

Monterey Bay Zen Center News

Autumn 2016

Leaving the Cherry Center on a Tuesday evening, turning off the lights, the door locked behind me, I go walking into the still, dark night. The last to leave the zendo, I treasure these few minutes. The quiet Carmel street shifts and becomes transformed. Soft light filters through the trees and shrubs; there is a sense of a village asleep.

When my mind isn't soft and pliable, words can become confusing and heave about like small boats in a storm. When I was younger and unaware of the mind's capricious tendency to dart about, I didn't know what to expect. Later, I found that working with plants and soil and wind and rain and sunshine was my true vocation.

As a child, I was taught things I didn't, and couldn't, understand about a deity whose name couldn't be written, whose image couldn't be made and whose face couldn't be seen. I was unwilling accept this narrative. What was real for me was my senses, my changing body and what was around me. Being a body is Zen. Watching the grass move in the wind, the stream eddy and ripple in afternoon light, the clouds pile and disperse in the sky, the nature of how things are all a part of me because I am a part of them. This is Zen.

Zen is as complex as the smallest bit of soil, made of decomposed rock and bodies of plants, animals and microorganisms. In the living of it, Zen is very simple. The practice suggests that I can sit in the middle of my life and allow thoughts to come and go, breath to pass freely throughout this body and simply be an ordinary human—a healthy animal. One can practice in remote temples in the pines and crags, or in cities. And one can be of any age before the mind grows up to the reality of this life.

My house shares a Carmel Valley hillside with large coastal live oaks. My small home is beneath a massive oak. In the afternoon, when the wind picks up, acorns fall to the roof—PLING! Then they roll to the porch below, bright and shining green. The oak leaves are sharp and pointed, no nonsense about them. Squirrels run circles in the trees, the cat watches from under a shrub. All these inhabitants: the acorn, the squirrel, the cat lives its own nature so easily, while as humans we seem to need to grow into and learn our bodies and minds. For me, it took a long time.

This may seem easy for some when one observes from this self looking at that self. But we learn that really we do not know the struggles of each other, even if we think we are close to one another. If we don't know our own minds, how can we know another? The Heart Sutra tells us that the self is empty, just the home of fleeting percep-

tions, none of it real or that we can hold on to. So, we needn't be so hard on ourselves. Or others. It isn't easy being born a human being. Whatever our nature, whether monk or a gardener, we aren't so different. We're just human Buddhas, transforming all the time, sometimes hungry ghosts, sometimes demons, sometimes gods. This is just the activity of our dynamic minds, hungry and grasping. Our questions are as perplexing as those monks facing their Teachers in the old stories. What are the actions of my life? When suffering comes, how can I meet it with kindness?

My happiest, most at ease mind, is my mind soft and fluid. A moment of noticing. It's when the edges of my mind aren't sharp like the edges of an oak leaf.

Think not thinking. How do you think not thinking?

Nonthinking. This is the essential art of Zazen. *Dogen Zenji*

— Susan McDonald

*this season of long shafts
of sunlight
of clouds,
of falling leaves,
of tomatoes ripening.*

Autumn

—Susan McDonald

OUTSIDERS: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I live on the Monterey Peninsula with 150,000 people, some I like and some I don't like and most I don't know. There are groups of people, tribes, families, business associates, politicians, students and also four hundred women who no longer have shelter. These women are homeless. We look at them as if something is very wrong with them or else why would they be sleeping in their cars or in the bushes.

We act as if they need to be fixed so they can deserve once again to live under a roof with doors that lock.

I grew up fearful of becoming a bag lady. My generation of women was taught that if you did not get a man's support you would become a bag lady. I didn't believe that I could take care of myself and I was wrong. The fear persists in my body.

I work on projects to create housing for single older women who are without adequate shelter. And this affordable housing doesn't exist in our community. I have to face my fears and worries that I too will live in my car someday.

What I have learned is that it is not the failings of people that cause homelessness it is the lack of affordable housing. We have destroyed the diversity of housing options, inexpensive apartments, boarding houses, back yard tiny houses, trailer courts, camp grounds. We

have improved our communities to the point where many people are left out. And we want the left out people to disappear from our beautiful neighborhoods and streets.

We all know this but still we value our definition of beauty forgetting that diversity is also beautiful. Artists and musicians thrive in run down colorful streets.

Bring back lower Alvarado Street, the jazz clubs, the upstairs boarding houses, the street life, the cheap cafes.

Let's change zoning and building codes to promote the diversity of housing. Let's remember that people live outside because the community has excluded them by focusing on that they consider beautiful.

Let me be open to life as it is.

At the Rio Olympics opening show we saw music and dance and art that arose from their slums. Maybe we need some slums as part of the diversity of life, the vibrancy of life.

Yes, beauty is important but no person has the market on what is beautiful. Let us expand the beauty in our lives.

Let us be open to other's lives, let's make room for the 400 women sleeping outside in our parks and streets.

Let us not be afraid of life as it is arising.

