

sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

OCTOBER 2008

A GUEST CALLED FIRE

A guest called fire came through this monastery gate not too long ago, disrupting our summer season with its demands, and challenging us to serve it in ways for which we may not have been prepared. This guest wanted more than a clean cabin, a warm bath, and a delicious meal; its needs were voracious. Indeed, it sought to consume the whole, shaky edifice called our way of life.

But the doors of Zen Mountain Center did not close during the fire's stay, even after all our other guests were evacuated. Even when this very gate before us was burning, the entry to our heart/mind temple remained open to let in the undeniable visitor which in the end sought only to pass through.

How surprised we were then to discover upon its departure that this difficult guest had also come bearing the dharma in a manner that both deeply unsettled and invigorated our personal and communal practice.

What, I ask, has the fire taught you? What, during these past weeks, have you discovered in the blaze of your own being that is beyond all displacement, beyond all destruction. . .and what, even now, are you willing to lose in the conflagration of the present moment? Give it all to the flames. Hold nothing back out of the mistaken notion that something—anything—must be or can be saved. For equanimity and generosity only fully ignite in that space of total renunciation where there is nothing left to lose.

These inspiring words were written by David Zimmerman, director of Tassajara, as the community began its recovery. Reading them, I remembered a talk by Jakusho Kwong, Abbot of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, entitled "Active Participation in Loss":

Accepting things as they are is a loss. Being in the moment is a loss. What are we losing? Our self-centeredness, our self-clinging, our ideas, our conditioning. We are also losing our selves to the sound of the crickets, to the sound and feeling of the zendo as we sit. . . and when we know how to do this, to really lose, then we know how to really be alive.

The promise of Zen practice is release from dissatisfaction, from a sense of being off-kilter in this life. No one tells us how difficult it is to accept *life as it is*, what a long, courageous, unsettling struggle it is to not hold back against the assaults of "reality." To give up our preferences, assumptions and habits, exhaling them again and again, as we gradually realize the futility of resistance, desires. We

are aided in this turning by the arrival of events against which there is no protesting, when "just this" is all there is.

A student brings her dog to the zendo, leaving her in the car. The dog complains audibly, until the student returns to lock it in its cage in the car, after which it sighs deeply, and settles down.

Another friend, a long-time Zen student, ran 25 years from cancer coursing in her body until her doctor said there were no further treatments he could offer. After so many years of watching this happen, I suddenly found her at peace in her hospice bed, saying "I'm not afraid to die." She had found acceptance.

When we feel there are alternatives, we reach for them, but when there are none, it seems we can rest in *what is*. That may be the hope of our practice, accepting what happens to us and in us without agitating ourselves by imagining another possibility. Accepting our reactions and responses to the world, knowing that the present moment is a full expression of its causes and conditions. Our habits of wishing the moment otherwise are useless, wishing we were better than we are, less angry, less frightened, less despairing. We are the fullness of our causes and conditions --- and that's it. Accepting *that is*, as Kwong-roshi tells us, losing our habits of resistance, our fantasies of change.

What we call the present moment is a koan. Zazen is a koan. Sesshin is a koan. We are asked to sit with no expectation and yet there's an unspoken sense that all this waiting in stillness (that includes endless mind chatter) will add up to profound benefit.

In talking with people who are studying zen I find with gratitude that after a period of practice, they learn to stop blaming others for what's wrong; they see that their mind is the problem—and the solution. Their expectations, desires, assumptions are the problem.

Unless we can accept our life, our body, our thoughts and feelings *as they arise*, or *in reflection on them*, we do not find release from frustration and complaints.

When we are in opposition with people, with things, one part of the mind is in opposition to another part of the mind. The only way we know the world is through its appearance in consciousness. Things, people, friends or enemies, are created by our consciousness. One part of consciousness names the object and another part approves or resists. One part of consciousness, the subject "I," is divided against another part of consciousness, the object. Subject consciousness is

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resisting object consciousness. It's all created by consciousness.

In Norman Fischer's commentary about the spiritual journey, *Sailing Home*, he identifies a period of waiting before we start, a sense of something unknown missing in our lives, perhaps a future possibility or fulfillment yet to come.

Our sesshin might be seen as a period of waiting. There's an implied promise in zen practice, even if we claim otherwise, that "if I do this long enough, something may happen." We are told we are waiting for nothing. Publicly no gaining idea and privately a thought there is something to be gained from continuous, committed zazen.

