

sangha

Newsletter of Santa Cruz Zen Center ❖ Warm Jewel Temple - April 2016

ON DHARMA TRANSMISSION

By Cathy Toldi:

The week of Winter Solstice, Rev. Dana Takagi and I went through the process of Dharma transmission. Dana received transmission from Gene, and I from Patrick. Even though there is a lot we don't talk about with regards to Dharma transmission, still, there are things I can say.

Essentially, Dharma transmission is about intimacy. It is two people resonating with mutual understanding about how to walk the Buddha Way. Our religion has all these wonderful teachings, ceremonies, robes and everything, but the core of the Buddha Way is very simple. It is actualizing the vow to awaken together with all beings. One person—the teacher—is a little further along the path, and says to the disciple, “I trust that you are a person who wants to use your life to carry on this teaching.” Even though we engage in lots of activities during transmission week that formalize the relationship, transmission has actually been happening for quite some time, throughout the close Dharma friendship that one has with this other human being. Patrick and I are peers; yet he is also ahead of me on the path, because time and again, he said “yes” to our root teacher Katherine while I said “no.” Near the end of Katherine's life, when she and I were estranged, Patrick supported me to reconnect with her. She and I communicated deeply about the nature of our difficulties. We forgave one another before she died. Through Patrick's generosity, courage, and patience with me, I was able to remain connected to Katherine, through him. I was able to stay home and take my place, such as it is. For this, I will be eternally grateful.

The transmission stories about our Zen ancestors are about relationships: the particular moments when the one in the offering role and the one in the receiving role met in the truth of the Dharma. In a large sense, this is happening to all of us, all the time. It's not just something for people in brown robes. You are meeting the truth of the Dharma every time you sit down on your cushion, every time you take your practice out into the world. Whenever something inside you resonates with the vow to awaken together with all beings—that's you, receiving transmission from Shakyamuni Buddha.

We honor the great, expanded sense of awakening together; and, during transmission, we also honor the particular lives of the Zen ancestors in our lineage. Every day we made offerings at the altars in the zendo, and around the property. We engaged in ceremony where for each ancestor, we said their name, offered incense, rang the bell, did a complete prostration. We wrote their names on silk

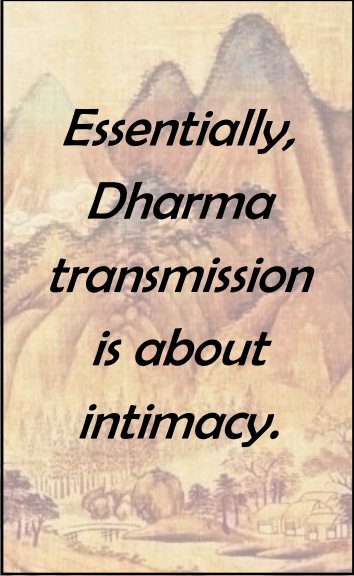
documents, with black ink that we ground ourselves. It takes a long time to grind the inkstick into the water so that it becomes just the right consistency. The first couple of days were hard. Both Dana and I were really sick. I felt like I was being ground down by the physicality of the experience. But as we moved into the week, the difficulty began to fall away. It just turned into this beautiful ritual of honoring every life. Hundreds of years later, here I am, saying your name, ancestor. Some of you were great, and some of you, we don't know anything about. But I'm saying your name, because you dedicated your life to awakening with all beings. Thank you for that. I had a body vision, that I was the inkstick, and the water was the Buddha-Dharma, and this process was grinding us together. I realized that the invitation is to completely give our lives to one another. That's what the ancestors did for us. And that's what we can do for each other.

After transmission, Patrick asked me, “What do you think is the connection, the thread, between 28 years ago when you first came into this zendo, and your continued practice?” I really love people. I just find that this practice allows me to participate more wholeheartedly in the human experience. I see how the practice impacts people. I think we change for the better. We just keep trying. I'm so moved by the emphasis in Buddhism on effort. There's so much complacency, and resignation, and bitterness, and cynicism in the world that I feel gratitude when I'm among people who want to do good things for others and are doing what they can to support other beings. Whether that be through activism, or a more contemplative approach, I think both are really honorable traditions, as we each do our part to try to have a more humane world.

