

sangha

Newsletter of Santa Cruz Zen Center ❖ Warm Jewel Temple - Winter 2021

RESOLUTE STABILITY

by Eugene Bush

How we work with the Indian, Chinese and Japanese texts translated into English challenges us to think and feel our way into the core of the Buddha's teachings. The many generations of Ancestors since Buddha's time expressed these core teachings in their own way in their own times to their dharma companions, making great efforts to communicate the essence of the Buddha's wisdom.

When we are working with translations, we are working with questions of world view in a way. The international leaders of the Soto Shu, along with many contemporary translators, make our common chants and many of Buddha's teachings available in many languages. A single character, with its roots in the heritage of India may have several English equivalents; the subtlety embedded in a character or phrase may include understanding based on the parts of the character, parts of a word. Thus, a translator is working with a palette of English words as possibilities for any given character or phrase. We can see how translations vary from place to place, from time to time, and that the meaning that people use to interpret and express text is based on that person's world view, their understanding of Practice. I strongly encourage the practice of comparing translations in use at various zen centers to support us to touch the meanings, feel them in our hearts and bellies, and bring the stories into our own daily lives.

What may at first appear to be a simple story reveals layers and layers of understanding, requiring our active engagement with the teachings. A very clear example of this is the Kalama Sutra.

The Kālāma Sutra is number 65 in the Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. It is often cited as the Buddha's "charter of free inquiry." The sutra starts off by describing how the Buddha passes through the village of a clan called the Kalamas. They ask for his advice: "Many wandering holy people and ascetics pass through, expounding their teachings and criticizing the teachings of others. ... We are perplexed and in doubt, Blessed One, as to which of these good ascetics speak truth and which speak falsehood."

Like a skillful communicator, the Buddha first affirms their inquiry, "It is fitting for you to be in doubt. Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter." The Buddha then goes on to support and encourage the Kalamas to investigate for themselves. Buddha invites the Kalamas to examine whether an activity leads to welfare and happiness or to harm and suffering. With very precise language, the Buddha leads the Kalamas to understand that each person has to know for themselves rather than rely upon some outside source to determine how to conduct oneself.

"Do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning,

by reasoned cogitation, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because of the status of the speaker. But when, Kalamas, you know for yourselves 'These things are unwholesome, blameworthy,... these things lead to harm and suffering,' then you should abandon them. ... [Or] when you know for yourselves, 'these things are wholesome, these things are blameless,... these things lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should live in accordance with them."

This response serves as an entry point to the Dharma; direct knowledge grounded in one's own experience can be called upon. He advises that the words of the wise should be heeded and taken

into account, but significantly he proposes not a passive acceptance but, rather, constant questioning and personal testing to identify those truths which can be counted on to reduce one's own out-of-balancedness. The Kalamas express gratitude for this teaching and become lay followers of the Buddha.

This teaching has led me to question – how exactly do I know what is wholesome, harmless & balanced? The practice of zazen itself can be the beginning of this investigation. This practice is central to zen. We sit down, become still, observe the workings of our own minds, bodies and hearts, pay attention, notice the causes of activity, notice the results of activity, refine and adjust, returning to Vow. This is what I believe Dogen later called 'resolute stability' in his extended zazen instruction named Fukanzazengi.

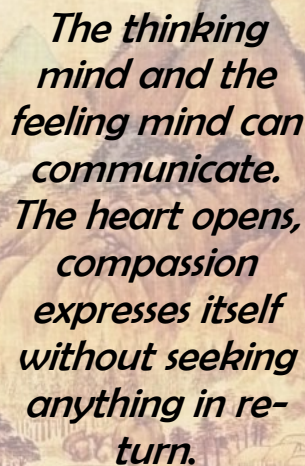
We practice zazen meditation simply for the sake of meditation itself (no gaining idea!) We sit simply perceiving the present moment as it is, a convergence of myriad conditions. Who perceives this moment? Recalling Katherine's wisdom, "The big Self posing as a small self."

Within this interval of non-judgmental present-moment awareness, compassion naturally arises. The thinking mind and the feeling mind can communicate. The heart opens, compassion expresses itself without seeking anything in return. Contrary to an assumption that meditation is self-absorbed disengagement from day-to-day life, meditation simply frees us from the constraints of our limiting habits. It would seem that meditation frees us so that we can be compassionate. But actually, it's the other way around – compassion is the vast territory out of which the capacity to tend to the moment arises.

PRACTICE FOCUS: FEBRUARY 19 TO APRIL 11

Cultivating Loving-kindness - led by Patrick Teverbaugh

Over the last 10 months, heart practices have been key to negotiating all that has arisen in our lives. Looking forward, we see many more opportunities to meet the world with compassion and loving-kindness. We still sit with the grief and suffering caused by the Covid virus. We need to address the healing of our Nation.



