

sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

APRIL 2011

MIND COOKIES AND COMPASSION FOR A NON-EXTERNAL WORLD

I was recalling a story that I once read about a woman who goes into a cafe one morning to have a cup of coffee. She's glad that she brought her bag of cookies along with her. She gets a newspaper, sits down, and starts enjoying the morning. Reading the paper. Picking up a cookie and eating it. Having a sip of coffee. There's a guy at the counter next to her doing the same thing: having a cup of coffee, reading the paper. He reaches over and takes one of her cookies out of the bag, and she thinks, "That's kind of strange—he didn't even ask." She takes another cookie, and soon he takes another cookie too. They don't say anything to each other; they just keep reading their papers. Now she's getting kind of annoyed because she really wanted to enjoy her bag of cookies, but every time she takes one, he also takes one shortly afterwards. She's getting more and more annoyed; she can't believe he doesn't even say anything. She can't say anything at this point either, it's actually become too weird. Finally it gets down to only one cookie left, and he quite casually, while still not looking up from his newspaper, breaks the cookie in half, eats half, and gently pushes the remaining half toward her. She's totally enraged at this point and can't believe somebody could do such a thing. She eats the remaining half cookie, finishes her coffee, throws down the newspaper and leaves the cafe. She gets in her car, reaches in her purse for her glasses, and there's a bag of cookies there. The same kind she was just eating, in an unopened bag! She's stunned. Her angry mind totally dissolves and she feels completely silly that, not only was she getting upset about this guy eating her cookies, but she was eating his cookies! And he was even so kind as to split the last one with her!

This is a kind of elementary "mind-only" story. It demonstrates the basic principle that what we think is going on is not really what's going on, that what appears to be happening is only our own mind's creation. The actual situation is quite different, even though we are completely convinced it is the way we think it is. We are so convinced that we don't even bother to question it; we just assume it is so. And yet our normal, unquestioned sense of reality is seldom—we could even say never—what we think it is. So this simple story is about how believing what we think leads to suffering.

The Mind-Only School that we're studying these days goes even further. It presents the view that not only were those not really her cookies, but also that they were not his cookies either. In fact they

were not really cookies at all. Or to say it from the Mind-Only point of view, cookies (as they are experienced, which is the only way we can ever possibly know about them) do not exist external to mind. They are a mental fabrication, constructed by mind out of mind-made color, smell, taste, touch, and concepts. Everything we experience, whether conceptual thoughts or direct sensory perceptions, is a manifestation of mind. This theme runs throughout Buddha's teachings, but it's highlighted and emphasized by the Mind-Only School, which was one of the major traditions out of which Zen emerged. As Dogen Zenji says, "Mountains, rivers, and earth, the sun, moon, and stars are mind."

"We are literally creating each other each moment... What could be more intimate?"

Our practice is about not believing our stories about what is happening, and the Mind-Only teachings get into very, very subtle stories, stories we don't even notice we are telling ourselves, stories like, "This piece of paper I'm looking at actually exists apart from my mind, external to my mind." When we hear about not believing in very subtle stories like this, we might think, "So what does this have to do with my day-to-day suffering and problems? To say that the paper is not even apart from mind – why bother with this level of investigation of experience?" If we can really start to open to the way that all our thoughts and even sense perceptions of the world are distorted by this basic duality that the mind creates, the duality of what the Mind-Only School calls the separation of "grasper and grasped," that kind of understanding can apply to all our problems. Even though it may be quite challenging to do so, if we could realize that everything we experience is only a manifestation

of mind, and thereby stop believing in an essential separation of the experiencer from what is experienced as an external world, then all of our basic, run-of-the-mill, day-to-day problems could be seen in a very different light. We would not be able to take so seriously the grasping of something that is actually not separate from the grasper, something that is merely a mental creation. Grasping or clinging to an idea, belief, or object that we think is real is the definition of suffering in Buddha's teaching.

When we hear of the Mind-Only view we might think, "Well, if there's really nothing out there apart from mind, then there really are no suffering beings." It might feel like this kind of view is undermining compassion, and undermining our helpfulness in the world, because if the world is not apart from mind, if it's really mind-only, why would we care about how it goes? In a dream, why does it matter what happens, if we know it's just a dream? I think it's important to keep looking at these questions and examine them from different angles.

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For one thing, if what we experience as “other” beings is really not separate from this mind, and the same is true of their experience of us, this experience is incredibly intimate. We are literally creating each other each moment, in a very dynamic and totally personal way. What could be more intimate? Opening to such intimacy of mind-only, we may feel a deep love for “others” and the strong wish for them to be free. Also, if everything we experience really is just like a dream, a mind-made creation for each of us, then when we see others appearing to suffer in this dream, we can deduce that it’s because they are taking the dream too seriously; they are reifying it as something existing independent of mind; they are thinking it’s not just a dream. Suffering beings, like us, are taking the dream too seriously. Therefore our motivation can become stronger to help dream beings become free from believing the dream that they’re in. Our wholehearted compassion and wish for others to be free from suffering is based on the inspiration that actually situations are workable, people really can be helped, people can actually be free from suffering. Even the worst situations no longer seem completely hopeless.