If there's a promise in our lives we might fail at fulfilling it. If no promise, there is some possibility, as Suzuki-roshi says, of knowing "the readiness of the mind that is wisdom."

Are we available to the truth of codependent origination, the truth of the moment? Can we slow down in our trajectory through life to be available to this moment? To the loss and possibilities of this moment?

The more I sit with the thought of waiting, the more I recognize that until we've stopped waiting we can't really join our life in a new way. It may be that fulfillment simply means active presence in our lives, the patience to be in this moment. Not hurtling past the events of our lives, but touching the ground with each step.

—edited from a talk by Katherine Thanas



SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

TRANSITION PLAN UNVEILED

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to the people who worked, and at times struggled, to clarify our plans for Katherine's stepping back. I am sure I am accompanied by the Sangha in bowing deeply to officers Carl Christensen, Mari Tustin and Beata Chapman, to our abbot Katherine Thanas and to the members at large—Carolyn Burke, Jody Greene, Pamela Perry, Patrick Teverbaugh, Cathy Toldi, Sue Walter who all participated during this 3-year term, carrying forward the efforts of the past 10 years.

The current Board of Trustees has worked many hours in developing this transition plan and carefully considered the input of the community. We have had several full day and half day retreats in order to do our best thinking together, planning for the near and more distant future of SCZC. The value of these efforts is immeasurable.

We have developed a model in which Katherine will stay involved in the leadership while others assume the co-equal teaching/leadership roles of Head Teacher, Global Sangha Leader and Administrator. Beginning January 2009, Patrick Teverbaugh will be the leader of Global Sangha and Eugene Bush will be the Administrator. Beginning in January 2010, Kokyo (Luminous Owl) Henkel will assume the role of Head Teacher.

Katherine will continue to be abbot and as such is the spiritual leader of SCZC. She will continue to teach, have dokusan, lead some sesshins and train the priests she ordains. The abbot's input, sought on a regular basis by the three teacher/leaders and the Board, influences and guides them.

Each lead person is responsible for managing his/her area, is encouraged to engage others in performing the tasks, but has final decision-making and policy-setting authority for his/her area. The teacher/leaders are committed to staying in frequent communication with each other to coordinate their areas, and help one another keep abreast of their activities. They are requested to act immediately to resolve any conflicts which may arise among them, large or small. While they are primarily responsible for their individual areas, all will engage in practice and outreach activities, and will support efficient and compassionate administration. These individuals will fill the roles for initial terms of two years; the possibility of renewal of contract will follow evaluation by the Board.

The Head Teacher position will continue to be held by Katherine during most of 2009. Beginning in the fall of 2009 when Kokyo leaves his role of Tanto at Tassajara, Katherine will mentor him in preparation for his assuming authority in January 2010 for heading the teaching, overseeing Practice Committee and related teaching functions.

The Global Sangha Leader, Patrick, organizes and coordinates social action activities, fosters membership and manages public relations. Further, he will cultivate opportunities to connect SCZC with the larger community.

The Administrator, Gene, convenes our Operations Group, coordinating the activities of the office, garden, grounds, residences, library and newsletter production and will work closely with the Board as a non-voting member.

Zendo roles, the maintenance of the buildings and grounds, teaching responsibilities and the offering of practice discussion will continue to be shared by senior lay practitioners and priests. SCZC is committed to making a conscious effort to cultivate and encourage senior women practitioners, lay and priest, to assume roles of leadership in teaching, zendo responsibilities, and to continue to seek gender balance in leadership.

As I step away from carrying the President's role during this strenuous time, I continue to feel nourished and encouraged by the many gifts of Sangha practice.

*Nine bows in the ten directions,
Eugene Bush, outgoing president*

SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

FALL-WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD OCT. 17-DEC. 10

The Fall-Winter Practice Period will begin with a weekend sesshin Oct. 17-19 and conclude with a five-day sesshin in Santa Cruz Dec. 5-10. The schedule includes daily zazen, weekly tea/discussion group Sunday afternoons, classes, precept practice, dokusan with the Abbot, and the two sesshins.

Head student will be Patrice Monsour, who took lay ordination in July 2000. Her dharma name is *Eto Tetsudo, Wisdom Lamp, Penetrating Way*. Her entering ceremony will be at **7:35 pm Weds. Oct. 15** and her closing ceremony **2 pm Sat. Dec. 13**.

