

sangha

Newsletter of Santa Cruz Zen Center ❖ Warm Jewel Temple - Winter 2018

MOUNTAINS WALKING

by Patrick Teverbaugh

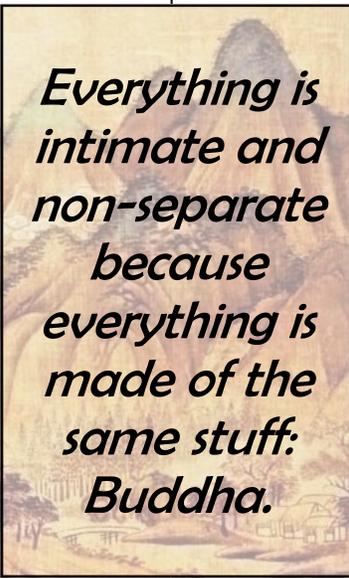
This summer I went on a long hiking vacation with my old friend from high school. We've been close friends for 50 years even though we've pursued very different interests during our adult years. On the hike, I appreciated the quiet surroundings and the meditative walking rhythm of each day's many miles. I found myself getting irritated with my friend when he would frequently stop to take photos, interrupting the "flow" of the hike, I felt. How could we have such different objectives for this trip—me interested in the flow and he interested in savoring the particulars? But I found that I could cut through my suffering if I settled back into the source of our 50-year friendship: just two people comfortable as sounding boards for each other as we negotiate this world—whether as 15-year-olds or at age 65. At the source of our friendship we're pretty much the same—picture two teenagers with guitars singing protest songs. As we've elaborated on these raw young minds over the years some differences have emerged. But at the source we're still made of the same things, we're not so different. We sang a lot on this trip, and played harmonicas!

In Buddhism we say that the primary cause of suffering is separating the world into ourselves and everything else. When I elaborate opinions and ideas about you or a political candidate or even the quality of a meal, that's suffering. When I forget that we're made of the same things, that our natural state is harmonizing and walking together—that's suffering. If I want to liberate myself and all beings from suffering, my practice is to loosen the grip I have on my self and its opinions and remember to harmonize.

As humans, we have a karmic predisposition to hold on tightly to a separate self. This is probably useful for primal survival, keeping ourselves safe from attack or injury. But continuously separating the world into friend or foe, likes or dislikes, creates an environment of suffering—greed, hate, and delusion. When I become aware of this suffering, I can ask myself, "What separation am I causing, how can I close the gap and become more intimate with this? Where can I start to harmonize in this place of disharmony?"

In zazen we take the backward step and settle into the source. This is the clear, vast awareness before thoughts are elaborated, before we start naming the sounds and sights and smells as different objects. This clear, bright awareness is also called Buddha Nature, and the Dharma Body of Buddha. This is our True Nature, our nature to be harmonious, intimate, non-separate. When a thought arises in zazen, I can see that it is made of this same Dharma Body—like the morning mist floating over a calm lake. In fact, any sound or sight or sensation that arises is nothing but this same source. It is not separate from me because we are the same nature, the Buddha Nature.

When I practice resolving discord with my friend on the hiking trail, I can remember that we are nothing but the same source, Buddha Nature—the nature to be harmonious. When I thought that that we had different ideas about our hike, I was forgetting our common True Nature. It was like the mist thinking it was separate from the lake!



Everything is intimate and non-separate because everything is made of the same stuff: Buddha.

Dogen talks about a similar practice in his fascicle, "Mountains and Waters Sutra." He states, "The mountains and waters right now are the manifestation of the words and teachings of the Buddha." This is the same as our thoughts being the misty expression of Buddha Nature mentioned above. Dogen goes on to challenge us with the idea that "the Green Mountains are constantly walking." The mountains and rivers and all objects are naturally abiding in and realizing their True Nature—while fully mountains they are the Mind and Body of Buddha, constantly revealing Buddha Nature. This is the landscape that Dogen wants us to live in, where sounds are the music of Buddha and sights are the Body of Buddha. Robert Thurman calls this landscape the Buddhaverse! Here, everything is in harmony and accord because everything is the Buddha Body. Everything is intimate and non-separate because everything is made of the same stuff: Buddha. Can we change our perspective on our life such that we're living in the Buddhaverse? Wow!