Our aspiration to help can be strengthened because we can see that the suffering of the world is just a hairbreadth’s deviation from freedom and joy, just the difference of this shift of vision. If everyone could see the kind of dream-like quality of our experience, and how we attribute reality to the dream, then we could be completely freed on the spot. There is such potential. It may be quite difficult to realize, but the beauty is that it’s a small shift with a huge effect. One teacher said that our basic delusion is “like stepping onto the wrong airplane.” It’s like there are two different gates to two different airplanes next to each other in the same airport; stepping onto this one is not that far from stepping onto that one. But the result is huge, because this airplane is going to Africa and that one’s going to Australia. A very small mistep creates a huge, huge difference. The more we’re open to this potential shift, the more we can see that everybody has this same potential, and the more it seems that this little step has the potential to quite literally save the world from suffering. Buddha’s great compassion is expressed as helping all beings, including ourselves, to shift our vision and to see the world differently. And an essential part of such a process is to first meet so-called “others” with sincere kindness and to wholeheartedly try to take care of the problems of what appears to be an external world, so that people will feel basically comfortable, at least settled enough to start looking into how this mind creates suffering.

--edited from a talk by Kokyo Henkel



SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER



**5-DAY BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY GENZO-E SESSHIN ON
“ONE BRIGHT PEARL”**

Tuesday, April 5 - Saturday, April 9, 5:00am-9:00pm.

Genzo-e is a concentrated study retreat on a chapter of Dogen Zenji’s *Shobogenzo*. In this retreat we will examine “One Bright Pearl” (*Ikka Myoju*). Each day will include zazen, morning and afternoon teachings and discussion, and oryoki meals. Sesshin ends with a ceremony to celebrate Buddha’s Birthday.



Suggested donation: \$35/day for sustaining members and \$40 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

**SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA’S
BIRTHDAY CEREMONY**

Saturday, April 9, 5:00-5:40pm.

We will make offerings, chant sutras, and bathe baby Buddha, amidst many spring flowers. Birthday cake and a vegetarian potluck dinner celebration will follow. Free of charge, children are especially welcome.

**“SHOSAN” QUESTION-AND-ANSWER CEREMONY AND
CLOSING OF WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD**

Wednesday, April 13, 6:35pm

Kokyo will give a short talk and then everyone will have an opportunity to come forward and ask a brief practice question. The evening will end with a short ceremony to close the Fall Practice Period, and the usual tea. All are welcome.

ONE-DAY SITTING

Saturday, May 7, 8:30am-5pm

The day includes a lecture in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Bring a bag lunch. \$12/day for sustaining members and \$15 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP: SPRING INK

with Gerow Reece

Sunday, May 29, 9:30am-4:00pm

Based on learning to write Chinese characters in the morning, we will practice writing English words freshly using the Chinese brush style in the afternoon. Familiarity with Chinese/Japanese is not necessary. If you wish to bring your own tools and materials please do, but materials will also be provided. Gerow Reece studied calligraphy with Morita Shiryu in Kyoto for two years, and has lived at Jikoji Zen Center for five years, practicing and teaching calligraphy and Japanese tea ceremony.

\$55/day for sustaining members and \$65 for all others. Vegetarian lunch will be provided. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

NAGARJUNA’S EXAMINATION OF THE SELF

Six Sunday evenings, June 12 - July 17, 6:30-8pm.

Mulamadhyamakakarika, Chapter 18, with Kokyo Henkel. The brilliant second-century Indian teacher Nagarjuna wrote one of the most profound and influential expositions of Buddha-Dharma, the Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way. Chapter 18 of this pivotal work examines the “self” of a person in relation to

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body and mind. Clarifying this issue is said to be the gateway to liberation from suffering in all traditions of Buddha-Dharma. Suggested donation: \$60/class series for sustaining members, \$78 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. (There will also be a tea and discussion group led by senior practitioners during zazen time before class, 5:30-6:30pm).

4-DAY TEACHING SESSHIN ON SHITOU'S "MERGING OF DIFFERENCE AND UNITY" co-led by Kokyo Henkel and Michael Newhall

Wednesday, June 2 (7:30pm) – Sunday, June 5 (noon).

