

# sangha

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

JULY 2011

## VIEW, MEDITATION, AND CONDUCT IN DZOGCHEN AND ZEN

Having recently received the great blessing of participating in a couple of meditation retreats in the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition, I feel more and more that Dzogchen, the “Natural Great Perfection,” is a beautiful way of understanding the practice of zazen, simple wholehearted sitting, and Soto Zen. Though Dzogchen comes from a somewhat different culture and uses a somewhat different kind of language, the teachings of the Great Perfection can help to clarify our Zen practice. These two traditions share many of the same early roots from the eighth century, when both were first beginning to blossom forth from the radiant nature of mind in Tibet and China.

Great Perfection teachings usually present the path of practice in three parts: the “view, meditation, and conduct.” The view is a clear understanding of what we’re meditating on. The culmination of meditation in all Buddhist traditions is resting at ease in selflessness, emptiness, the unfindability of any fixed identity. In Zen, we could call the view the unborn mind, or non-dual clear awareness. In both the Dzogchen and Zen traditions, it’s also called “ordinary mind.” Ordinary mind is a term that can be understood correctly and falsely. The false understanding would be our obsessive, conceptualizing, thought-grasping mind, which is quite ordinary in the sense of being our usual state. But the true ordinary mind of the Great Perfection and of Zen is the unadorned non-grasping mind, ordinary in that it’s actually very plain and simple, with nothing extra added.

Ordinary mind is the “Way” that doesn’t seek or grasp for anything. Or as Dogen Zenji presents the view, in his Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen, “The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it depend on our practice or even on our realization? This vehicle of the Zen ancestors is free and naturally at rest, unrestricted, not burdened by anything. What need is there for concentrated effort? Indeed, this whole being is far beyond the dust of the world, all our old dusty habitual ways of thinking, so it’s not an issue of washing it clean. And it’s never apart from us, always right here and now.” So Dogen begins his practice instructions by exuberantly introducing the view in such a way.

In the Great Perfection tradition, after the view is first clarified, then there’s the meditation, the actual practice. And the meditation is defined as simply “sustaining the view.” The meditation is actually just opening more and more completely to this view of the all-pervading

original Way, free from all our dusty ideas about it, the Way that’s never apart from us. Just opening and relaxing into the view is the meditation, or what is sometimes called in the Great Perfection tradition “non-meditation.” The culmination of meditation practice is non-meditation, recognizing and resting in the naturally present ungraspable true nature of this life, which doesn’t depend on any particular practice or realization.

Both Zen and the Great Perfection do, of course, offer some practical ways to embody or express this all-pervading Way, like sitting as upright, still, and comfortable as possible. We take our seat and arrange our legs, either on a cushion or a chair, cross-legged or kneeling, or whatever works for us to be very settled and comfortable. And then we lift up the head through the spine, feeling the pull from the sky holding us up, in a relaxed way. And, especially if we’re coming into meditation from a stressful day, we breathe deeply at the beginning, with full abdominal breath, letting the air just fill the lower belly, then breathe out every last ounce of air. We take a few really deep breaths. Such breath settles the body and mind. The breath can get very constricted, so we breathe very deeply and naturally, releasing any holding. And then we remember the view. Above the entrance to the zendo at Bukkokuji, where I practiced in Japan, there is a huge calligraphed sign with Dogen’s words: “The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading.” It points out the view to everyone who enters the zendo to meditate. The Way is originally perfect and it’s not going to depend on our practice or our verification of it.

Often, as we approach this settled and open nature of mind, we start checking. We start trying to verify how we’re doing in this realm. I have the tendency to ask myself, “Is this it? Is this meditation in accord with the teachings?” That very checking and assessing of how it’s going actually disturbs the complete settledness. In the Great Perfection tradition it’s said that “I” cannot verify this non-dual, open nature of mind. We can’t verify it, but it can be verified. It verifies itself. How wonderful! The Way verifies itself, confirms itself, realizes itself. As long as I am trying to do that, even the slightest bit, that effort is the very obscuration of this non-dual mind. That’s the definition of duality: the subject trying to verify some object, like emptiness of mind.