We welcome everyone to avail themselves of the intensified schedule by joining as many events as possible. Application forms are available from co-Inos Patrick Teverbaugh or Michael Bashista. This form will ask you to make a personal commitment for the practice period, taking account of your work and home obligations.

Fees for the Practice Period activities will be:

Day Sit: \$10 -\$15 (sliding scale)

Sesshin fees, \$10/day for sustaining and non-sustaining members (our actual out-of-pocket cost for food). In addition, in order to cover the center's ongoing expenses, we are requesting donations of \$30/day from sustaining members and \$39/day from non-sustaining members. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Sets of eating bowls (oryoki) may be rented for \$10 or purchased for \$45.

MINDFULNESS CLASSES CONTINUE, INVESTIGATING THOUGHTS

Completing our survey of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness we will pay attention to the arising and passing of thoughts during our upcoming class. We will observe the arising of thoughts, judgments, and mental states in general, working with the *Analyo* book *Satipatthana Sutta* which we've been using for this course.

The class will be offered by Abbot Katherine Thanas on Sun. evenings from 6:35-8pm, following zazen, Sun. Oct. 26-Nov. 30. Suggested donation for the six week series will be \$60 for sustaining members; \$78 for nonsustaining members. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

HEAD STUDENTS

Patrice Monsour began sitting with us in 1993. She practices both at the SCZC and at Holy Cross Church, not seeing any contradiction in her practice between the two spiritual paths. She has given dharma talks at both places and participated in an interfaith dialogue group at the Zen Center. Her careful attention to the details of zendo practice prompted us to invite her to become co-Ino, a position she held for six years.

She also practiced for three months at Tassajara in 2003 and spends 3-4 weeks each summer in the student program there. She has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and has been



a psychologist with UCSC Counseling & Psychological Services since 1990.



PHYLLIS CONLAN has been practicing with the Monterey Bay Zen Center since 1996 and was lay ordained in January, 2002, receiving the name *Seion Kanchi, Purity Sound, Mirror Wisdom*. She is currently secretary for the board of the Monterey group.

In Feb., 2006, she was Head Cook for our Villa Angelica sesshin, and Ino in Feb., 2008. She has taught for 18 years at Tularcitos School in Carmel Valley and lives with her husband at Jamesburg. They passed through the threat of fire this summer, staying behind to protect their home rather than evacuating. Fortunately, the fire did not come down to their property. She is the mother of Nellie Thorngate, our wildlife biologist.

WHY NOT FORM A BIMONTHLY BOOK GROUP?

Would Sangha members be interested in sharing essays, poetry or a book that has helped your practice? The Community Room has a wonderful collection! Contact Jack @466-0422 or mcjack@cruzio.com, and let's start this in Oct.

HUNGRY GHOST CEREMONY, WEDNESDAY EVENING OCT. 29

We celebrate this ceremony each year, renewing our remembrance of those who have departed from this life. We offer them food and drink and invite them to be named, remembered, and released. This is a time to call forth all the restless, unfulfilled parts of our bodies and minds, honoring their energy, inviting them to be known then released.

The ceremony is one of recollection, nourishment, and resolution. We decorate the zendo with colorful cloths, and some of us wear masks in honor of Hallowe'en. Everyone is welcome, in costume or not, especially children. The ceremony takes place at the usual time of Wednesday lecture.

SEEDS OF WELLNESS: A DAY WITH DR. PATRICIA WOLFF, NOVEMBER 1

An integrated exploration into the care of our body, mind and spirit, examining natural solutions to the health challenges women face. We will combine meditation and mindfulness practices with homeopathic, herbal and nutritional approaches.

Dr. Patricia Wolff, DC, FMFT, is a trained psychotherapist, a classical homeopath, and a Doctor of Chiropractic. She has been practicing in the field of natural health care for women and children for more than 30 years. Her focus is the care of our bodies, minds, and spirit. She practices with the Monterey Bay Zen Center and was lay ordained in 1995.

The workshop will go from **10 am-4 pm** in the S.C. zendo. **\$50** for sustaining members and **\$65** for nonsustaining members. Lunch included. Reservations, 831-457-0206.

SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

FIRE SALE/RAFFLE



More than 100 people attended the art show/fire sale Sept. 13 at SCZC to benefit Tassajara. Approximately \$3,000 was raised. There is still time to buy raffle tickets for \$25 each to win a two-nights stay at Tassajara for two people. All proceeds benefit the monastery. To purchase raffle tickets call 457-0206. The drawing is Oct. 8.

