NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA CRUZ AND MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTERS

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#### BODHISATTVA VOW IN THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

**T** n the Lankavatara Sutra, the Scripture of the Buddha's Entry into Sri Lanka, the Buddha expounds in many ways the teaching that there is nothing other than mind. There are also many teachings on the compassionate spirit of the bodhisattva in this sutra, such as the teaching of what we call the *icchantika*. This is a strange concept, a kind of disturbing concept, but this sutra liberates the concept from its disturbing quality. An icchantika originally meant someone who totally indulges himself and doesn't care about anybody else, or even about his own liberation. She doesn't believe in cause and effect, and in Buddha's teachings this is called "wrong view." Right view, conventionally speaking, is trusting in the workings of cause and effect and karma, or cause and effect as it works through living beings with intentions, where large-hearted intentions lead to happiness and self-centered intentions lead to unhappiness. Because of their extreme wrong view, and the extremely harmful actions they commit due to this wrong view, the icchantikas have basically cut off the possibility for Buddhahood; therefore it was even said that they actually had no Buddha Nature. Buddha Nature is sometimes described as the potential to become a Buddha, and the icchantika is compared to a scorched seed which can never grow, as if the very genetic structure of its Buddha Nature has been ruined.

In the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle of universal salvation for all beings, this is a very disturbing concept: that any living being could not have the potential for Buddhahood. The Mahayana generally proposes that all living beings, no matter how much trouble they've caused, have the potential to be Buddhas and not only that, but they will become Buddhas. In this spirit, the Lankavatara Sutra has a beautiful section about the icchantika, where the Buddha says, "As for icchantikas, who in this world would liberate them except icchantikas?" That's the first teaching: how are icchantikas freed from suffering? By icchantikas. The Buddha goes on, "There are two kinds of icchantikas: those who forsake good roots and those whose vows regarding others are without limit." The first kind sounds like the original definition of icchantika, they forsake their roots of goodness, they don't care about wisdom and compassion that grow into Buddhahood. That's the classic icchantika. But there's another kind of icchantika in this sutra, those whose vows to benefit others are limitless: bodhisattva icchantikas. Then why are they called icchantikas? Strange isn't it?

The Buddha continues, "What is meant by forsaking good roots? This refers to slandering the bodhisattva canon and falsely claiming it is not in accord with the teaching of liberation in the sutras or in the vinaya." There's a little plug here for the Mahayana, the vehicle of bodhisattvas. Some earlier schools of Buddhism that were more conservative felt that this radical bodhisattva ideal was going too far, and that teachings such as the Lankavatara Sutra were not authentic

JULY 2012

Buddhist sutras. However there is great compassionate value in the Mahayana sutras and the Mahayana vinaya, the teachings about ethical conduct such as the Brahmajala Sutra, the source of our bodhisattva precepts. The Buddha says, "Because they forsake their good roots they don't enter nirvana." So, these are the first kind of icchantika.

Next are the other type of icchantika. They are "bodhisattvas whose practice includes the vow not to enter nirvana until all beings enter nirvana." That's the classic definition of a bodhisattva; they have great compassion that wants to free everyone from suffering, and the way to completely free everyone is to carry them across to great nirvana which is perfect, unshakable peace and complete freedom from suffering. That's the bodhisattva vow. Not just to help beings a little bit, but to help carry them all to nirvana, perfect peace. And they vow not to enter nirvana themselves until everybody else goes first. This second type of icchantika is quite different from the first kind! But remember that the original definition of icchantika is one who is incapable of realizing Buddhahood. The first kind is incapable because they have cut off their good roots by slandering the bodhisattva's practice. The second type is incapable because they are bodhisattvas and they are not going to enter nirvana, or Buddhahood, until all beings enter, which realistically speaking would take so long that the bodhisattvas are virtually incapable of entering nirvana themselves. So the bodhisattva icchantika skillfully turns the original meaning of the term in this amazing and surprising Zen-like way. The Buddha in this sutra takes the most disturbing concept of someone who is incapable of becoming a Buddha, and instantly makes it into the greatest possible thing. In our Zen ancestor Keizan Zenji's

autobiography, he says, "At age 25, just like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, I made the great compassionate vow of an icchantika." When I first read that I thought, "What? He made the vow of an icchantika, to be the most evil, despicable, person?" Now I see that this may have been based on the Lankavatara Sutra.