*The thinking
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We need to look inward with compassion to examine our white privilege, and we need to address the structure of organizations and systems that continue to manifest racial inequity.

How can we nourish and sustain our hearts? Bodhisattva practice is a life of compassionate activity. Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha nourish and sustain us. And this does not mean only the ones we meet on School St., but the very practice of seeing Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in everyone and everything also cultivates our heart practice.

The annual Parinivana Sesshin opens the Practice Focus from February 19 to 21 when we look at the methods the Buddha teaches to sustain the Practice of saving all beings. The sesshin ends with the Parinivana Ceremony on Zoom. During the sesshin, meditation periods will be spread throughout the day so we can carry the mind and heart of our sitting into the usual activities of our lives. There will be a short talk each day.

The four Sunday morning classes scheduled in February and March will focus on developing compassion and loving-kindness. We will look at traditional Buddhist teachings such as the *Metta Sutta* and the *8-fold Path*, as well as commentaries by contemporary teachers. Discussions and break-out room dialogues will make this a more personal exploration.

The Practice Focus ends with sesshin on April 9 to 11. It will be structured much like the opening sesshin and end with Buddha's Birthday Ceremony. Here we celebrate the freshness of Spring with its renewal, energy, and growth.

I look forward to practicing and studying with the Sangha on this central Buddhist topic, and celebrating all the possibilities that this particular Springtime holds for us!



Offering - by Ellen Richter

SCZC BOARD NEWS

An abridged version of SCZC Board's "2020 Year in Review" - Nov. 2020 All Sangha Meeting

Our response to COVID: We've attempted to be both adaptable and responsible to our community and are grateful for your support and understanding as we've moved through this unknown time. We'd like to express gratitude to all those who have embraced the online programs and sitting, as well as those who continue to maintain the grounds and operations while we are not there.

We appreciate that many people miss sitting in person but have opted to take a careful approach as cases have increased in our community and State. We'll continue to meet and discuss the progression of opening as cases decline.

2021 Board: Yaro Jane Army and Mari Tustin were re-elected to continue while Anita Elliot was newly elected and joined us in January. Anais Schenk's term as President ended in December and she's opted not to continue. Mari Tustin stepped up as Board president with Sarah McClellan serving as vice president while Yaro and Ken Collins have continued in their respective roles as Treasurer and Secretary. Anais thanked the community for having her on the Board as she appreciated her time of service. We will all miss her capable, calm and efficient handling of all things SCZC Board, and wish her the best in her new ventures.

Special farewell to Edie Brown for having been a member at SCZC for over 30 years as she has performed all the roles at Zen Center including Board President for 6 years. She and her husband will be moving to BC, Canada. She plans to maintain her role in leading the Sangha Net until SCZC can physically meet and make the transition efficiently. We wish her all the best on her continuing adventure along the dusty path!



2021 SCZC Board: (L to R) Rene Netter, Rachel Grad, Anita Marie Elliott, Yaro Jane Army, Neti Parekh, Gilbert Ramirez, Mari Tustin, Will Peck, Ken Collins, Sara McLellan - taken at our January Zoomed Board meeting!

IN MEMORY OF DHARMA FRIEND, LAURIE BAIR

Ziggy Rendler-Bregman

直心碧山: Jikishin Hekizan *Straightforward Heart, Blue Mountain*

If you met Laurie at Santa Cruz Zen Center, she came forward completely to meet you.

I knew Laurie for almost 25 years, watching our daughters play soccer, our sons play in the band at SC High School. As long-time parishioners of Holy Cross Catholic Church we shared many conversations about theology, spiritual practice, and politics. It was Laurie who discovered SC Zen Center first. She began showing up for zazen at 5:45 am before heading off to work as an accountant at Dominican Hospital. "I think you might like to join me at Zen Center, she said, "I think you will like it"....12 years later, still here.

As Catholic Christians, we set out on a serious and deep study of Buddhism. We participated in dharma classes, skit nights and Sesshins. Laurie served as Tenzo many times. She helped out with office work making the bank deposits weekly and rolled up her sleeves for sangha work days, marched with SCZC for Pride and helped out wherever she could.

Laurie suggested the Christian-Buddhist dialogue with Fr. Cyprian Consiglio and head teacher Kokyo. They packed the zendo on several different occasions.

For our Monday morning Dharma Study, it was usually Laurie serving the oatmeal and Laurie with the great questions and some-

times fierce opinions. Her husband Paul started joining us for dharma study, thermos of coffee and dictionary in hand.