CALLIGRAPHY WITH YOSHI SHIBATA WILL RESUME NOVEMBER 2

Classes with master teacher Yoshi Shibata will resume **Sun. Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, from 9:30 am-noon**. Fee is \$15 per class. No experience necessary, but pre-enrollment is required. Materials list is posted on www.sczc.org. Shibata Sensei has been practicing calligraphy since age 5 and has been honored with many awards in national competitions in Japan. He teaches brush art as a practice which joins body, mind, breath and voice.

FULL DAY, HALF-DAY SIT NOV. 8

We offer a half or full-day sit **Sat. Nov. 8, from 8:30 am-noon or 5 pm**. Please bring a bag lunch. There will be a dharma talk, interviews with Katherine or the head student. Fee is \$10-\$15.

BIRDWALK AND WATERSHED ZAZEN NOV. 15 WITH NELLIE THORNGATE

Join local wildlife biologist and zen student Nellie Thorngate in an exploration of Buddhism, conservation and the San Lorenzo Watershed. We will walk through a portion of the watershed running through Henry Cowell State Park, contemplating our interdependent relationship with it and with nature as a whole. **10 am-noon**. Meet at the Felton entrance to the park.

Wear sturdy shoes, lots of layers. Bring water and sunblock and binoculars if you'd like. Suggested donation **\$10**. Sign up **457-0206**.

LAY INITIATION CEREMONY NOVEMBER 22

Five students will receive lay initiation, **Sat., Nov. 22, 2-4 pm** in the zendo. Preparing for this initiation are: Beverly Filip, Kaye Kaminski, Diana Nieves, Chuck Overley, Nannette Overley.

Each will receive a dharma name from Katherine as well as the return of the robe they sewed with their new name written on the back. In this ceremony we acknowledge our profound intention to be reborn as a bodhisattva in the world and to live from this time forward for the benefit of all beings. Everyone is welcome.

MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

Ordinary Recovery Group meets every Saturday from 9 to 10 at the Cherry Center. This is a class for people exploring addictive behaviors within a Buddhist framework. Information, Robert 375-7826.

Koan Literature Study Group meets every other Thursday at noon at the Cherry Center to study the koans in the *Book of Serenity*. New members are welcome. Information, Kathy 375-7826.

Fall Practice Period at MBZC will be for seven weeks, from **Oct. 14-Dec. 2**. This is an opportunity to commit to intensifying your Zen practice through classes, extra zazen, half day sittings, day sitting, study. We encourage each person to use this time to deepen their practice and understanding. Registration forms for the practice period will be at the Cherry Center or can be obtained from Kathy Whilden, 375-7826. Questions and explorations about participating in the practice period, please talk to the head student, Phyllis Conlan at 659-2365 or Tey Roberts 624-5725.

Beata Chapman Workshop, Sat. Oct. 25, 10:15 am - 2pm at the Cherry Center. Beata will present zazen postures for people experiencing physical difficulties in upright sitting. She is a long-time Zen student who has focused on alternative postures because of her own intractable nerve pain. She is working on this with Darlene Cohen. The workshop will be of value to everyone, even those who sit cross-legged. Fee is \$25. Scholarships available. Registration and info. Tey Roberts, 624-5725.

LOVE DANCING? LOVE TASSAJARA?

FIRE IN YOUR HEAD, A ZYDECO ZENEFIT to help Tassajara offset their financial losses during last summer's fire. With the Cachagua Playboys and special guests.

Friday Oct. 17, 7:30 pm at the Carmel Woman's Club, San Carlos and 8th street, Carmel. **\$25**: All proceeds to benefit Tassajara. Info./tickets (831) 624-7491.

SUNDAY CLASSES ON SATIPATTHANA

Six Sunday Classes with Katherine Thanas, **Oct. 26-Nov. 30, 10 am to noon** at 98 Via Campana, Mont. Katherine will continue the study of Mindfulness using the book *SATIPATTHANA, The Direct Path to Realization* by Analayo. Cost \$10 per class. Info. Kathy Whilden 375-7826.

DAY SITTING WITH KATHERINE THANAS

A Day of Sitting with Katherine Thanas at SCZC Sat. Nov. 8, 8:30am-5pm. Sitting meditation, walking, dharma talk, dokusan with Katherine. Bring your lunch.