By Dana Takagi:

Being a transmitted priest means you are a living ancestor in the Great Way. Entrustment with the Soto Zen lineage involves both internal work of self as well as external presence and being available for sangha. Of course the internal and the external are intertwined. My ability to be available to others is connected to my own study of this, my own body and mind. While we often notice, and are drawn to the externalities, for example, the “stuff” of transmission—ceremonies, robe, kotsu (teaching stick), and hossu (whisk), we may overlook the internal work that balances vulnerability with availability, receiving what Dogen calls “kind instruction” from a teacher and in turn, offering the fruits of kind teaching to others. Thank you to Kokyo and Patrick of Santa Cruz Zen Center, and to Fugan Gene Bush.

I came to be Gene's disciple shortly after Katherine passed away



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in 2012. The process of transmission begins when a teacher authorizes one to begin a curriculum of Dogen study. There is a series of fascicles on transmission by Dogen and it is conventional to work through these slowly, deliberately, with a teacher. In this process a teacher and student examine, test and confirm knowledge of the teachings. I was in that process with Katherine since 2011 and we had worked through most of the fascicles when I showed up that fateful day in June 2012 to find her fallen. Since early 2012, I could see her health was failing. On one occasion, I showed up to study and instead we went to the doctor for her dizzy spells. Such was my relationship with Katherine, studying and attending to our ordinary lives.

Shortly before Katherine's funeral, a senior Dharma teacher at SFZC asked me about transmission plans. I replied it seemed too soon to know if I wanted to complete transmission at all. This teacher's kind instruction was direct and firm: "Actually, it's not up to you, once you were asked by Katherine, it's not about you." Though stunned I felt turned by her words.

After that conversation, I became Gene's disciple. This required adjustment on my part as I have known Gene as a Dharma friend and not as a teacher. Since 2012, through studying, sewing, and many discussions, there have been subtle changes in my relationship with Gene, and the gist of these subtle changes was my own sense of turning *toward* actively embracing him, the transmission, and the necessary internal processes to be present with him, available to sangha and my life-worlds of work beyond the zendo. Last fall, on the cusp of transmission ceremonies, I asked Gene "what should I be concerned with?" and he replied "being vulnerable."

Being vulnerable is part of our human condition, and, for many of us, difficult to accept and maintain. As Jane Hirshfield has said, "to be truly vulnerable is terrifying." Vulnerability works at the level of interiority, activating primal kinds of fear, loss, and pain. The internal shifts are subtle, take time, and we may not recognize the subtleties right away. Dogen does not use the term vulnerability though he does write about what is important to meet others. In a piece on the Great Way in the *Eihei Koroku* (p.503), he writes, "To give kind instruction is the standard and model for good teachers."

My father died three months before transmission. His illness, decline, death and aftermath were interlinked with preparations for transmission ceremonies. In the run up to transmission, my work with Gene was full of love, friendship, and teaching. At the start of transmission ceremonies, one meets with one's teacher, and I expressed to Gene this turning toward. I haven't known quite how to think about transmission and for a long time, it's been kind of vaguely formed in my mind as transmission with Katherine through Gene, but now, it is so clearly transmission with Fugan Gene as my teacher, me as his disciple, and Katherine is our shared past.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEN

Saturday, April 23, May 28, 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.

INTRODUCTION TO KOANS

Workshop with Neti Parekh. Saturday, April 16, 9:30-12.

We will take up reading, contemplating, and discussing a small

number of koans from the Gateless Barrier. We will work in pairs and in small groups, noticing what thoughts and associations arise as we endeavor to unpack, and be unpacked by, these ancient stories. No experience is necessary. Suggested donation: \$25/day for sustaining members, \$30 for others.