When we first sit down to meditate, it’s helpful to first check our posture, our breath, and to check exactly where we’re holding on conceptually—to assess the situation that so we know where to let go. Then we can let go, more and more deeply, but when we get to

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# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

(continued from page one)

this very settled place and feel like we may have reached complete settledness, we don't check. Just where that point is to stop checking is quite intuitive. At some point we just drop off checking and assessing, and stop. Even stop meditating. At that point, even trying to make a little effort creates separation. As Suzuki Roshi says, we make effort right up to the very last moment when all effort disappears. If we give up effort right from the beginning, we'll never even sit down at all! So we make effort to sit upright, to breathe deeply, to relax and let the body settle, and then once we're quite settled, then we may be able to release all effort and checking and just rest.

In Dzogchen, after clarifying the view and sustaining it in meditation, finally there is conduct. Conduct is what happens after the formal meditation session, how we live our life in the world. The point of practice is actually our conduct, how to live in the world in this very ordinary way. Ordinary, without fixation or grasping. Obviously we have to do things, sometimes quite complicated activities, but we can let phenomena arise in the midst of the all-pervading Way, from that, as an expression of that. For example, thoughts can actually arise from that ground of empty clarity, thoughts can manifest without disturbing the perfection of the Way. Emotions can arise and they don't need to disturb it. Of course experiences often seem to disturb it, and that's when we've lost the recognition of the view of the clear openness of the Way.

The Great Perfection speaks of the self-liberation of thoughts and emotions. In other words, we don't liberate them; thoughts and emotions can free themselves, like writing on water. This image is used in both Dzogchen as well as early Chinese Zen. As soon as the mind "writes" a word it's gone, unlike writing on a piece of paper where it leaves ink tracks that we then grasp onto. Words and concepts, thoughts and emotions, can all arise, but they're freed at the very moment of arising. If we remember the view of the originally perfect all-pervading Way as the ground from which experiences are arising, it's possible to see how they naturally self-liberate.

--edited from a talk by Kokyo Henkel



## SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER



### ONE-DAY SITTING (FOLLOWED BY LIBERATING LIFE CEREMONY)

Saturday, July 9, 8:30am-5pm, ceremony at 5pm.

The day includes a lecture by Kokyo in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Please bring a bag lunch. After the sitting there will be a traditional Zen ceremony for releasing captive animals, in this case crickets, from being killed. Everyone is welcome to participate in either event. Suggested donation: \$12/day for sustaining members and \$15 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### AT HELL'S GATE, PEACH BLOSSOMS, PLUM BLOSSOMS:

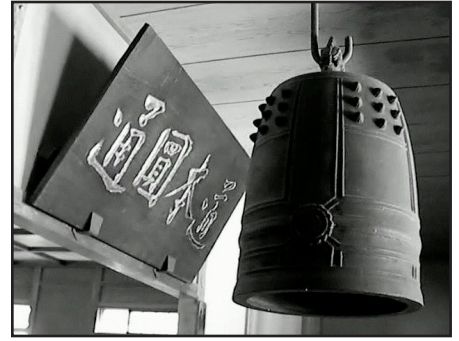
A Practice Series for People Living with All Kinds of Pain with Beata Chapman and Chris Davidson

Full-day workshop followed by two half-day sessions: Saturday, July 30, 9:30-4pm, Saturdays, August 6 and 13, 9:30-noon.

Many of us have terrible suffering: grief, anxiety, depression, physical pain, or chronic illness. How do we deal with such difficult states of mind and body? Meditation practice encourages us to live rich and satisfying lives right in the middle of our misery.

In this practice series, we will acknowledge our individual suffering, examine how particular thoughts and feelings produce specific types of stress and pain, do gentle, comforting movements, learn to recognize obstacles to concentration in our everyday lives, and discuss the importance of specific types of pleasure and comfort in lives made difficult by recurring pain and stress. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one, and any cushions you like.

Saturday July 30, \$50 for members, \$65 for all others (bring a bag lunch); each half-day Saturdays, \$25 for members, \$30 for all others. Pay in advance by July 15 for the entire practice series: \$90 members, \$115 others. 10 CEUs available for the series, with certificate fee of \$20. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Contact [relief@sufferinganddelight.net](mailto:relief@sufferinganddelight.net) for more information.