But there's more here in the sutra too. If you start to feel sad that as a bodhisattva with such a vow you would never realize this great realm called nirvana, since a bodhisattva's practice includes the vow not to enter nirvana As we go to print, Abbot Sobun Katherine Thanas is breathing on her own at home, unconscious after a serious brain injury and not expected to live more than a few days. Please watch sczc.org or Facebook for updated information.



(continued from page one) until all beings enter, the Buddha goes on to say, "However, what bodhisattvas mean by entering nirvana is characterized by not entering nirvana." In the Mahayana, where the teachings of emptiness reign supreme, the true characteristic of nirvana is no nirvana. Nirvana has no characteristics, it cannot be said to be like this or that. Ultimately speaking, there is no "nirvana" for anyone to enter or leave. Therefore, not entering nirvana may not be such a bad thing after all. In fact how could it ever be entered anyway? The Buddha explains further, "Bodhisattva icchantikas never enter nirvana. They know that everything is already in nirvana; thus they never enter nirvana." Though it could be said that there is no nirvana to enter, it could also be said that there is nothing that is not already truly in nirvana. But bodhisattvas are careful not to say that since everything is in nirvana, then right now is nirvana. There are many Zen sayings like, "To say it's this misses the mark." Bodhisattva icchantikas know everything is already in nirvana - not just people, but everything is quiescent from the start, naturally at peace and free from obscurations, as it is. Since the bodhisattva icchantikas know that everything is already in nirvana, they never enter nirvana. How can you enter if you're already inside?

"This is not true of those icchantikas who forsake their good roots." If they slander the Mahayana, they slander the teaching that all things are quiescent from the start and naturally in the state of nirvana. For such icchantikas, it's going to be hard work, but eventually they do get to seemingly enter nirvana. The bodhisattva icchantikas don't get to enter nirvana because they're already in nirvana along with everything and everyone else. But these other non-bodhisattva icchantikas, they can graduate from being icchantikas and apparently enter nirvana. But how will they be able to even appear to enter nirvana if they have forsaken their roots of wisdom and compassion? "Mahamati, even though they forsake their good roots, through the power of the Tathagatas, the Buddhas, at some point their good roots reappear." The permeation of wisdom from the pure Dharmakaya actually enters their storehouse consciousness and plants the seed for opening to nirvana. Through the power of the Buddhas, at some point this wisdom seed is planted and their good roots grow again. The Tathagatas are not some beings outside of us, because there is no such thing as anything outside of us. But, mysteriously, due to everyone's connection with the Tathagatas, such a seed can manifest. The Buddha says, "And how so? Because Tathagatas do not forsake any being." So could it be that those ignorant and harmful icchantikas really do have Buddha Nature after all?

- edited from a talk by Kokyo Henkel

### MIND, TRANSFORMATION, AND BUDDHA NATURE: THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA

Six Sunday evenings: July 1 - August 5, 6:35-8pm.

Kokyo will offer part two of a class series on Red Pine's translation of the Lankavatara Sutra, an essential scripture of the Yogachara or Mind-Only School of Buddhism, revealing the vision of the whole world as ungraspable projections of mind, as well as introducing the teaching of Tathagatagarbha, or Buddha Nature. Suggested donation: \$10/class for sustaining members, \$13 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

#### WRITING IN FREEDOM

With Angie Boissevain, Saturday July 7, 8:25am - 3:00pm

This class will combine meditation and free writing practices in order to cultivate our inspiration, natural intuition, and delight in the music and nonsense of words. There will be walks in the park, discussions, and blocks of time for free writing to liberate what's under our ordinary talk, and encourage trust in the music and truth to be found in our own personal language....including the nonsensical. Nothing we write needs to be shared, though the pleasure of sharing will be encouraged. Please bring pencils/pens, and lots of paper.

Angie Boissevain is a Soto Zen priest and Dharma heir of Vanja Palmers. She has practiced Zen for over thirty years, serving as a teacher and director at Jikoji in the Santa Cruz Mountains. She studied with her teacher Kobun Chino Roshi while she was raising three sons, being a wife, and writing poetry. She is the inspiration and guiding teacher of Floating Zendo in San Jose, also leading sesshin at Jikoji and other places around the world including Arcata, Taos, Austria, and Switzerland. Paid registration by June 24: \$54 for sustaining members, \$63 for all others. Registration after June 24: \$60 for sustaining members, \$70 for all others. Vegetarian lunch will be provided.

