

Sangha

NEWSLETTER OF SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2 SPRING 1991

Kobun Chino, Roshi, on Bowing

Question: Could you talk about the bowing we do in the service?

Kobun: "It is a very powerful action, destroying continuous birth of the ego. Ego is nonsense. Also, if it is your own you have to suffer with it. So whether the ego arises or not go with it and don't destroy it. Take all energy within and about with you. It is not a thinking process. It is an action. You recreate yourself. Most of the time we give freely to the life of egos One bow to somebody is a way to unite two as one. There is no discussion about it.

"One bow has every sensation, excitement, regret, joy, appreciation, heat, cold — everything — that which we are actually. It has the same nature as zazen so it is not a group ritual to do. Do it by yourself and if you have somebody you care for who is far away do it toward that person. If you have a beloved follower to transmit something to or someone with whom you are mutually realizing something bowing is an excellent gesture. If you have a great problem with the whole world situation because your (actual) perspective is contrary to your expectations, to bow to the world is another way to get into it. Instead of running

around and biting a bit of each part you swallow the whole problem as your problem. Because . . . it is all with you. We were born in the beginning like that. To be born on this earth is to have the whole thing. From the beginning there are these precise distinctions between things but the whole thing is yourself. That is how it started. When we become so deeply involved in precise discrimination between things for such a long time we forget our original self. We don't lose that original nature

but we forget. So, to sit is to recover that original nature fully and to stay with it for a while. And to get up is to gain excellent relationships with other selves, many dilemmas, people, plants, birds, jobs, all kinds. Suzuki-roshi talks about this original self as the "Big Mind" in which everything exists without exception."

From a lecture given on October 24, 1978, originally appearing in a 1979 edition of "Sangha."

A Brief History of the Santa Cruz Zen Center — Part I

In three parts, we will recount the first 20 years of Zen Center activity; the history of the first ten years is taken directly from a summation written in 1979, of the period during which Kobun Chino was the chief priest.

About 528 B.C. Siddhartha Gautama, after six years of arduous practice, discovered Where It's At. During the next two and a half millenia his wisdom was gradually conveyed westward from his homeland of northern India. In the summer of 1970 A.D. it reached Santa Cruz, California through the efforts of Kobun Chino, Ryan Brandenburg, Charles Oliver and others.

At first, the only activity of the Santa Cruz Zen group was to meet each Tuesday night for sitting, service, and lecture by Kobun. These first meetings were held in a small Unitarian church on Center Street, rented for the occasion. The following year things started getting serious.

In 1971 several regular members of the group rented a house at 114 Swift Street and converted the living room into a meditation hall. Now, in addition to Tuesday lectures, people could join in daily group sitting, attended mostly by the few people living at the

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Zen Center History (continued)

Swift Street house. Much of the money, materials, and encouragement needed for sitting practice during the Swift Street Era were provided by Ruth O'Neal.

In the spring of 1972 Kobun led the first weekend sesshin in Santa Cruz. Also that summer the group held its first business meeting. The meeting was generated by the following events: (1) The owner was selling the Swift Street house, and everyone would have to move. (2) The group was flat broke. (3) Ruth O'Neal was leaving for Japan.

The first problem was solved when Jim Goodhue offered his living room as a temporary zendo. In September 1972 the zendo was moved to Jim's house at 113 School Street. At that time Jim was living with a group of people whose only common characteristic seemed to be that they were all friends of Jim Goodhue. When a few of them floated away the following year, they were replaced by people who wanted to live there so they could better establish their zazen practice.

Gradually, without anyone noticing, the temporary zendo became permanent. Eventually Jim discovered that his house had been taken over by Zen. In revealing this insight to the other Sangha members he was quick to stress that it was fine with him. With the understanding that 113 School St. was a "Zen house" began the never ending debates on life-style and practice in such a place: Who can live there? How should the house be organized? What is the relationship between the house members and the larger Sangha? What *is* practice? Should people wear shoes in the house?...

After months of work by a few people, the group became an official non-profit corporation with official by-laws, an official board of directors, and an official name: "The Santa Cruz Zen Center." (Other suggestions had been "Zen Center Santa Cruz," and "The Wall of the Western Barbarian.")