Dogen asks us to take a careful look at our own walking, at our own practice of abiding fully in Buddha Nature. Then, "Since you know your own walking, you should fully know the green mountains' walking." Our practice reveals that the mountains and rivers, the walls and pebbles, me and you, are expressions of the same Buddha Nature. No wonder a hike in the mountains nourishes us so completely—it is our home, we are intimate with all we see, it is us!

"You should also examine walking backward and backward walking and investigate the fact that walking forward and backward has never ceased since before form arose... Walking forward does not obstruct walking backward. Walking backward does not obstruct walking forward." Here, Dogen explains how we live in this landscape and, at the same time, liberate ourselves and all living beings. He shows how I can walk forward fully in my life—care for my family, pay my bills—and simultaneously take the backward step and remember that we are all the Body/Mind of Buddha. I can still walk forward into the mountains, and look back at my friend taking photos and see nothing but the young Buddha singing folk tunes!

COMPLETING THE DOKUSAN AND OFFICE BUILDING

We are celebrating the near completion of the new dokusan and office building! This project has been in the works—in planning, funding, designing, permitting and building—for eight years. Rory Howland, the contractor, has been extremely patient and generous with us. The highly skilled carpenter, Greg Tomer, is to be acknowledged for his refined and accurate work and for his attention to detail. A few interior details remain to be done, along with the surrounding porch and ramps. The final touches of unifying the new building with the garden will be accomplished during the Spring. Many thanks to the Board for persisting with the countless decisions related to this project, and deep gratitude to the Sangha for the generosity which allows SCZC to be sustainable for the next generations.

Honoring Katherine Thanas' legacy, with many bows, and yes, great relief, *Dana Takagi and Gene Bush*



NEW SANGHA SUPPORT NET LEADER

The Sangha Support Net Program is for Sangha members and Sangha members' families during times of challenge or times of transition. These challenges could include such times as: accident, temporary illness, hospitalization, long-term illness, death of a loved one or death of a pet. We also offer Sangha support for life transitions such as: starting a relationship, ending a relationship, marriage commitments, receiving the precepts, birth of a child, the transition from youth to adulthood or house blessings. Occasional service to the community at large for funerals and other life transitions is also offered. Gene Bush has been leading this facet of community service for many years. In the near future, Edie Brown will work closely with Gene for a few months at the beginning of 2018 in anticipation of Edie becoming the Sangha Support Net Leader for Warm Jewel Temple. Edie returns from her practice period at Tassajara with gift bestowing hands!



Zen Center celebrates diversity in the SC Pride Parade on June 4



Releasing captive crickets into the ZC garden, after chanting for them, during annual Liberating Life Ceremony on September 2

NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES

There will be a new SCZC Board of Trustees in January 2018. Previous Board members Edie Brown, Dana Takagi, Michael Bashista, Sally Aguirre, and Chris Davidson are stepping down - many bows of gratitude for their years of devoted service. The new Board is President Mary Knudtson, Vice President Mari Tustin, Treasurer Yaro Jane Army, Secretary Liz Milazzo, Neti Parekh, Laurie McCann, Ken Collins, Rachel Grad, and Anais Schenk. Thank you to the new Board members for their willingness to take care of SCZC in this way. The Board is composed of volunteers who have been members of SCZC for at least one year. The Board meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:35pm in the zendo. The beginning of each meeting is open for community comments. If you have any concerns, ideas, or interest in serving in the future please speak with any of the Board members or any of the Practice Leaders.



SCZC resident practitioner Ken Collins received the precepts from Rev. Ryushin Paul Haller at San Francisco ZC on September 23. Ken's new name is Ryumon Doitsu: Dragon Gate, One Way.



Painting by Ellen Richter

AFTER FIRE

by Rosie King

After fire

long winter rains
 we are falling with you high-peak waterfall
 innumerable drops
 we are springing up with you burnt mountain
 stay with us green dragon
 wildflowers beneath charred trees

for Abbot Myogen Steve Stuckey (1946—2014)

TREES DON'T

by Terry Butler

Trees don't grow straight
 and deer in the forest
 don't
 walk a straight line.