OPENING THE MIND AND HEART THROUGH FILM

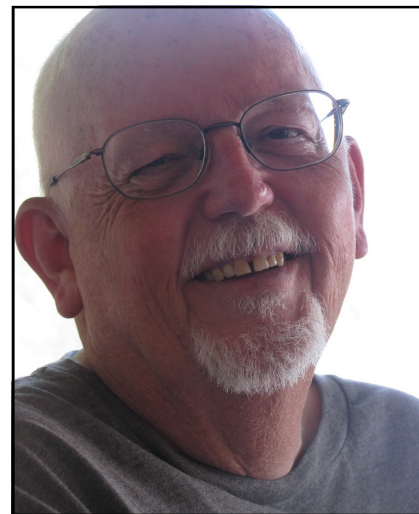
Friday, April 22 (Earth Day), 7-9pm (in community room)

This evening's movie is "No Impact Man," a fun and inspiring documentary to celebrate Earth Day, which tells the story of a man who gave up virtually all of the comforts of modern living—electricity, gas-powered transportation, shipped food and public waste disposal—in a drastic effort to curb his environmental impact. This well-intentioned, year-long experiment takes a toll on his wife and baby daughter, as well as bringing the family closer together.

FUNERAL CEREMONY FOR BRIAN BIELEFELD

Saturday, April 23, 1:30-3:30pm (including reception).

Celebration of the life of our dear departed Dharma friend.



Seikai Mani (Quiet Ocean, Myriad Cures)
Brian Bielefeld (1942-2016)

SHUKKE TOKUDO, PRIEST ORDINATION FOR EDIE BROWN

Sunday, April 24, 2-4pm (including reception).

Edie will be ordained as a priest by Rev. Patrick, in a ceremony where she receives robes, bowls, and precepts. Please come celebrate this joyful commitment to the bodhisattva's way!

HALF-DAY SITTING

Saturday, April 30, 8:30am-12pm.

Includes a lecture by Rev. Dana Takagi.

TASSAJARA WEEKEND WITH ONE-DAY SITTING

Friday, May 6 - Sunday, May 8 at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. With Rev. Patrick Teverbaugh. Arrive Friday afternoon, day-long sitting on Saturday, work with the community on Sunday morning, and return home Sunday evening. Ask at SCZC for details.

SAMANTABHADRA BODHISATTVA'S CONDUCT AND VOWS

4-week class series with Kokyo Henkel, May 15-June 5, 6:40-8pm. The epic Flower Ornament Sutra ends with this bodhisattva's inspirational expression of devotion to all buddhas and to all beings. Samantabhadra's ten vows have been an important Mahayana Buddhist teaching and practice for many centuries and are the basis for many of our devotional practices of Zen. Suggested donation: \$10/class for sustaining members, \$13 for others.

SANGHA DAY

Saturday, May 21, 9:15am-3pm.

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 lunch.

JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR

Saturday, June 4, 11am-5pm.

Zen Center will open the Japanese Cultural Fair with a chant of well-being. While the Fair continues in the park with taiko drumming, food and crafts, we will host chado tea ceremony, sejiki ceremony for departed ancestors, bonzai demonstration, ikebana flower arranging, and kimono fashion show on our Zen Center campus. Come spend an hour or the whole day at this great annual event!

SANTA CRUZ PRIDE PARADE

Sunday, June 5, 10:30-11:30am.

Celebrate diversity with other Sangha members as we march with faith-based organizations, welcoming everyone to practice at Zen Center. This event is a lot of fun – spending a sunny morning together, waving to the crowd, and manifesting the interconnectedness our community!

SANGHA SUPPORT NET WORKSHOP: SICKNESS, SUFFERING, OLD AGE AND DEATH

With Revs. Eugene Bush, Dana Takagi, and Edie Brown

Saturday, June 11 and July 30, 1-4pm.

