

sangha

Newsletter of Santa Cruz Zen Center ❖ Warm Jewel Temple - Summer 2019

MEETING LIFE WITH YOUR HEART

by Rev. Patrick Teverbaugh

In the first chapter of the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Buddha demonstrates a central practice of Mahayana Buddhism. I call this practice “meeting your life with your heart.” When we navigate our life with an open heart—with compassion, lovingkindness, or empathy—we manifest the intimacy and interconnectedness of Buddha’s Heart/Mind. Buddha taught that our liberation from suffering is the Realization of the non-dual, undifferentiated one-ness of Consciousness—or emptiness, or Buddha Nature, or suchness, or ungraspable mind—the many names of Buddha. It’s simple, just be Buddha—no separation, no problem! And walking in the world with the attitude of the heart is the path of reducing separation and increasing intimacy and accord.

The Vimalakirti Sutra first appeared in India around the 1st century CE and gained popularity in East Asia after it was translated into Chinese in the 3rd century CE. People were drawn to its jewel-encrusted, fantastic imagery as well as its pragmatic practice instructions. The fact that its central character is a layperson has inspired those of us who practice outside of a monastery, for over two thousand years.

In Chapter 1, a great assembly has gathered around the Buddha, who is sitting on a throne, to hear him speak. A procession of young monks approaches, each carrying a jeweled parasol for shade from the sun. The Buddha turns the parasols into a swirling mass that ultimately becomes a huge canopy over the entire assembly. The jewels in the canopy become an infinite display of twinkling stars or planets, each populated with a buddha expounding a sutra to an assembly. Each twinkling planet is a Buddha-Field—bejeweled, harmonious, nourishing with abundance.

“As soon as the precious parasols had been laid down, suddenly by the Buddha’s miraculous power, they were transformed into a single precious canopy so great it formed a covering for this entire billion-world galaxy...The entire content of the galaxy could be seen...and the voices of all the Buddhas in the ten directions could be heard proclaiming their teaching of the Dharma...”

Buddha is showing us that everywhere we look—in all the ten directions—we encounter the Buddha and a harmonious Field filled with Dharma. Shariputra, one of Buddha’s senior disciples, looks around and can’t believe his misfortune at being in such an ordinary, even unfavorable habitat, when all around him are the splendors of other Buddha-Fields. He states:

“I see this great earth with its highs and lows, its thorns, its precipices, its peaks, its abysses, as if it were entirely filled with manure.”

Buddha then touched his toe to the ground and instantly the world

was transformed:

“...Suddenly it was transformed into a mass of jewels, a magnificent array of many hundreds of thousands of clusters of precious gems...Everyone in the assembly was filled with wonder, everyone perceiving that they were seated on a throne of jeweled lotuses.”

Shariputra was overjoyed and exclaimed: *“I see it!”*

Here Buddha explains that we are always in a Buddha-Field of harmony and intimacy and we can see it when we are negotiating the world with our hearts. We abide in a Buddha-Field when we: *“live by love, compassion, joy, and impartiality.”* (the Four Immeasurable States of Mind).

We abide in our Buddha-Field when we practice the Six Perfections: generosity, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom, states the Buddha. So, too, when we practice the ethical Precepts of not killing, not stealing, not lying, etc.

These are the practices that allow us to meet the world with our hearts. In fact, these practices connect us to our own hearts and we are immediately in our Buddha-Field. Our hearts are what connects us to others, so it makes sense that the manifestation of Buddha Nature or non-dual Consciousness in our conventional reality is the attitude of the heart.