Bukkokuji zendo entrance:  
"The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading"

### PRECEPTS STUDY SERIES

with Eugene Bush

Five Sunday evenings, August 14, 21, 28, September 4 and 11, with Full Moon Precepts Renewal ceremony Monday Sept 12, 5:45 pm.

The Ten Essential precepts can serve as a guide for upright living. In this class series we will study the precepts and their manifestation in the activities of everyday life. The conceptual framework will relate the precepts to the Four Noble Truths and the discussion will center on both the meanings of the words and the subtle interpretations each student may bring. We will read excerpts from writings by Reb Anderson and Dainin Katagiri as well as other primary source documents. The third session will focus on those who are considering asking to formally receive the precepts. We will discuss the requirements for sewing a rakusu and the process of preparing for jukai. For the benefit of the group process, attendance is recommended for at least 4 of the 5 sessions. Participants may attend zazen and service before class. Suggested donation: \$7/class for members, \$10/class for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

### ONE-DAY SITTING

Saturday, August 27, 8:30am-5pm.

The day includes a lecture by Abbot Katherine in the morning and tea with discussion in the afternoon. Please bring a bag lunch. Suggested donation: \$12/day for sustaining members and \$15 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS

## INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday, July 23, August 20, and September 24, 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 walk-ing meditation, followed by discussion. Everyone is welcome, free of charge.

## SANGHA DAY AND POTLUCK DINNER

Saturday, July 16 & September 17 (9:15am-4pm, dinner 4-6pm)

Sangha Day is a time to come together and help take care of the temple and grounds: cleaning the zendo, making candles, gardening, etc. Please bring a lunch and something for a social potluck dinner.

## COPYING THE HEART SUTRA: 10,000 SHAKYO FOR JAPAN

Sunday, July 17, 1-4pm

The Tohoku Earthquake Memorial Sutra Mound Committee is sponsoring a project of creating 10,000 Shakyo (hand-copied sutras) as a memorial for those who died in the Japanese earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear power plant disaster. They have been asking people around the world to make hand copies of the Heart Sutra which will be recited, one by one, in a prayer ceremony and then buried at the top of Mt. Gassan on October 9. Join us at SCZC to trace a Chinese character version of the sutra or write it out in English, to be sent to Japan for the ceremony.

## MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS HIKE

Friday, August 26, meet 8am at SCZC

Please join us for a late summer Dharma hike. We will carpool from Zen Center, leaving at 8am sharp. This will be a strenuous 9 mile hike in beautiful Butano State Park. Please wear sturdy shoes, and bring water and a snack. We'll return to Santa Cruz in the later afternoon. We will spend most of our time in silence, with brief poetry or Dharma readings during our rest stops. You may speak with Cathy if you have any questions.

## FALL PRACTICE PERIOD

September 28-December 7

Practice period is a focused period of time, ten weeks this fall, for a deeper commitment to zazen, individual and group meetings to explore Zen practice, and Dharma study. This fall practice period will include a class series by Kokyo on Dogen Zenji's Uji ("Being Time"), a 4-day Denko-e Sesshin study retreat on Keizan Zenji's Transmission of Light, a one-day sitting, and end with a 7-day Rohatsu Sesshin to celebrate Buddha's Awakening.

*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.*



## TASSAJARA ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER STUDY WEEK

with Kokyo Henkel

Monday, September 5 - Thursday, September 8

In the morning participants will join the residential monastic community for zazen, chanting, breakfast, work practice, and lunch. Afternoons and evenings may include lectures, classes, opportunities to meet with Kokyo, and plenty of personal time. Dinner is in the guest dining room.

\$63/day for shared guest accommodations, plus a \$6/day teaching donation. Private rooms are available for two. To register, call Tassajara reservations at 877-833-5963 (toll free) or 415-865-1899 or email tassreservations@sfzc.org

## FROM THE ABBOT

Since August of last year, five important Zen teachers have passed on. With the most recent loss of Charlotte Joko Beck at age 93 on June 15, it seems fitting to acknowledge their collective contributions to American Zen. Their lives and teachings are part of the development of practice at Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Zen Centers.