— Rev. Kathy Whilden

TAKING THE GREAT LEAP: DEATH, DYING AND LIVING IN EVERY MOMENT

A workshop on the practice of life and death, *Taking the Great Leap* will be held Saturday, October 29 at the Carl Cherry Center. Through talks, zazen, experiential exercises and discussions, Rev. Myogen Kathryn Stark will explore our capacity to meet the most profound moment of human experience and find—in turning towards the truth of our mortality—the truth of how we can actually live to know the wonder of being.

Great is the matter of birth and death –

Life is fleeting, gone, gone . . .

Awake, awake, each one,

Do not waste this precious life.

These words, written on the *han*, the wooden instrument that calls us to the zendo also calls us to wake up to our life.

What does it mean to die? Who dies? How do we find meaning in life when we come up against the end of life? Who are we now, in the light of death? What can death teach us about life? How do we find the courage to face our own death, to face our own life?

In this workshop we will explore questions such as these through the investigation of Buddhist perspectives, teachings, and practices on death and dying. We will look at how facing our inevitable death in every moment can inform our lives in every moment.

Workshop will be led by Rev. Myogen Kathryn Stark, MA, MDiv. Rev. Stark began Soto practice in 1990 and received priest ordination from Sobun Katherine Thanas and dharma transmission from Shosan Victoria Austin. She holds master's degrees in Buddhist studies with a specialty in Buddhist chaplaincy from the Graduate Theological Union and Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley. She currently leads a sitting group in Sonoma and works as an interfaith hospice chaplain in the Sonoma and Napa areas.



Fee: \$50-75, sliding scale, work scholarships available. Please bring your own lunch. For information, contact Susan, 831-601-7590, soozmcdonald@gmail.com

DAYAN QIGONG: THE ART AND PRACTICE OF THE WILD GOOSE

This workshop in ancient Taoist medicine practice, designed to enhance circulation and compliment meditation, will be facilitated by Dr. Robert Rosenbaum, a Qigong and Zen teacher. It will be held Saturday, November 5 from 9 to 5 at Outcalt Chapel, Community Church of Monterey.

Dayan Qigong (Wild Goose Qigong) is steeped in the Taoist attitude of “just natural” and “doing non-doing” and encourages dropping self-centered thoughts and “effortful exercise.” This style of Qigong has 64 movements which follows a logical progression according to principals of Traditional Chinese medicine. Each movement “works to open particular meridians, and aligns with specific acupuncture point,” says Rosenbaum.

Robert Rosenbaum, PhD, is a clinical neuropsychologist, Zen and Qigong teacher. Price: \$75, scholarships available. Information: Patricia Wolff at 659-3042 or patrishw@yahoo.com.

LIVING THE PRECEPTS

Soto Zen Precepts: Seeing What We Do

Living the Precepts, a series of classes exploring the practice of Ethics and Zen meditation, will be held Saturdays, October 15 and 22 and continuing November 12 and 19 at the Carl Cherry Center for the Arts.

According to Suzuki Roshi, the precepts are an expression of our original nature, rather than rules or an abstract code of ethics. Studying the precepts heightens awareness of how they can inform and enliven our daily words and actions, assist us at work, and in our interactions with friends, family, and the wider world.

In meeting the ethical challenges of modern life, the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts offer a clear and engaged path of practice. The Zen precepts show us what the heart and mind of Zen look like when immersed

in the world. Through talks, discussion, journaling, reading and meditation, we will explore and practice the precepts with ourselves, our communities and all of life. Time: 10:30 to noon. \$10 suggested donation per class.

Robert Reese is a Soto Zen priest the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi and received Dharma Transmission from Sobun Katherine Thanas.

THUS COMING, THUS GOING: SANGHA IN TRANSITION

After nearly six years of continuous education, I finally achieved a major milestone — August 6th I successfully completed The Board of Registered Nursing's examination process. A week later I was sent my RN license, which means I can practice nursing in the state of California.

The next leg of my journey involves a residency program at Natividad Hospital beginning at the end of September. In the meantime, I am currently enrolled in a Bachelors program at CSUMB (it seems I'm a glutton for education).

Although I have used the word "I" ten times while writing this short paragraph, the truth is I didn't undertake this journey alone. My Sangha members have supported me in countless ways over the years. And, therefore, I wish to express my gratitude for their encouragement and patience. In truth my efforts cannot be untangled from the efforts of everyone and everything. Therefore I am humbled to be a part of this thing we call existence and honored to live in a time and place with everyone who reads these words. With a deep bow of gratitude,

— Scott Bryan



Seeking right livelihood, I worked for a time at an Ayurvedic clinic, but found that medicine was not my passion. Working there expanded my understanding of Eastern medicine's approach to the functioning of body and mind. I then worked as a Wellness Coordinator at The Pebble Beach Spa Juice Bar. It was a challenging year and a half as well as a great opportunity to see, more clearly, how I want to contribute my energy to the world. This year after the passing of my Grandmother, who was my first and most precious teacher, I had some wonderful realizations. Having spent over half a decade contemplating furthering my education, I decided to enter the Master's of Social Work Program at CSUMB. To prepare for applying, I'm now taking pre-requisites at MPC. And at the same time I am also completing a 500 hour yoga training in Berkeley. Thank you for inviting me to share the recent developments of my life—I am filled with gratitude for all your love and support!