Wind pushes the trees and
 they lean and fight each other.
 They die and block the trails.

Rocks and streams on hillsides
 keep the deer drifting from straightaway.
 The deer make paths of least resistance.

Whoever expects something different from people
 is only looking at his reflection in a still pool
 just before a pine cone falls in.

Plop.

He disappears in graceful ripples.
 Volga Boatmen ride the waves.
 He disappears,
 though he doesn't
 go anywhere.

Sunlight keeps pouring through the spaces between his atoms.
 His thoughts keep spinning along
 looking for order.
 He might wait
 to see himself whole again.

If he keeps sitting there
 time will bring back his reflection
 (different now
 because everything
 has changed).

Wind will have ruffled his hair.
 Sunlight will strike him at a different angle.
 Clouds may have gathered
 or his mood may have altered.
 He may have stopped thinking.
 A deer may have dislodged a boulder.
 It might have rolled down the hill
 and he may have died beneath it.

If he was lucky and there was time
 he might have learned that
 death is
 the only thing that moves in a straight line.



Photo of full moon outside the zendo by Aryeh Hillman

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DAILY SCHEDULE



Monday-Friday:

5:45am Zazen (all periods 40 min.)
6:25am Morning Service (chanting)
12:00pm Zazen
5:45pm Zazen
6:25pm Evening Service

Wednesday Evening:

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

Saturday Morning:

8:30am Zazen
9:10am Morning Service

Sunday Evening:

5:45pm Zazen
6:25pm Evening Service

Library open during tea after
Wed. Lecture

See szc.org for other weekly and monthly events including "Ordinary Recovery", qigong, Dharma discussion groups



SCZC is on
Facebook

2018 Sesshin and Zazenkai (Retreats and One-Day Sittings):

Jan 7 (half day) Zazenkai: Here the Way Unfolds (Eugene, Cathy, Dana, Patrice)
Feb 17-18 (2 day) Parinirvana Sesshin (Eugene Bush)
Mar 17 (half day) Sobun Katherine Thanas Memorial Zazenkai (SCZC & MBZC)
Apr 5-8 (4 day) Buddha's Birthday Sesshin (Kokyo Henkel)
May 12 (1 day) *at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center* (Cathy Toldi)
Jun 2 (half day) Eco-Sitting for the Earth (Neti Parekh)
Jun 22-24 (3 day) Genzo-e Sesshin (Dogen's 'Ten Directions') *at Jikoji* (Kokyo)
Jul 14 (1 day) Zazenkai
Aug 10-12 (3 day) Mountains and Rivers Sesshin (Cathy Toldi)
Sep 1 (1 day) Interfaith Zazenkai (Kokyo Henkel)
Oct 11-14 (4 day) Sesshin (Patrick Teverbaugh)
Nov 3 (1 day) Zazenkai (Patrick Teverbaugh)
Nov 29 - Dec 5 (7 day) Buddha's Awakening Day (Rohatsu) Sesshin (Patrick T)

2018 Practice Focuses and Practice Period:

Spring Buddha's Birthday Practice Focus: March 11 - April 8 (4 weeks)
(led by Kokyo Henkel)
Summer Mountains and Rivers Practice Focus: July 21 - August 12 (3 weeks)
(led by Cathy Toldi)
Fall Buddha's Awakening Practice Period: October 10 - December 5 (8 weeks)
(led by Patrick Teverbaugh)

2018 Class Series and Workshops:

Jan 14: Here the Way Unfolds (Eugene B, Cathy T, Dana T, Patrice M)
Mar 11- Apr 1 (4 wks): Radiant Light, Nonseparation (Dogen's 'Komyo') (Kokyo)
Mar 17: Natalie Goldberg book reading - 'Truth of This Life' by Katherine Thanas
May 13-20 (2 weeks): (Eugene Bush)
Jul 22-Aug 5 (3 weeks): Mountains and Rivers (Cathy Toldi)
Aug 19, Sep 16 (2 weeks): Living with Dignity (Eugene B, Dana T, Edie Brown)
Oct 21 - Nov 25 (6 weeks): Song of the Grass Hut (Patrick Teverbaugh)