About the same time Jim announced that he was going to Japan for a very long time. In an effort to sever his ties to Santa Cruz, he offered to give the two School Street houses to the group if they would pay off his debts. His debts were nothing compared to the total payments he had made on the houses, and the loose cash available in the group was nothing compared to Jim's debts. Everyone took a deep breath and agreed to come up with one hundred dollars each in three weeks. Everyone did; Jim disappeared into the mysterious Orient; and the Santa Cruz Zen Center, after an even more mysterious real estate transaction, became the owner of a valuable chunk of Santa Cruz.

Concurrent with these events, Mrs. Francis Brier, who had been living at 115 School Street for 25 years, decided to move to a nursing home. A burst of group energy transformed this building into the present zendo.

The Zen Center also had its first sandwich booth at the Santa Cruz Spring Fair that spring. Although we were obliged to eat leftover soy bean spread for many weeks, it was agreed that the project had been a success. Participation in the Spring Fair became an annual event and soon led to a then undreamed of solvency.

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Spring Business Meeting Report

New life is sprouting all around - blossoms in the garden, a stunning new hand-made altar in the zendo, a new shoe-rack outside, lots of ideas and practice opportunities.

As we celebrate Katherine's full-time residency in Santa Cruz, and as our sangha continues to grow, we become ever more aware of what it takes to actually support an active community practice. Our first two business meetings of 1991 have focused on two such areas of support: our caretaker situation, and the physical structure of the house and zendo.

The caretaker discussion was stimulated by noticing that we've had

a significant turnover of house residents in the last year; we've wondered how to create a more stable situation. Non-resident sangha members expressed a desire for connection with and sense of commitment from the caretakers. Some current and ex-residents shared about the needs they see from a caretakers' perspective.

We confirmed the basic expectations for caretakers, and discussed the importance of being clear about those expectations with anyone considering the caretaker position. The expectations are as follows:

- keep up the house, garden, and zendo on a weekly basis
- sit at least six periods of zazen per week
- some involvement in practice jobs
- hospitality with sangha members and Zen Center guests
- at least a six-month commitment, with a three month review
- a willingness to commit 8-10 hours per week to engage in the above

In the process of brainstorming a list of ideas about how to encourage and locate caretakers with a commitment to sangha and practice, it became evident that building renovation is a real need, particularly in the caretakers' residence. The kitchen badly needs remodeling. We also discussed adding a second

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sangha

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Business Meeting Report

(continued)

bathroom and making the garage into a more usable community space.

A sub-committee was formed to get cost and time estimates. They agreed to submit their findings at the next business meeting. As we move ahead with plans to strengthen our physical as well as spiritual structures, it's probably a good time for each of us to consider our current level of financial contribution. The bills will soon start flowing in!

With the idea of creating a large fundraiser, and also the opportunity for new dimensions of sangha practice, we have agreed to invite nationally famous author Natalie Goldberg to come next spring (May 1-2, 1992) to do a workshop for (and with) us. She is a student of Katagiri Roshi and author of the books, *Writing Down the Bones* and *Wild Mind*. We expect to learn a lot planning, producing and practicing in this event. All will be welcome to join in the process!

— Cathi Toldi

Construction Help Needed

The call is out for plumbers, electricians, carpenters, handypersons — even unhandypersons.

Work is about to begin on long needed maintenance and renovation projects. Any help is greatly appreciated. Please leave your name and number at the Zen Center, 457-0206, and a project leader will be in touch with you.

Work Leader's Report

This spring several projects have been completed: a durable new shoe rack behind the zendo, a strongbox in the residence house, an irrigation system to keep gardens alive through a dry summer, a brick-paved niche for trash barrels, a newly recovered inkin and a carefully crafted new altar for the zendo. "Thank you's" to all contributors of energies mental, physical and fiscal.

For the balance of the year we plan to add a second bathroom, either adjacent to the zendo or in the residents' house; to redo the existing residents' kitchen, floor to ceiling, including virtually everything in between; to refurbish the "garage" for day use; and last, but not least, to constructively redefine the role of the local fauna (termites, raccoons, opossums, cats and most particularly skunks) at our redwood farm, a major project in and of itself.

