I call my life.

What is showing up today, now...in the garden, on the sidewalk, on the phone? Can I just watch, or listen deeply enough in order to recognize how at the same time it is both ordinary-just a bee buzzing in the lemon tree or plum, and extraordinary...its pollinating, gathering nectar for honey? Can I simply notice how easily I want to reject something or cling to something else? I am learning that in order to allow everything in, the membrane of this small self must be open/porous enough yet at the same time, the fabric of this small self must also be incredibly strong. On the cushion, this fabric of myself is woven. On the cushion, I learn who is walking this ordinary path.

-- ziggy rendler-bregman

Good morning Katherine,

Your instruction was always so simple and straightforward, just like this article from a long ago talk. Simple, but not easy. Allow it all in, keep witnessing limited self. As you asked in your article, I now ask myself, how, how, how? How do we sit with doubt and resistance? How do we not get taken in by the tricks of our mind? How can I relax with my limitations and listen deeply to the thoughts and feelings as they arise?

I study my "how" questions and what I see is this: myself peering anxiously down the road, trying to see around the bend so that I can proceed with caution and get it right and avoid my harmful tendencies. Roadmap, please.

What about not knowing how? Right here in the uncertainty, can I relax and listen deeply? Not listen for what might be around the next corner, but listen to what is appearing, no matter what. And then take the next step knowing that I will always have a partial view. And the next step, and then the next.

Can I relax with my limitations? Can I listen quietly and carefully to my limited and fearful mind, without turning away and also without being swept away, and without knowing how? Witnessing limited self with kindness and patience is seeing the dharma, hearing the dharma. Usually I think the dharma is someplace else. Surely this situation, this mind of not measuring up, this critic, is not the dharma. Listening wholeheartedly to each expression in the phenomenal world as it arises, observing the samsaric mind with humility, falling down and getting up, practice occurs and the dharma wheel turns. This is my understanding of finding my place where I am. With deep gratitude for your teaching,

-- Nannette Overley

SESSHIN

April 9th thru 12th

We conclude the Winter Practice Period with a four day retreat. We begin Thursday morning at 5 a.m. and practice until Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. The sesshin includes daily Dharma talk, oryoki meals, sitting and walking meditation. The Sesshin ends with a ceremony for Buddha's birthday at 4 p.m. Please register by April 4th.

CELEBRATE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

April 12th, 4 pm

Join the Sangha celebrating Buddha's birthday on a beautiful Spring afternoon, Sunday April 12, at 4 pm. The patio will be filled with flowers and bouquets piled up around a statue of the baby Buddha. During the ceremony we all have an opportunity anoint the Buddha's body with sweet tea! Following the ceremony we will enjoy refreshments and celebrate our good fortune to have such a friendly Sangha! See you all there!

ONE-DAY SITTING

Monday May 4 at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center

Travel by car pool to Tassajara, arrive Sunday afternoon, day sit on Monday, work with the community on Tuesday morning, return home Tuesday evening. Ask at SCZC for details.

STONE AND SELF

Workshop with Michael Bashista, May 8-10

Over one weekend we learn how to carve, texture, sand and polish a soft stone. In doing so we face our apprehensions and explore our creativity by irrevocably changing an object that has existed for millions of years and, in moments, hours and days, change it for millions of years to come. See flyer or www.sczc.org/zenEvents. Fee: \$110/130

SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

5-DAY SUMMER SOLSTICE "NO TOYS" SESSHIN

with Kokyo Henkel. June 18-22

Completely silent retreat: no chanting, lectures, dokusan. 5 am - 9 pm (ends 4 pm Monday). Suggested donation: \$35/40 per day.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturdays, April 25, May 23, June 27, 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.

SANGHA DAY

Saturday, May 16, starts 9:20 am

Sangha Day is a time to come together and help take care of the temple and grounds: cleaning the zendo, making candles, garden-ing, etc. Please bring something for a potluck lunch.

SOURDOUGH BREAD WORKSHOP

A fundraiser for Global Sangha

Support the efforts of Global Sangha by joining the sourdough breadmaking workshop. Over 3 days we will learn how to grow and maintain a sourdough starter. We will make delicious artisan loaves with crispy crust and a tender, creamy interior. Funds will be used to buy food for the lunch we prepare each week at the Homeless Garden Project. For best results it is recommended that you attend all three days of the workshop. Friday evening April 17, all day April 18, and Sunday morning April 19. Call Patrick for details 831-295-3380.

JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR

Saturday June 6

Once again, Santa Cruz Zen Center will participate in the annual Japanese Cultural Fair, this year on Saturday June 6. We will open the fair with chanting on the main stage in the park. Throughout the day Santa Cruz Zen Center offers its Quiet Grove for the kimono demonstration, ceremony of tea, flower arranging, and bonzai. We finish the day with the Segaki Hungry Ghost Ceremony. Hundreds of people come to Zen Center to participate in these activities and to learn more about the Center. This is a great way to support a major cultural event like the Japanese Cultural Fair and to meet members of our community.

SANTA CRUZ PRIDE PARADE

Sunday June 7

Join us in celebrating the diversity of our Sangha and our community! As we march in the parade we demonstrate the joy of the Sangha Treasure. We get to meet other like-minded faith-based organizations as we walk and wave.

We meet at 10:30 a.m. on the corner of Cathcart and Pacific, Sunday morning June 7. The parade lasts barely an hour. It's a short parade but definitely a heart filled event.



Eventually, intuitively, like a bee moving to a flower,
we come to 'just sitting'.

--Houn Kobun Chino

Painting by Shizan Watanabe

BASKET MAKING WORKSHOP

With Brian Bielefeld & Gene Bush, Sunday, August 16

This class will get you started in the ancient craft of basket making. We will concentrate on the use of round reed, a processed form of the rattan vine of Southeast Asia. It is easy to use and very forgiving.

We will make a simple basket with possibilities of enhanced design for further work. Those with experience will learn how to enhance their craft. We will also see how other artists have developed a basic design into unique, beautiful creations.

In the words of instructor Brian Bielefeld, "Basket making requires paying attention to the process. If the mind wanders the basket wanders." Join us for this late summer exploration of embodied practice – synchronizing hand and mind to create an artifact of natural elegance. 10 am - 4 pm, brown bag lunch, \$70 for ZC members, \$80 for all others. Includes cost of materials.

NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Because in my role as treasurer I am aware of the many donations, membership contributions and responses to the Annual Appeal, it is clear to me that many of you express your appreciation in this way. All of these donations along with fees for classes and sesshins are what make Santa Cruz Zen Center a thriving practice environment. There are also many contributions from others during sangha days (work days) and from those who volunteer for zendo roles. All this is a reminder of the generosity of our members. Many bows,

--Michael Bashista

SCZC relies on fees and donations to continue its mission. If you can pay more, please consider doing so. If you cannot afford the suggested donation, please offer what you can. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Santa Cruz Zen Center
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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.

SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER		115 School Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060		831-457-0206	www.sczc.org
DAILY SCHEDULE		Precepts Renewal	Fri. Apr 3	5:45-6:30pm	
Monday-Friday:		Buddha’s B-day Sesshin	Apr. 9-12	5am-9pm	
5:45am	Zazen	Buddha’s Birthday	Sun. Apr 12	4-5pm	
6:25am	Service (chanting)	Sobun Roshi Memorial	Fri. Apr 24	6:25-7am	
12:00pm	Zazen	Introduction to Zen	Sat. Apr 25	10-noon	
5:45pm	Zazen	One-day Sitting	Mon. May 4	8:30am-5pm	
6:25pm	Service	Precepts Renewal	Mon. May 4	5:45-6:30pm	
Wednesday Evening:		Stone and Self	May 8-10	starts 6:30pm on the 8th	
6:35pm	Lecture/discussion	Class series – Heart Sutra	Sundays, May 10-June 7	6:35-8pm	
7:30pm	Informal tea	Sangha Day	Sat. May 16	starts 9:20am	
Saturday Morning:		Introduction to Zen	Sat. May 23	10-noon	
8:30am	Zazen	Kobun Roshi Memorial	Tues. May 26	6:25-7am	
9:10am	Service	Precepts Renewal	Tues. Jun 2	5:45-6:30pm	
Sunday Evening:		Sejiki and Cultural Fair	Sat. Jun 6	11am-5pm	
5:45pm	Zazen	Summer Solstice Sesshin	Jun 18-22	5am-9pm	
6:25pm	Service	Sobun Roshi Memorial	Wed. Jun 24	6:25-7am	
LIBRARY OPEN		Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jun 27	10-noon	
During tea after Wed. Lecture					
ORDINARY RECOVERY					
Friday evenings at 6:45 pm					