**Robert Aitken Roshi** died August 5, 2010 after a lifetime of Buddhist study, practice and teaching. He founded the Diamond Sangha based in Honolulu and co-founded the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. He modeled an important legacy of social activism for the Buddhist community and authored more than ten books on Zen.

**Jerome Petersen** left us on December 12 in San Francisco at the age of 82. He first visited S.F. Zen Center in 1961 and found that he was at home on a cushion. He lived at the center the rest of his life, helping newcomers by his presence and ordinary practice.

**Darlene Cohen** died at age 68 on January 12 of cancer. She developed rheumatoid arthritis in her mid-30's but transformed her disability into an active life of teaching. She co-founded the Russian River Zendo with her husband Tony Patchell and encouraged thousands afflicted with chronic pain and disability through her writings on living joyfully with pain. Her suggestions on alternative postures for meditation, developed with SCZC president, Beata Chapman, appear on our website.

**Lou Hartman** left us at age 95 on January 30 in San Francisco. A long-time member of the S.F. Zen Center, Lou left behind four children and his wife, Blanche, former abbot of SFZC. His practice as an ordinary monk helped younger and older students alike.

**Charlotte Joko Beck** founded the Ordinary Mind Zen School and authored two early books on Zen. She inspired readers and students with her practical, no-nonsense teachings on Zen, enlightenment and everyday life.

## FROM THE GLOBAL SANGHA LEADER

S.C. Zen Center marched in the LGBT Pride parade June 5. Along with other religious organizations in the parade, we demonstrated our welcoming spirit and celebration of diversity. We had a good time as we manifested the merging of difference and unity. Remember to put the first Sunday in June on your calendar and join in the fun next year! For the last year-and-a-half, SCZC has hosted "Ordinary Recovery" each Friday night at 6:45. Participants bring meditation and support to help heal the wounds in our lives: addictions, troubled relationships, difficult emotions. All are invited to attend.

# SANGHA EVENTS AND NEWS



## MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER



EACH MOMENT  
IS THE UNIVERSE:  
BREAKFAST WITH  
POETRY BENEFIT  
AT EARTHBOUND  
FARM

Saturday, July 30,  
9-11am.

Earthbound Farm is sponsoring a benefit for the Monterey Bay Zen Center. The fundraiser begins with a delicious organic breakfast at the Earthbound Farms Farm Stand at 7250 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA (3.5 miles east of Highway 1). After breakfast, local poets Elliot Roberts, Patrice Vecchione and Ernie Stromberg will read poetry based upon the theme of "Each Moment is the Universe." The theme is from Katagiri Roshi's book of the same name. MBZC students have been studying the book with founding teacher, Katherine Thanas, over the past year.

Requested donation: \$25/adult, \$10/child, kids under 6 free. Please RSVP to Mark Orrisch at 831-659-7138 for advance tickets or mbzc.pres@prodigy.net



### ZEN WOMEN ANCESTORS STUDY GROUP

Thursdays, July 14-August 18, noon to 1pm, Cherry Center in Carmel.

Using the Zen Buddhist women ancestors' names we will start with mythic women, on to Buddha's India, and then travel through China on to Japan. We will study their lives and enlightenment stories and how they can inform our practice today. All participants will be encouraged to share and present their own study of texts and stories. Suggested donation to MBZC: \$5-10. The group will be facilitated by Sara Hunsaker. Please contact Sara for information: sarahun@comcast.net or 831-659-1552.

### THE WILLOW TREE CANNOT BE BROKEN: TWO CLASSES ON THE SPIRIT AND TEACHING OF SOTO ZEN

with Robert Reese

July 16 and August 13, 10:15-noon, Cherry Center in Carmel.

Through meditation, talks and discussion, the classes will investigate the core teachings, themes and practice of Dogen Zenji. Classes will include the understanding of the Soto Zen "family style" as interpreted by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, Kosho Uchiyama Roshi and Kodo Sawaki Roshi. An important teaching in Soto Zen is that every thought, word, and action is part of our spiritual life, whether or not we choose to acknowledge them as significant. By exploring the teaching of these pivotal teachers we will make the effort to integrate the Soto style into all aspects of life. Suggested donation: \$10, for information call: 831-624-7491 or 920-8303.