In September 2019, Paul died of a sudden heart attack. Laurie invited full participation in a Buddhist-Catholic Funeral Rite for Paul at Holy Cross Church. Almost one year to the day 2020, Laurie was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She faced it courageously and invited many to help her while also maintaining her sense of privacy. Laurie's humor, her honesty, and compassion for others manifested completely while she suffered so much pain. She called me from her hospital bed at Dominican the day before she died to thank me for "being such a good friend". "You have been like a sister to me", she said. How loving that is, to have the awareness to reach out like that. She was not a warm fuzzy... Laurie was a deep fuzzy.

Laurie died on December 5th, the day after her 72nd birthday and the day before grandson Quillen's 6th birthday. She was his "Super Hero" and she will always be my beloved friend.

She is survived by her daughter Ellen and son John as well as her daughter-in-law Alix and grandson Quillen. Her cremation was witnessed by close friends while her dharma friends from Zen Center gathered to remember her on Zoom. Laurie was buried near Paul at Oakwood Cemetery in a private ceremony on December 23rd. She was a true friend and is greatly missed.



Calligraphy by Catherine Sy: Emptiness - Wu Chinese /Mu Japanese (L), Release -Fang Chinese / Hanatsu Japanese (R)

First Winter After

Somewhere across the snowfield of grief
I trudge, ice-caked boots. How bleak the trail
of aching grey and the heavy silent watch
of Lodgepole Pine. Ripped from its massive
trunk, limbs split, scattered branches in every
direction. Not last night's storm, I reckon
but some other gale. What emerges from the snow-bank
must be taken into my hand. Crust of snow breaks,
pure white lines drawn with stick and the mud-speckled
stone of my heart sinks. Shiver in this relentless wind,
remember who howls in their dark, lonely rooms,
who sings by your bed, watches for the full moon. Ice
cracks me open. Clouds wander off the grid.

Ziggy Rendler-Bregman



Lemons - Ellen Richter



Laurie with Kokyo Henkel, at Holy Cross Church when he attended as guest teacher for Sangha Shantivanam meeting.



Laurie and Paul at the 2017 "Women's March", downtown Santa Cruz.

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www.sczc.org

**DAILY Online SIP Zoom meditation
Schedule**

See www.sczc.org for Zoom link

Monday-Friday:

5:45am Zazen
6:20am Morning Service (chanting)
6:00pm Zazen
6:30pm Evening Service

Wednesday Evening:

6:35pm -7:30 Lecture/discussion

Saturday Morning:

8:30am Zazen
9:10am Morning Service

Sunday Evening:

6:00pm Zazen
6:30pm Evening Service

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



SCZC is on
Facebook

***2021 Sesshin and Zazenkai (Retreats and One-Day Sitzings):**

January 9 (half day) Zazenkai (Eugene Bush)
February 19-21 (3 day) Parinirvana Sesshin (Patrick Teverbaugh)
March 20 (half day) Zazenkai (Eugene Bush)
April 9-11 (3 day) Buddha's Birthday Sesshin (Patrick Teverbaugh)
June 19 (half day) Eugene Bush
July 11 (half day) Cathy Toldi
August 7-8 (2 day) Mountains and Waters Sesshin (Cathy Toldi)
October 15-16 (2 day) Sesshin (Eugene Bush)
November 13 (1 day) Zazenkai (Eugene Bush)
Dec 4-11 (7 day) Buddha's Awakening (Rohatsu Intensive) Patrick Teverbaugh

***2021 Practice Period:**

Spring Practice Period: Feb. 18 - April 10 (7 weeks) led by Patrick Teverbaugh
Fall Practice Period: *Plans are pending possible re-opening*

***2021 Class Series and Workshops:**

February 28, March 7, 14, 21 (4 Sun AMs): Loving Kindness (Patrick Teverbaugh)
October - December (5 classes): *Plans are pending possible re-opening*

***2021 Weekly and Monthly Study and Practice Groups:**

Monday: Breakfast Study Group, 7:45-8:30am (Patrick Teverbaugh) **online**
Friday Morning: *Cooking for the Homeless*, 9:15-12 (P. Teverbaugh) **on hiatus**
Thursday PM: Koan Study Group, 3-3:40pm (Neti Parekh & Patrick) **online**
Friday Evening: *Ordinary Recovery*, 7-8pm (Patrick Teverbaugh) **on hiatus**
First Tuesdays: Awakening Together, 6:45-8pm (Val Miranda with P.Teverbaugh) **online**
Third Thursdays (usually) Foundations of Practice: Precepts Study 6:35-8pm
(Patrick) 1/21, 2/18, 3/18, 4/22, 5/20, 6/17, 7/15, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18 **online**

***Currently events are held online. Future events are subject to change due to Covid and SIP. Check www.sczc.org for latest updates**