Wisdom, work and moral support will be welcomed.

— Kirk Nelson

Good-bye to Kirk

Kirk Nelson, long time Zen Center resident/caretaker and friend to many of us will soon be leaving Santa Cruz and the country for work and study in the Far East. We wish him the best in his new adventure. His warm, helpful presence will certainly be missed.

Weekend Sesshin Planned for July

We will hold a weekend sesshin Friday, July 26 to Sunday, July 28 at the Santa Cruz Zendo.

The sitting schedule will be: Friday, 7:30-9pm; Saturday, 5am-9pm; Sunday, 5am-5pm.

All participants are asked to follow the entire schedule of zazen, service, meals and work.

The fee will be \$30 for those already making pledges; \$50 for others. Pre-registration is required. Write or call for an application: Santa Cruz Zen Center, 113 School Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, 475-0206.

Katherine Thanas will lead the sesshin.

Treasury News

The books have been closed for the fiscal year ending February, 1991 showing net (liquid) assets of \$5908. Although pledges and donations are on the rise, a major fundraising effort will be needed to raise capital for the proposed building renovation projects now being considered.

Also, after much dedicated work, Peter Szydlowski, our Treasurer for the past few years, will be leaving his Treasury post. Frank Shaver will be assuming responsibilities and is already deeply immersed in paper and figures.

Many thanks to Peter for his valued contribution.



Study Group on Mindfulness Practice

A four-week series on the Practice of Mindfulness will be offered on four consecutive Sundays, June 16, 23, 30, and July 7 from 4:30 to 6pm at the home of Kathy Whilden, 98 Via Campana in Monterey.

The classes will focus on acquainting ourselves with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (one of the earliest teachings of the Buddha) and applying the practice to all aspects of our everyday life: walking, cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, bathing, using the toilet, etc.

Among the texts we will work with will be: "Transformation and Healing" by Thich Nhat Hanh, "Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing" by Thich Nhat Hanh, "The Four Foundations of Mindfulness" by U. Silananda.

Katherine Thanas will lead the class. The format will include some periods of mindful work as well as discussions and sharing of experiences. The fee will be \$20 for the series, \$5 per class. Pre-registration is required because of space limitations. To register from the Monterey/Carmel area call Kathy at 375-7826, from Santa Cruz area call the Zen Center at 457-0206.

Daily Sitting Schedule At Santa Cruz Zen Center

Morning

Mon-Fri

Zazen 6:10

Service 6:50

Sat

Zazen 7:00

Service..... 7:40

Evening

Sun-Fri (except Wed)

Zazen 6:10

Wed

Zazen instr..... 6:30

Zazen 7:10

Service 7:50

Lecture/discussion 8:00

Monterey Bay Zen Center

The Monterey Bay Zen Center group meets on Tuesday evenings at the Cherry Foundation, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel.

The evening schedule is as follows:

7:00 Zazen

7:40 Walking Meditation

7:50 Service

8:00-9:00 Lecture/Discussion

Zazen instruction is offered on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:15pm. Longer sittings are arranged during the year.

For further information call Sara Hunsaker at 408/649-8084.

Dates to Remember

Sun/June 16,23, 30, July 7, Study Group on the Practice of Mindfulness.

See description on this page.

Tues/June 25, 8pm, Full Moon Ceremony, Monterey Bay Zen Center

Wed/June 26, 8pm, Full Moon Ceremony, SCZC

Sat/June 29 SCZC workday. Sign-up.

Mon/July 1, 7pm, Chanting Practice at SCZC

Thurs/July 4, No scheduled sittings.

Sun/July 7, 8am-4pm, Day Sit in Carmel. For further information or sign-up call Sara at 649-8084.

Mon/July 8, 7pm SCZC Business Meeting

Fri/July 26-Sun/July 28, Weekend Sesshin at SCZC.

See description in this issue. Pre-registration is required.

Mon/Aug 5, 7pm, Chanting Practice at SCZC

Sun/Aug 11, 5am-4pm, Day Sit at SCZC. Sign-up.

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*Please forward.
Address correction requested.*