This two-part workshop is an invitation to consider the details of aging and dying with dignity. While perhaps of most interest to people 60 years and older, this workshop is useful for anyone including those who may be anticipating caring for a family elder. The first day will include an overview of the aspects of health care one must weigh, the emotional facets of preparing for illness or death, and practical resources for planning for the end of life. Between the first and second sessions, participants can prepare documents and set in motion a network of support. It will include using the “Five Wishes” format, establishing a health care directive and some preparations for how one would like to be remembered. While it is important to think these things through for our own benefit, the true recipients of our careful considerations are family members and friends. With these important documents in hand, caregivers are spared the difficulties of making many decisions because they have already been given guidance. Suggested donation: \$25/day for sustaining members, \$30 for others.

5-DAY SUMMER SOLSTICE “NO TOYS” SESSHIN

with Kokyo Henkel. June 17-19

Completely silent retreat: no chanting, lectures, dokusan. 5am-9pm (ends 4pm Monday). Suggested donation: \$35/day for sustaining members, \$40/day for others.

SCZC relies on fees and donations to continue its mission. If you can pay more, please consider doing so. If you cannot afford the suggested donation, please offer what you can. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.



Shuso Michael Bashista at his Dharma Inquiry Ceremony in April, along with Practice Period Leader Rev. Patrick Teverbaugh



Kingfisher by Rev. Ellen Richter

IMPORTANT THINGS

By Brian Bielefeld

The obsidian eye turns,
a jay, black hood over stellar blue
creeps down the arc of a fragile branch
her weight sags closer
to reach a cluster of dead leaves
she tips and tumbles
dry fragments of leaves explode
the vacant branch nods in time
music of a tree, a bird, and a falling leaf.

Was this the irresistible urge
to pad posterity's nest
or the ticking of a moth
born of a curled leaf?

There is no great drama here
no emperor crowned
no bloody battle lost or won
nothing worth noting

But this tree will never be the same again
this paper with its marks of black
no longer a blank screen, the residue
of (soil, water, fierce sun) wood
the remains of a tree in which once sat
a blue creature who spied a person
sprawled on a rock
dreaming of important things.

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DAILY SCHEDULE



Monday-Friday:

5:45am Zazen (all periods 40 min.)
6:25am Morning Service (chanting)
12:00pm Zazen
5:45pm Zazen
6:25pm Evening Service

Wednesday Evening:

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

Saturday Morning:

8:30am Zazen
9:10am Morning Service

Sunday Evening:

5:45pm Zazen
6:25pm Evening Service

Library open during tea after Wed. Lecture

See sczc.org for other weekly events
including "Ordinary Recovery", qigong,
and Dharma discussion groups

Introduction to Koans	Sat. Apr 16	9:30am-noon
Precepts Renewal	Fri. Apr 22	5:45-6:30pm
Earth Day Film Showing	Fri. Apr 22	7-9pm
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Apr 23	10am-noon
Brian Bielefeld Funeral	Sat. Apr 23	1:30-3:30pm
Edie Brown Ordination	Sun. Apr 24	2-4pm
Sobun Roshi Memorial	Mon. Apr 25	6:25-7am
Half-day Sitting	Sat. Apr 30	8:30am-noon
Tassajara Weekend	May 6-8	Fri eve - Sun eve
Samantabhadra's Vows	May 15-Jun 5	6:35-8pm
Precepts Renewal	Fri. May 20	5:45-6:30pm
Sangha Day	Sat. May 21	starts 9:20am
Kobun Roshi Memorial	Thurs. May 26	6:25-7am
Introduction to Zen	Sat. May 28	10-noon
Sejiki and Cultural Fair	Sat. Jun 4	11am-5pm
Santa Cruz Pride Parade	Sun. Jun 5	10:30-11:30am
Sangha Net Workshop	Sat. Jun 11	1-4pm.
No Toys Sesshin	Jun 17-19	5am-9pm
Precepts Renewal	Mon. Jun 20	5:45-6:30pm
Sobun Roshi Memorial	Fri. Jun 24	6:25-7am
Introduction to Zen	Sat. Jun 25	10-noon



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