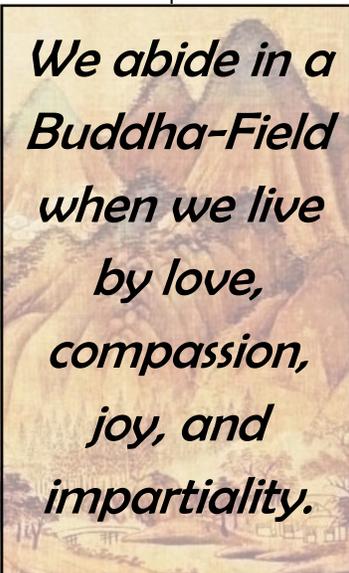
Heart practice and realization of our Buddha-Field arise easily at a family celebration, a walk in the woods, or reveling at the Japanese Cultural Fair,

for instance. These are environments where we all experience Shariputra’s joy of *“I see it!”*

But there are a lot of situations in our life when we need to feel the toe of the Buddha at our backside in order to see our Buddha-Field: in the heat of an argument, in a long line at the grocery store, at the outcome of an election, for instance. In difficult situations, wouldn’t we want to react from our jewel hearts rather than our desperate thoughts from the hell-realm? The Four Immeasurables and Six Perfections then become just the medicine we need to reconnect us to the attitudes of the heart!

I use the actual physical sensation of frustration or despair as a mindfulness bell to remind me that I need to rediscover my heart. And I like the image of just a gentle tap of the toe to change my mind. I use my experience of zazen to give me confidence. When I sit, I can be totally engaged in an angry dialogue with myself, but then stop and let those thoughts evaporate. Then I settle back into my breath and body—and wholehearted practice. The shift is almost imperceptible, but it is a profound transformation of heart and mind, as we’ve all undoubtedly experienced. It’s an inconceivable journey from my manure-filled mind back to the Buddha-Field! *“I see it!”*

May we all realize our enduring home in Shakyamuni’s Buddha-Field, comfortably reclining on our jeweled lotuses.



*We abide in a
Buddha-Field
when we live
by love,
compassion,
joy, and
impartiality.*

GLOBAL SANGHA NEWS

by Rev. Patrick Teverbaugh

MLK PARADE, JANUARY 21

This was the second year that Santa Cruz Zen Center has marched in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade through downtown Santa Cruz. We accompanied many other faith-based groups, as well as civic organizations and individual marchers. This mass of people, unified in their demonstration of lovingkindness, also celebrated each other's diverse backgrounds and traditions. In this regard, Dr. King shared the same vision as Buddhism's ancestors.

PRIDE MARCH, JUNE 2

A lively group of us marched in the LGBTQ Pride Parade. We carried the Zen Center banner, our decorated parasols, and waved flags. We marched for each other, for our friends and family members. It was a great way to spend time with Sangha, and a great way to be with our neighbors!

This year, all the faith-based organizations marched behind the interfaith ministerial group, *Out in Our Faith*. Our unified theme was celebrating diversity and removing barriers to full participation in our places of spiritual searching.



JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR, JUNE 8

SC Zen Center celebrated its 15th year as part of the Japanese Cultural Fair. As we traditionally do, we opened the Fair with chanting on the Main Stage in the park. Then we spent the rest of the day hosting the quieter cultural activities on the back patio of the Center. Once again, the events featured an Ikebana demonstration by the Watsonville Ikebana club, and a bonsai lesson from the president of the Santa Cruz Bonsai Club. The largest crowd of the day gathered for the kimono fashion show. Sangha member Carl Christensen transformed the dokusan room into a tea house, and performed tea ceremonies for small groups of visitors throughout the day.

Zen Center hosts also showed people around the campus and answered any questions about our history and practice. In this regard, the day became a busy open house that introduced our Center to the larger Santa Cruz community.

This was the second year that we have also prepared and sold Japanese pastries during the Fair. We make *taiyaki*, a fish-shaped sweet waffle filled with bean paste. The booth was staffed by our chefs from the Global Sangha lunch-prep gang. Proceeds went toward the weekly meals that we prepare for the River Street Shelter and the Homeless Garden Project.

This year seventeen volunteers donated their time to helping make the Fair a big success, and making it a lot of fun!