This sesshin will be held at Jikoji in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Each day will include zazen, morning and afternoon teachings and discussion, and oryoki meals. \$40/day, which includes overnight lodging. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Call Jikoji to register: 408-741-9562

SCZC relies on fees and donations to continue its mission. If you can pay more, please consider doing so. If you cannot pay the fee listed, please pay what you can. Talk with Gene or Michael if you have questions about fees.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday April 23, May 28, and June 25, 10am-noon.

A monthly introduction to the body and mind of Zen meditation and the forms of practice at SCZC. The morning includes sitting and walking meditation, followed by discussion. Everyone is welcome, free of charge.

SANGHA DAY

Saturday May 21 and June 11

Sangha Day is a time to come together and help take care of the temple and grounds: cleaning the zendo, making candles, gardening, etc. May 21, from 9:15am-4pm, with social potluck lunch. June 11 afternoon only, followed by social potluck dinner.

MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS WALK

Friday June 10

Silent hike of seven miles through our own mountains and rivers. Bring water and snacks. Meet at SCZC at 8:30am.

JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR AND SEJIKI CEREMONY (OFFERINGS FOR HUNGRY GHOSTS AND DEPARTED ANCESTORS)

Saturday June 18, 11am-5pm

All are invited to a sejiki (a.k.a. segaki) ceremony in the spirit of Obon, the summer holiday in Japan to remember departed family ancestors and friends. In this ceremony we call forth the restless, unsatisfied yearnings of our own life, inviting them to be known and released, as well as remembering departed ancestors and

friends. The Japanese Cultural Fair will also include a tea ceremony and demonstration of Ikebana flower arranging in the Zen Center garden. Zazen instruction will be offered throughout the day. Other events will be held at Mission Plaza park.



L-R: Gene Bush, Patrick Teverbaugh, Abbot Katherine Thanas, and Robert Reese

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY-TRANSMITTED PRIESTS

Reverends Gene Bush, Robert Reese and Patrick Teverbaugh completed the Dharma Transmission Ceremony with Abbot Katherine Thanas in December and January. The three priests each spent a full week chanting and circumambulating the Zen Center altars, while also writing the names of the lineage of Zen ancestors on silk, and performing prostrations to the lineage and their teacher. Sangha members from SCZC and MBZC supported their efforts by cooking, cleaning, sewing, building altars, and assisting in other ways. We congratulate the new Dharma successors and honor their great effort to accomplish the Buddha Way.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

I sit in our office on School Street quietly writing, yet I am sharply aware that I am not alone. Today, this rainy day, on our bimonthly work day, there are about 15 people on site, accomplishing the work of keeping our temple safe and beautiful – cleaning the zendo and the dokusan room, continuing the endless task of bamboo root removal, preparing the garden for the many ceremonies scheduled for spring and early summer. A handful of people are up to their knees in mud, a different cluster is up to their elbows in a sea of cushions, all with the common purpose of assuring that Zen Center continues for the current and future generations of seekers of the Way.

Recently a complex electrical problem was solved with the diligent and cooperative efforts of at least seven people. Soon a new building proposal will be in the hands of the Board for consideration. Each of the many steps involved in these activities is a thread in the fabric of our practice community. With the exceptions of the abbot and the head teacher, we are an all-volunteer community; the generosity exhibited by each person's offering of time and contribution of funds inspires and encourages the fullness of practice available to all. The buildings and grounds, the Board and Practice Committee,

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the calendar and schedule, the community outreach and “turning the light inward” together make this Sangha.

Over time the membership has changed with a few core people staying around, and the grounds have changed with a few anchoring trees holding firm. Our forms of practice carry the heritage of the lineage through ninety-three generations and we are, moment by moment, affirming our connection to practice, to each other and to the broader community of practitioners.

Bowing nine times in gratitude for the community
of this Warm Jewel,

Gene



MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER



ANCIENT TIBETAN DREAM WISDOM WORKSHOP

Weekend of May 6-8, Pacific Coast Church in Pacific Grove

Lene Handberg, whose accessible manner and immersion in the mysteries of Tibetan Buddhism makes her a beloved teacher in Europe and India, is coming Pacific Grove. She is steeped in the traditions learned from her teacher, Tarab Tulku XI, a contemporary of the Dalai Lama. Lene will offer an introduction to the Shamanistic Dream Tradition and Tibetan Dream Yoga. This workshop is sponsored by the Pacific Coast Church and MBZC.

Please contact Patricia Wolff for details and reservation: 236-3007

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN BUDDHISM

Saturday April 16 and June 18, 10:30am-noon

This workshop invites meditators and the general public to a conversation about the practice of Zen. Specialized individual attention to posture and form and a brief description of Buddhist thought are offered.

At the Cherry Center in Carmel. No charge. For more information call Susan McDonald: 626-3945.

COOKING YOUR LIFE: TENZO KYOKUN (INSTRUCTIONS TO THE COOK)

A workshop with Robert Reese on creating the supreme meal.