#### ONE-DAY SITTINGS

Saturday July 14 (led by PatrickTeverbaugh), August 11 (led by Gene Bush), September 8 (led by Kokyo Henkel), 8:30am-5pm.

All sittings include a lecture in the morning; please bring a bag lunch. August 11 sitting will be on the theme of "zazen at work," cultivating the practice of opening zazen mind in our everyday activity. After the sit-



Head Student Chuck Overley at Dharma Inquiry Ceremony, Apr 11

ting on September 8 (at 5pm) there will be a traditional Liberating Life Ceremony for releasing captive crickets from being killed.

Suggested donation: \$12/day for sustaining members and \$15 for all others. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

#### JIZO CEREMONY FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIED

With Cathy Toldi, Saturday August 18, 3-5pm.

We will have a ceremony of acknowledgement, grieving and release of grieving for children who have died, before or after birth, through abortion, miscarriage, stillbirth or accident. We will meditate together, offer incense, and sew a small garment to call forth those we have lost and say goodbye to them with the intention of remembering those who have died, and healing those who are living. Please bring a small piece of red cloth, thread, needles, and thimble.

Free of charge, donations gratefully received.



### TASSAJARA GENZO-E STUDY WEEK: MOUNTAINS AND WATERS OF THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT

Sunday, September 2 - Friday, September 7

This study week will be a Genzo-e retreat, an in-depth exploration of a chapter of Dogen Zenji's thirteenth century masterwork, the Shobogenzo or "Treasury of the True Dharma Eye." Through zazen with the monastic community, discussions, and life in the mountains, we will take up Sansuikyo or "Mountains and Waters Sutra," in which Dogen wonderfully celebrates the mountains and waters right now as the actualization of the ancient Buddha Way, each abiding in its unique yet interdependent expression and realizing completeness along with each of us.

\$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

#### SHODO CALLIGRAPHY CLASS WITH YOSHI SHIBATA

Four Sunday afternoons: September 2,9,16,23, 2:30-5pm.

Learn the fundamentals of Shodo Japanese Calligraphy using Ltraditional ink and brush. Shodo is a traditional art that is practiced by common people as well as by Zen and Shinto priests and artists. In Japan there is a saying: A person's writing shows their character. Shodo teaches us how to meditate and express our inner strength in our art and life. In this workshop we will start with the meditation of making ink, then continue on to learn basic strokes using a calligraphy brush. No experience necessary.

Yoshi Shibata has been practicing Shodo since he was 5 years old, beginning at a temple in Japan where he studied calligraphy along with other traditional Japanese arts. He has won a number of national calligraphy competitions. Over the years he has taught classes locally in Santa Cruz, including workshops at UCSC.

All four sessions: paid registration by August 24: \$72 for sustaining members, \$81 for all others; registration after Aug 24: \$80 for sustaining members, \$90 for all others. (see flyer or website for materials to bring).

### 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

#### Saturday afternoon, September 29

Past and present SCZC practitioners will share memories of practice at Zen Center, as well as plans for the future; there will be a ceremony, refreshments, and more. Please check sczc.org as the schedule of events unfolds.

#### INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday, July 28, August 25, September 22, 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 July 21 (1-5pm followed by potluck dinner) & September 15 (9:15am-4pm with potluck lunch)

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 something for a potluck meal.

#### ORDINARY RECOVERY GROUP

Friday evenings, 6:45pm-7:45pm, in the zendo

A weekly meeting discussing Buddhist practice with addictions, emotions, and relationships. A short meditation, a Dharma reading, compassionate discussion and support.

#### JUKAI: CEREMONY OF RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS

On April 14, seven people received the Bodhisattva Precepts, along with a rakusu (Buddha's robe) they had sewn, and a Dharma name. Great congratulations! Their new names are:



Received from Katherine Thanas, and previously from Suzuki Roshi:

Jeffrey Sherman: Neido Senmyo / Practicing the Way of Harmony, Clarifying the Great Matter

Received from Gene Bush:

Jean Marie Peterson: Denkan Shado / Field of Blessings, Appreciation Way Kris Garvin: Seigo Shonen / Quiet Thunder, Birth/Death Awareness Rane Hoogner: Kaigen Koshin / Generous Root, Cultivating Trust *Received from Patrick Teverbaugh:* 

Laurie McCann: Shosui Nonin / True Flowing, Ability Patience Deniz Bombar: Gikan Ekai / Justice Mirror, Wisdom Ocean *Received from Kokyo Henkel:* 

Brian Bielefeld: Seikai Mani / Quiet Ocean, Myriad Cures



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

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information on what's happening Centers Facebook pages for current BOOK: you can "like" the two Zen MBZC AND SCZC ARE ON FACE-



czc.org

there, photos of events, and more.