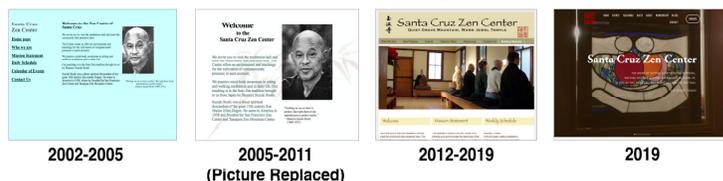
WEBSITE OVERHAUL COMPLETE

by Webmaster Rachel Grad

Where can you find a full archive of Santa Cruz Zen Center board minutes, or online copies of Sangha Newsletters dating from the last century? Did you know that some of your favorite Zen teachers are now maintaining blogs? Have you ever dreamed of signing up and paying online for an SCZC class? Or perhaps you have not yet planned your life around Zen Center events because there was no comprehensive online calendar to help you.

All this, and more, can be found at the newly-revamped Zen Center website, which was launched on May 11. The year-and-a-half-long project was taken on in an effort to update the outward presentation of SCZC and to offer new tools to serve the existing sangha. The website was designed by last year's Sangha Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, comprised of Anais Schenk (who is now board president) and Rachel Grad (who will continue on as webmaster), with contractor Joe Hall of Om Design. Please enjoy navigating the site, which includes so much great new content, and feel free to submit any comments or questions. Thank you to the board and practice leaders for supporting this project, and to Michael Bashista for maintaining the website for ten years prior to this update. Visit us, as always, at www.sczc.org.