— Yasi Payandehjoo

COPYING THE 10,000 THINGS – AND THEN SOME

The directions for sutra copying are given like zazen instructions: Keep the back straight, relax the shoulders, breathe from the physical and spiritual center of the body. Write each stroke with full concentration of body and mind. The lines should be strong, and clear. Copy with the entire body, not just the hands. Each line should be written with a feeling of gratitude for the teaching. Do not hurry absentmindedly.

We will explore the 10,000 things expounding the Dharma by using our eyes and arms, pens and ink to copy vines, branches, words, rocks onto shingles, bark, paper, rocks, cloth. We then offer it up to the universe. There is no end to it.



Two workshops are offered Sundays from 9-noon: Copying the 10,000 Things Oct 9 and De-& Re-Constructing the 10,000 Things Nov 27. To participate contact Sara: 915-4736 or sarahun@comcast.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Unpacking the Heart Sutra w/ Sara Hunsaker, Sat, Oct 1, 10:30-noon, \$10 suggested donation, Cherry Center

Bendowa Seminar w/ Robert Reese Sun, Oct 2, 10:00-noon, Davi Building Washington St, Monterey

Film: Travellers and Magicians w/ Sara Hunsaker, Thurs, Oct 6, 7:00pm, \$10 includes popcorn, Cherry Center

Compassionate Communication w/ Patricia Wolff, Sat, Oct 8, Dec 10, 6:30-8:30pm, St. James Church

Loving Kindness Seminar w/ Kevin Griffin Sat, Oct 8, 10:15-4:00, Cherry Center, \$60 incl. lunch; scholarships available; contact Matt: mhammond@compuserve.com or 831-588-3787

Sejiki: Hungry Ghosts Ceremony Tue, Oct 25, 6:30-8:30pm Cherry Center, refreshments

Mountains and Rivers Meditation w/ Patricia Wolff, Wed, Oct 26, 7-8:30pm Paso Hondo, Carmel Valley, 659-3042

Half-day Sitting: Giving Thanks w/ Sara Hunsaker, Sun, Nov 20, 8:30-noon, by donation, Carmel Valley Zendo

Half-day Sitting: Celebrating Buddha's Enlightenment w/ Sara Hunsaker, Sun, Dec 4, 8:30-noon, by donation, Carmel Valley Zendo
Year-end Ceremony w/ Susan McDonald, Tue, Dec 27, 6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center, refreshments

New Year's Eve Sitting w/ Sara Hunsaker, Sat, Dec 31, 9-midnight, by donation incl. noodles, Carmel Valley Zendo



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ON FACEBOOK: you can
“like” the two Zen Centers

Facebook pages for current
information on what’s happening
there, photos of events, and more.

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
Kinhin (walking) 7:10
Service 7:20
Lecture/discussion 7:30-8:30

Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen 7am
(followed by service and soji)

Zazen instruction first Tuesday of
each month at 5:30pm

Ordinary Recovery, Sats, 9-10am
Cherry Center, Carmel

Fearless Fathers, Tuesdays, 5:30
p.m. (415) 531-2090

Brown Bag Zen, Fridays 12:15-1:15
St. James Church, Monterey

Mountains and Rivers Meditation,
2nd & 4th Weds 7-8:30pm
Patricia 659-3042

Chicken Coop Zendo, Thursdays
5:30-7:00pm - 659-2365

Unpacking the Heart Sutra

Bendowa Seminar

Travellers and Magicians

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Loving Kindness Seminar

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Living the Precepts

Sejiki Ceremony

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Dayan Qigong

Living the Precepts

Half-day Sitting

De- & Re-Constructing

Half-day Sitting

Compassionate Comm.

Year-end Ceremony

New Year's Eve Sitting

Sat, Oct 1

Sun, Oct 2

Thurs, Oct 6

Sat, Oct 8

Sat, Oct 8

Sun, Oct 9

Sat, Oct 15, 22

Tue, Oct 25,

Wed, Oct 26

Sat, Oct 29

Sat, Nov 5

Sat, Nov 12, 19

Sun, Nov 20

Sun, Nov 27

Sun, Dec 4

Sat, Dec 10

Tue, Dec 27

Sat, Dec 31

10:30-noon, Cherry Center

10:00-noon, Davi Bldg

7:00pm, Cherry Center

6:30-8:30pm, St. James Chrch

10:15-4:00, Cherry Center

9:00-noon, CV Zendo

10:30-Noon, Cherry Center

6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center

7-8:30pm Paso Hondo, CV

10:30-4:00, Cherry Center

9:00-5:00, Outcalt Chapel

10:30-noon, Cherry Center

8:30-noon, CV Zendo

9:00-noon, CV Zendo

8:30-noon, CV Zendo

6-8:30pm, St. James Church

6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center

9-midnight, CV Zendo

Illustrations by June Poe and Sara Hunsaker