### Summer 2012

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6:25am	Service (chanting)	Or	
12:00pm	Zazen	Sai	
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Wednesday Evening:			
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ORDINARY RECOVERY			
Friday evenings at 6:45 pm			

SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER

**DAILY SCHEDULE** 

115 School Street, Santa	Cruz, CA 95060	831-457-0206	www.sc
Lankavatara Sutra class	July 1-Aug 5	6:35-8pm	
Precepts Renewal	Tues. July 3	5:45-6:30pm	
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Wed. July 4	6:25-7am	
Writing in Freedom	Sat. July 7	8:25am-3pm	
One-day Sitting	Sat. July 14	8:30am-5pm	
Sangha Day & Dinner	Sat. July 21	1-6pm	
Chino Roshi Memorial	Thurs. July 26	6:25-7am	
Introduction to Zen	Sat. July 28	10-noon	
Precepts Renewal	Thurs. Aug 2	5:45-6:30pm	
One-day Sitting	Sat. Aug 11	8:30am-5pm	
Jizo Ceremony	Sat. Aug 18	3-5pm	
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Aug 25	10-noon	
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Aug 31	5:45-6:30pm	
Tassajara Study Week	Sep 2-7	4pm Sunnoon	ı Fri.
Shodo Calligraphy	Sep 2-23	2:30-5pm	
Suzuki Roshi Memorial	Tues. Sep 4	6:25-7am	
One-day Sitting	Sat. Sep 8	8:30am-5pm	
Liberating Life Ceremony	1	5-6pm	
Sangha Day	Sat. Sep 15	9:15-4pm	
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Sep 22	10-noon	
Chino Roshi Memorial	Wed. Sep 26	6:25-7am	
Dogen & Keizan Mem.	Fri. Sep 28	6:25-7am	
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Sep 28	5:45-6:30pm	
40th Anniversary	Sat. Sep 29	see sczc.org	

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# MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

### LOOKING CAREFULLY: THE SHEPHERD'S PURSE BENEATH THE HEDGE

### Breakfast with Poetry Benefit at Earthbound Farms, Saturday, July 7, 9-11am.



E arthbound Farms is sponsoring a benefit for the Monterey Bay Zen Center at their beautiful Farm stand. This fundraiser begins with a delicious organic breakfast. After breakfast, local poets, George Lober, Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts and Patrice Vecchione will read poetry based upon the theme of "Looking Carefully: the Shepherd's Purse Beneath the Hedge." The title references a poem by Basho:

> Taking a close look – In tiny white clusters, Flowers of shepherd's purse At the foot of the hedge

Earthbound Farms Stand, 7250 Carmel Valley Road (3.5 miles east of Highway 1). Donation: \$25 for each adult and \$10 for each child, kids under 6 are free. Please RSVP to Mark Orrisch at 831-659-7138 for advance tickets or mbzc.pres@prodigy.net.

### LOTUS IN MUDDY WATER: A RETREAT FOR THOSE IN RECOVERY

At Tassajara Zen Mountain Center with Robert Reese, Saturday August 11, 9-4pm.

Through talks, discussions and meditation, we will investigate the many points of convergence between the 12-steps of recovery and the teaching and practice of Soto Zen. Meditation can be a powerful tool in relapse prevention and can become a "positive addiction" that provides a healthy alternative to addictive behaviors. During this day-long retreat there will also be time to enjoy the hot springs and natural beauty of Tassajara. Robert Reese, a priest in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, received Dharma transmission in 2010. Space is limited; we will be carpooling, leaving Carmel at 7am and arriving at Tassajara around 9am. Please let know if you are able to carpool: 920-8303.

Cost: \$40 fee to Tassajara with lunch; \$30 without lunch (checks to Tassajara Zen Mountain Center) plus dana (teacher donation). Information: Robert Reese 831-920-8303, or nfeasn2637@sbcglobal. net. Please let Robert know if you are able to car pool.