WWW.SCZC.ORG

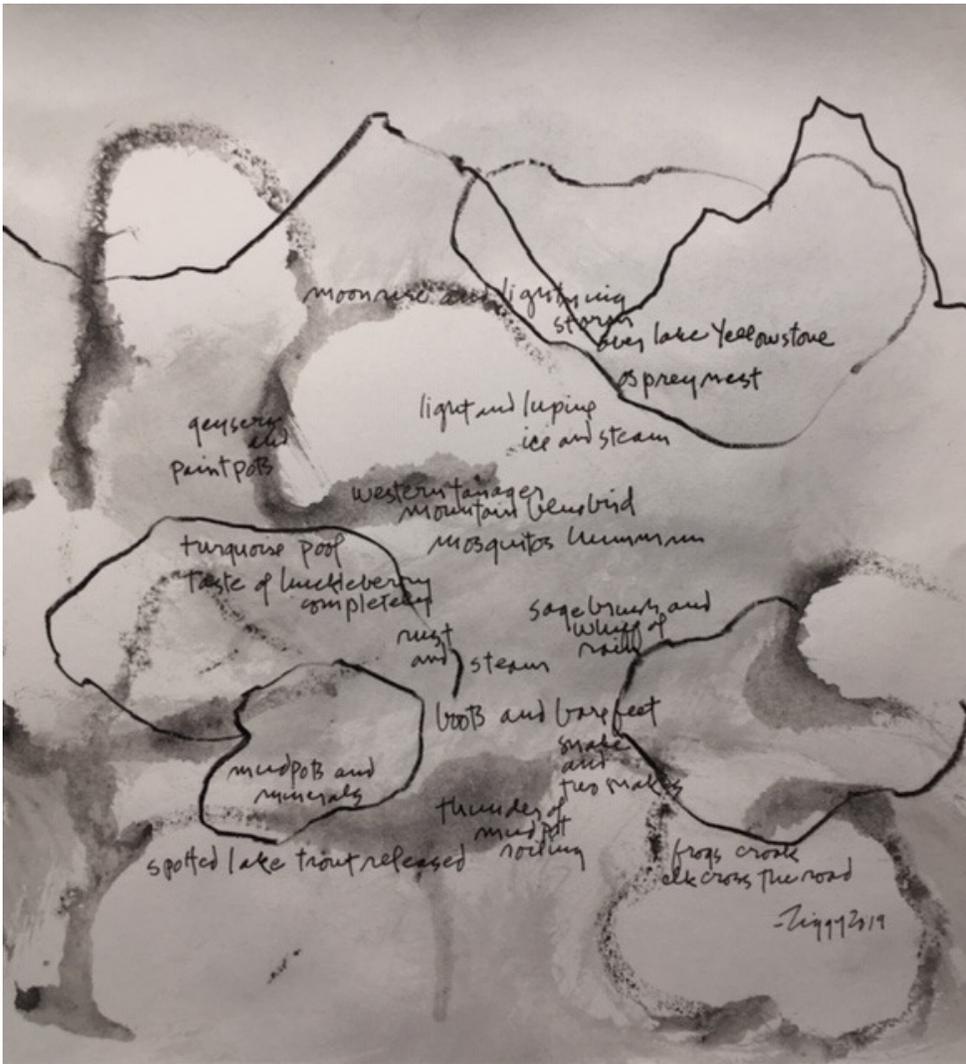


KOKYO AND SHOHO LEAVING SANTA CRUZ IN 2020

After 10 years of practicing and teaching at SCZC, Practice Leader Kokyo Henkel and his wife Shoho Kuebast will be moving to Kathmandu, Nepal in the Spring of 2020 to continue their study and deepen their practice of Mahayana Buddha-Dharma. The SCZC Practice Leaders Council will continue to share responsibility for the ongoing daily practice at Zen Center and the offering of myriad Dharma events. Kokyo will lead the Fall Practice Period at SCZC, as well as sesshin and classes in the Spring before their departure.



"Blue, black, and white" by Rev. Ellen Richter



"Painted Poem" by Ziggy Rendler-Bregman



Painting by Eduardo Izquierdo

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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 sczc.org for other weekly and monthly events including "Ordinary Recovery" and Dharma discussion groups



SCZC is on
Facebook

2019 Sesshin and Zazenkai (Retreats and One-Day Sittings):

Jan 12 (1 day) Zazenkai (Patrick Teverbaugh)
Feb 15-17 (3 day) Parinirvana Sesshin (Cathy Toldi)
Mar 16 (1 day) Zazenkai (Eugene Bush)
Apr 4-7 (4 day) Buddha's Birthday Sesshin (Patrick Teverbaugh)
May 11 (1 day) *at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center*
Jun 1 (half day) Eco-Sitting for the Earth (Neti Parekh)
Jun 14-16 (3 day) Genzo-e Sesshin *at Jikoji Zen Center* (Kokyo Henkel)
Aug 9-11 (3 day) No Toys Sesshin (Patrick Teverbaugh)
Aug 31 (1 day) Sutra Recitation Day (Kokyo Henkel, Shoho Kuebast)
Sep 14 (half-day) Zazenkai with Liberating Life Ceremony (Kokyo Henkel)
Oct 8-20 (3 day) Denko-e Sesshin (Kokyo Henkel)
Nov 9 (1 day) Zazenkai (Kokyo Henkel)
Dec 5-11 (7 day) Buddha's Awakening Day (Rohatsu) Sesshin (Kokyo Henkel)

2019 Practice Focus and Practice Period:

Spring Buddha's Birthday Practice Focus: March 17 - April 7 (3 weeks)
(led by Patrick Teverbaugh)
Summer Mountains and Waters Practice Focus: July 7-21 (3 weeks)
(led by Cathy Toldi)
Fall Buddha's Awakening Practice Period: October 16 - December 11 (8 weeks)
(led by Kokyo Henkel)

2019 Class Series and Workshops:

Jan 13 - Feb 10 (5 wks): Foundations of Zen (Eugene Bush, Cathy Toldi)
Mar 17-31 (3 wks): Vimalakirti Sutra (Patrick Teverbaugh)
May 19, 26 (2 weeks): Twelvefold Chain Collage Workshop (Eugene B, Cathy T)
July 7-21 (various days): Mountains and Waters (Cathy Toldi)
Sep 22, Oct 13 (2 weeks): Living with Dignity (Eugene Bush, Edie Brown)
Oct 27 - Dec 1 (6 weeks): (Kokyo Henkel)