### SOUNDS OF VALLEY STREAMS: A DAY RETREAT AT TASSAJARA ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER

with Leslie James

Saturday, August 20, 9am-4pm.

This retreat simply offers the finest of Tassajara – Buddhist practice, talks, practice discussion, mountain air, hot springs and silence. We will explore Soto Zen practice and the natural beauty of Tassajara through meditation, talks, group discussions, and the hot springs. We will be carpooling, leaving Carmel at 7am and arriving at Tassajara at around 9am. Please let us know if you are able to carpool: 831-920-8303. \$40 to Tassajara (with lunch); \$30 without lunch; dana (teacher donation) \$25. For information contact Robert Reese: 831-920-8303.

*Leslie James is the Abiding Teacher at Tassajara and has practiced at San Francisco Zen Center since 1971. She received lay Dharma Transmission from Tenshin Reb Anderson in 2001. She has two grown children and lives at Tassajara with her husband.*

### AWARENESS OF THE SELF RECEIVING ITS FUNCTION

A workshop with Kokyo Henkel

Saturday, September 10, 10:30am-1pm, Cherry Center

This day of Zen meditation and discussion will be an exploration of the eighteenth century meditation manual by Menzan Zuiho called "Awareness of the Self Receiving its Function" (Jijuyu Zammai). Menzan wrote these instructions for devoted lay practitioners of zazen, distilling Dogen Zenji's teachings into an inspiring encouragement to "drop off body and mind" and be free in the very midst of our life here and now. (By donation.)

### REPORT ON TASSAJARA VISIT, SPRING 2011



Students from Monterey Bay Zen Center and Santa Cruz Zen Center visited Tassajara Zen Mountain Center April 29 - May 1 for a weekend retreat. The retreat continues a tradition of support from Tassajara for the practice communities in Santa Cruz and Monterey as well as an opportunity for students of both communities to practice together.

**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

**ORDINARY RECOVERY**

Friday evenings at 6:45 pm



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.

Nagarjuna class series	Sun. July 3,10,17	6:35-8pm
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. July 5	6:25-7am
One-day Sitting	Sat. July 9	8:30am-5pm
Precepts Renewal	Fri. July 15	5:45-6:30pm
Sangha Day & dinner	Sat. July 16	9:15am-4pm, 4-6pm
Copying Heart Sutra	Sun. July 17	1-4pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. July 23	10-noon
Chino Roshi Memorial	Thurs. July 26	6:25-7am
Hell's Gate workshop	July 30, Aug. 6,13	9:30am-4, 9:30-noon
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Aug. 12	5:45-6:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Aug. 20	10-noon
Precepts study series	Sun. Aug. 14,21, 28	6:35-8pm
Mtns. & Rivers hike	Fri. Aug. 26	8am
One-day Sitting	Sat. Aug. 27	8:30am-5pm
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. Sep. 6	6:25-7am
Precepts study series	Sun. Sep. 4,11	6:35-8pm
Precepts Renewal	Mon. Sep. 12	5:45-6:30pm
Sangha Day & dinner	Sat. Sep. 17	9:15am-4pm, 4-6pm
Shuso Entering & talk	Wed. Sep. 21	6:35-7:30pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Sep. 24	10-noon
Chino Roshi Memorial	Mon. Sep. 26	6:25-7am
Open Practice Period	Wed. Sep. 28	6:35-7:30pm

**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](http://www.montereybayzencenter.org).

Zen Women Study Group	Thur. Jul. 14,21,28	noon-1pm, Cherry Center
Soto Zen Class	Sat. July 16	10:15-noon, Cherry Center
Poetry Breakfast Benefit	Sat. July 30	9-11am, Earthbound Farm, CV
Zen Women Study Group	Thur. Aug. 4,11,18	noon-1pm, Cherry Center
Half-day Sitting	Sat. Aug. 6	8:30-noon, St. James, Monterey
Soto Zen Class	Sat. Aug 13	10:15-noon, Cherry Center
Tassajara Retreat	Sat. Aug 20	9am-4pm, Tassajara Zen Center
Self-Receiving Workshop	Sat. Sep. 10	10:30am-1pm, Cherry Center

Santa Cruz Zen Center  
113/115 School Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you would like to be removed  
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name and address. This will  
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