#### SOUNDS OF VALLEY STREAMS

A retreat at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center with Leslie James, Saturday, August 25, 9am-4pm

This retreat simply offers the finest of Tassajara – zazen, practice discussion, mountain air, hot springs and silence. We will explore Soto Zen practice and the natural beauty of Tassajara through meditation, Dharma talks and group discussions.

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.

We will be carpooling, leaving Carmel at 7am and arriving at Tassajara around 9am. Please let Robert know if you are able to carpool: 920-8303 Cost: \$40 fee to Tassajara with lunch; \$30 without lunch (checks to Tassajara Zen Mountain Center) plus dana (teacher donation) \$25 (checks to Leslie James). Space is limited. Information: Robert Reese 831-920-8303, or nfeasn2637@sbcglobal.net.

## ZEN LIBRARY OPENS AT CHERRY CENTER

MBZC received a gift of 250 Buddhist books. These books were collected over many years by Tey Roberts, reflecting her wide-ranging, inquiring mind. Katherine Thanas received this gift on behalf of our Center in a special ceremony in early March of this year. The Tey Roberts Memorial Library was given as a gift by Elliot Roberts in memory of Tey.



She was devoted to practice and to MBZC, serving as Ino and as a founding member of the board. The books are housed at the Cherry Center and will be open during Zendo events. Information: contact Phyllis Conlan at conlans98@razzolink.com.

#### THE WORST HORSE

#### The Fundamentals of Buddhism from the Practice & Teaching of Suzuki Roshi

Saturday mornings, September 22,29, October 6,13, 10:15am-noon with Robert Reese.

This four-part class is intended to provide an overview of classic Buddhist themes from the perspective of Suzuki Roshi's teachings. Through meditation, talks and discussion, the class will investigate suffering and end of suffering, the eight-fold path, fundamental Mahayana teachings, the place of meditation and precepts in daily life – all explored from the viewpoint of Suzuki Roshi's teachings. Shunryu Suzuki (1905-1971) was a direct spiritual descendent of the great Zen master Eihei Dogen. The author of Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind and Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness, Suzuki Roshi established the San Francisco Zen Center and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center (the first Zen monastery established in the United States). His intimate, gentle teachings have influenced Zen practitioners throughout the world.

Suggested donation: \$10 per class, Carl Cherry Center for the Arts, 4th and Guadalupe, Carmel. Information: 920-8303; 624-7491, nfeasn2637@sbcglobal.net.



#### WEEKLY SCHEDULE Earthbound Farms Benefit Sat. July 7 9-11, EB Farm Center, CV We meet Tuesday evenings, Monday and Thursday mornings at the Jukai Ceremony Tues. July 17 6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center Cherry Center, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel. Zazen, tea, talk Sat. July 22 9-12 CV Zendo 659-1552 w/ Sara Hunsaker Tuesday evening schedule: Zazen 6:30 8:30-noon, St. James, Monterey, Half-day Sitting Sat. July 28 Kinhin (walking) 7:10 w/ Robert Reese 7:20 Service Step-by-Step Walk Sat. July 28 10-11:30, Garland Park, CV Lecture/discussion 7:30-8:30 Zen Ancestor Class Thurs. Aug 2-Sep 13 12-1, Cherry Center Monday, Thursday mornings: Zazen 7am Introduction to Zen Sat. Aug 4 10:30-noon, Cherry Center (followed by service and soji) Half-day Sitting Sat. Aug 18 8:30-noon, St. James, Monterey Zazen instruction first Tuesday of Step-by-Step Sat. Aug 25 10-11:30, Garland Park, CV each month at 5:30pm. Ordinary Recovery Tassajara Sitting Sat. Aug 25 Robert (831) 920-8303 Saturdays 9-10am Brown Bag Zen Full Moon Ceremony Tues. Sept 4 6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center Fridays 12:15-1:15 St. James Church, Introduction to Zen Sat. Sept 15 10:30-noon, Cherry Center High and Hellam Sts, Monterey Half-day Sitting Sat. Sept 15 8:30-noon, St. James, Monterey Carmel Valley Sitting Group Second and fourth Wednesday Sukuki Roshi Class Sat. Sept 22,29, Oct 6,13, 10:15-noon Cherry Center 7-8:30pm - Patricia 659-3042

Information: (831) 375-7826 www.montereybayzencenter.org