Sign up with **Tey Roberts 624-5725** or on the bulletin board sheet. **\$30** (scholarships available)

RED PINE TALK AND WORKSHOP

Save the date. We are pleased to announce that Red Pine will be returning to Monterey Bay Zen Center Jan. 23-24. Info. Tey Roberts, 624-5725.

DAILY SCHEDULE



Morning:

Monday-Friday:

Zazen 5:45

Service 6:25

Saturday:

Zazen 8:30

Evening:

Sunday-Friday (exc. Weds):

Zazen 5:45

Wednesday:

Zazen

Instruction 5:45

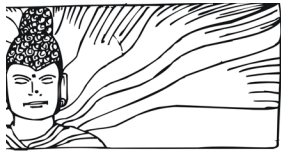
Zazen 6:45

Walking Medit. 7:25

Lecture/discuss. 7:35

LIBRARY HOURS

Wednesday: 5-6:45pm and during tea after lecture



Suzuki-Roshi Memorial Sangha Day	Fri., Oct. 3, Thurs., Dec. 4	6:25am, Zendo
Head Student	Sun. Oct. 12	9am-4pm
Entering Ceremony	Weds. Oct. 15	7:25pm, Zendo
Weekend Sesshin	Oct. 17-19	6:30pm, Fri-4pm Sunday, S.C.
Intro. To Zen	Sat., Oct. 25, Nov. 22	10am-noon, Zendo
Mindfulness class	Sun., Oct. 26	
	Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.	6:30-8pm, Zendo
Board Meeting	Tues., Oct. 28, Nov. 25	6:30-8:30pm, Comm. Rm.
Hungry Ghost Ceremony	Wed., Oct. 29	7:25-8:30pm Zendo
Seeds of Wellness	Sat., Nov. 1	10am-4pm, Zendo
Calligraphy/Shibata	Sun., Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23	9:30am-noon Zendo
Full Day or 1/2 Day Sit	Sat., Nov. 8	8:30am-5pm Zendo
Bodhisattva Ceremony	Thurs., Nov. 13	5:45pm, Zendo (in place of zazen)
Watershed Zazen	Sat., Nov. 15	10am-noon, Cowell State Park (Felton)
All-Sangha Mtg.	Sat., Nov. 15	3-4:30pm Zendo
Lay Initiation	Sat., Nov. 22	3:30-5pm, Zendo
Sesshin	Fri-Weds. 12/5-10	6:25pm Fri-3pm Weds.
Half-day sit	Sat., Dec. 13	8:30am-noon
Closing Ceremony for Head Student	Sat., Dec. 13	2-4pm Zendo
Winter Break	Weds. Dec. 24-31	8am 12/24 to 8pm 12/31, Zendo

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We meet Tuesday evenings, Monday & Thursday mornings at the Cherry Center, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel.

Tuesday evening schedule:

Zazen 6:30

Walking Medit. 7:10

Service 7:20

Lecture/discuss. 7:30-8:30

Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen 7am

(followed by service and soji)

Zazen instruction is offered the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. Everyone is welcome. For further information call 831-647-6330 or go to our website: www.montereybayzencenter.org.

Board meeting	Sun., Oct 5	10 to noon, Carmel Valley
Shuso Entering Ceremony	Tues, Oct. 14	6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Ctr.
<i>Practice Period Begins</i>		
Tassajara Zenefit	Fri., Oct. 17	7:30pm, Carmel Women's club
Half day sitting	Sat. Oct. 18	8:30 to noon, 98 Via Campana
Beata Chapman workshop	Sat. Oct. 25	10:15am-2pm, Cherry
Katherine Thanas Classes	Sundays Oct 26-Nov. 30	10 to noon, Via Campana
Day Sitting with Katherine	Sat. Nov., 8	8:30am-5pm, Santa Cruz Zendo
Board Meeting	Sunday, Nov. 9	12:15 to 2, Via Campana
Segaki Ceremony	Tuesday Nov. 11	6:30 to 8:30, Cherry
Intro to Zen	Sat. Nov. 15	10:15 to noon, Cherry
1/2 day sitting	Sat. Nov. 22	8:30 to noon, Via Campana
Shuso Ceremony	Tuesday Dec. 2	6:30 to 8:30pm, Cherry Center
<i>Practice Period Ends</i>		
Red Pine talk & workshop	Fri & Sat., Jan 23, 24	Cherry Center

Santa Cruz Zen Center
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