Saturday, May 21, 10:15am-1pm, Cherry Center in Carmel.

In the Tenzo Kyokun, Dogen Zenji investigates the parallels between preparing meals in a monastery and our own spiritual practice. In the short text, Dogen teaches us how to “cook” or refine, our lives—thus creating the supreme meal.

Through meditation, talks, discussion and lunch, we will explore Dogen’s “cookbook for life” and how to live with an unbiased mind in the midst of everyday life. The workshop is the first in a three-part series examining Soto Zen Buddhism.

\$20 donation (includes lunch). For more information call: 920-8303.

CARMEL VALLEY SITTINGS

With **Patricia Wolff**, ongoing, first and third Wednesday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm. Our Carmel Valley meditation group continues to meet twice a month. We do a 30 minute period of zazen followed by a silent period of tea and cookies, a brief Dharma talk and discussion. For more information call: 659-3042

With **Sara Hunsaker**, Thursday night meditation, 6:30-7:45pm at 24 Paso Cresta, Carmel Valley (starts April 21). Tuesday morning meditation, 10:15-11:45 at Carmel Valley Community Chapel, Paso Hondo and Village Drive (starts April 19). We will study Zen history, stories, texts and meditation practices. There will be a 25 minute period of meditation, tea, talk and discussion. For more information call Sara Hunsaker: 659-1552 or email sarahun@comcast.net.

ORDINARY RECOVERY

Saturday mornings at the Cherry Center in Carmel, 9-10am.

A meeting to explore the teachings of Buddhism and the twelve steps of recovery. Call Robert for more information: 624-7491.

BROWN BAG ZEN

Fridays, 12:15-1:15pm.

A noontime informal Zen meditation group meeting every week. There is a 20 minute meditation, tea, a 10 minute talk and a discussion. This group is open to new and experienced individuals who want to sit with others. There is no charge and donations are gratefully accepted. For more information call Kathy: 375-7826.

As they begin to rise again



As they begin to rise again
Chrysanthemums faintly smell,
After the flooding rain

Matsuo Basho

DAILY SCHEDULE



Monday-Friday:

5:45am	Zazen
6:25am	Service (chanting)
12:00pm	Zazen
5:45pm	Zazen

Wednesday Evening:

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

Saturday Morning:

8:30am	Zazen
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Sunday Evening:

5:45pm	Zazen
6:25pm	Service

LIBRARY OPEN

During tea after Wed. Lecture



MBZC AND SCZC ARE ON FACEBOOK: you can "like" the two Zen Centers Facebook pages for current information on what's happening there, photos of events, and more.

Genzo-e Sesshin	Apr. 5-9	5am-9pm
Buddha's Birthday	Sat. Apr. 9	5-5:40pm
Shosan Ceremony	Wed. Apr. 13	6:35-7:30pm
Precepts Renewal	Mon. Apr. 18	5:45-6:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Apr. 23	10-noon
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. May 4	6:25-7am
One-day Sitting	Sat. May 7	8:30am-5pm
Precepts Renewal	Tues. May 17	5:45-6:30pm
Sangha Day	Sat. May 21	9:15am-4pm
Chino Roshi Memorial	Thurs. May 26	6:25-7am
Introduction to Zen	Sat. May 28	10-noon
Calligraphy Workshop	Sun. May 29	9:30am-4pm
Jikoji Sesshin	Jun. 1-5	7:30pm-noon on 5th
Mountains & Rivers Walk	Fri. Jun. 10	8:30am
Sangha Day & Dinner	Sat. Jun. 11	1-7pm
Nagarjuna Class series	Sun. Jun. 12,19,26	6:35-8pm
Precepts Renewal	Tues. Jun. 14	5:45-6:30pm
Japanese Fair & Sejiki	Sat. Jun. 18	11am-5pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jun. 25	10-noon

MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

PO Box 3173, Monterey, CA 93942

831-375-7826

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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

Tuesday evening schedule:

Zazen	6:30
Walking Meditation	7:10
Service	7:20
Lecture/discussion	7:30-8:30

Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen	7am
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(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 831-375-7826 or go to our website: www.montereybayzencenter.org.

Half-day Sitting	Sat. Apr. 9	8:30-noon, St James, Monterey
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Apr. 16	10:30-noon, Cherry Center
Dream Workshop	May 6-8	Pacific Coast Church, Pacific Grove
Cooking Your Life	Sat. May 21	10:15-1pm, Cherry Center
Half-day Sitting	Sat. Jun. 11	8:30-noon, St James, Monterey
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jun. 18	10:30-noon, Cherry Center
Earthbound Farms benefit	Sat. Jul. 30	Earthbound Farms, Carmel Valley

Santa Cruz Zen Center
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Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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