

Monterey Bay Zen Center News

Summer 2016

REFUGE AND VOW

Awakening is a verb

One Tuesday evening, not chanting as usual the Four Vows, we closed chanting the THREE REFUGES.

I take refuge in Buddha

I take refuge in Dharma

I take refuge in Sangha

I felt myself plunging through body and mind in our mingled voices. When our voices rose, we were one voice, one body and mind. We were moved by the unconscious energy that was welling up from our hearts in joining our voices in vow. Not repeating the usual pattern, we experienced a right-now moment, a moment of awakening together.

Our voices rose, became one voice, one body, one mind. Stepping away from usual pattern opened to a right-now moment, a moment of awakening together.

When we are chanting, the sound itself, mind listening and voice opened, we're free of mind-consciousness. We taste the quality of non-conceptual mind. We are free when taking refuge — one body, one mind. Free of the sense of a separate self.

We shared a moment of no-self, a non-substantial moment. It is like the experience of sesshin, as morning flows into night, day after day, we become one body, one mind.

It is like sitting in a swirl of thoughts and dropping down into breathe, into just sitting.

It is like looking at the wall, and the wall breaks open, seeing in an unbounded way. This is a moment of big mind.

We know intuitively that we can trust this.

CICADAS BUZZ

ONE THINKS THIS IS STILLNESS

BUT A MILLION LIVES UNFOLD

Anonymous

The purpose of practice is to shape our capacity to see light.

Kobun Chino Roshi.

THE DHARMA OF THE BUMBLEBEE

THE DHARMA OF THE ANT

Think of traveling a county road, perhaps the road to Tassajara, a narrow, dirt road. On the cut bank to the side, we can see the musculature of an oak high above eye level. What we see is the intricacy of growth become solid wood. The very outer edge of the life sustaining body of oak.

I take refuge in Buddha.

Before all being, immersing body and mind deeply in the Way, awakening true mind.

Immersing body and mind means carrying our understanding into everyday life with awareness of body, speech and mind, embodying an aware body and mind. Awakening true mind means waking up from the story of our lives. Taking refuge in all of our whole life.

I take refuge in Dharma.

Before all being, entering the merciful ocean of Buddha's Way.

It's natural for us to study the ancient teachings, the sutras and the work of modern writers as well. Study of koans, of zendo cooking, of ritual practice, these and more give us an understanding of the history and contemporary practice and expression of Dharma, dynamic and changing in the modern world. But, it also means studying the way things are — everything around us. Looking closely at the bumblebee, the house spider, looking carefully at the architecture of oaks and buckeye trees, the colony of ants, listening to the raucous crow. Our practice is one of intimacy with all things, attentiveness to mind and body of self, taking refuge in all living things, this is Dharma.

I take refuge in Sangha.

Before all being, bringing harmony to everyone, free from hindrance.

Our Sangha is central in our lives as practitioners. We need our teachers, our dharma sisters and brothers, a place to practice together, a safe and orderly place where we can sit and act in safety. We ourselves are a refuge for each other and for the troubled. We ourselves are held within the vast net of all beings, all beings are Sangha.

--Susan McDonald

*Because the mind is
free —
Listening to the rain
Dripping from the
eaves,
The drops become
One with me.*



Patrick Teverbaugh and students at Tassajara

IN BRIEF

Just Walking: Walking and Stillness. Susan McDonald and Phyllis Conlan will be meeting at Dampierre Little League Park, 37 Paso Hondo, Carmel Valley for walking meditation and the practice of stillness in walking. Please call (831) 659-2365 for more information.

Bendowa: A Continuing Study. Robert Reese will lead the continuing study of Dogen's Bendowa or the Practice of the Whole Hearted Way on the first Sunday of every month beginning July 3, 2016. Students meet at Ingrid Aquino's studio at the Davi Building, 485 Washington Street, Monterey. Classes run from 10:00 am to 12:00 with meditation and a seminar format. Please call Robert to register at (831) 920-8303.

Compassionate Communication. Compassionate communication gatherings are meeting the second Saturday evenings of the month at St. James Church, at the northeast corner of Jackson and High Street in Monterey. Using non-violent communication (NVC) and Buddhist practices, students have been exploring how to live lives filled with courage, curiosity, clarity and humor. Together students meditate, share delicious snacks, learn about effective tools to foster communication and investigate how we get "hooked" in our relationships. For more information, call Patricia Wolff at (831) 659-3042

Don't Miss Breakfast with Poetry. The breakfast will start at 9:00 am and the event will run until 11:00 am on Saturday, July 16, 2016. Poetry reading by Patrice Vecchione, Eliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, and Susan McDonald begins around 10:00 am. Donations support the Monterey Bay Zen Center and its activities. Earthbound Farm, 7250 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA (3.5 miles east of Highway One). Donation: \$30.00 for each adult and \$10.00 for each child, children under 6 are free. Please RSVP to Mark Orrisch at (831) 659-7138 to register or email mbzc.pres@prodigy.net. Participation is limited to 50 individuals.

Carmel River Meditation. The Mountains and Rivers sitting group led by Patricia Wolff, will be meditating by Carmel River in Carmel Valley. Patricia invites anyone interested to join the group on Wednesday, July 27 and August 24 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, for meditation by the river. Participants should dress warmly in layers

and bring a lawn chair if possible. Please contact Patricia at (831) 659-3042 or patrishw@yahoo.com to register or for more information. Suggested donation of \$10.00. No one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay.

UNPACKING THE HEART SUTRA

In Soto Zen Buddhism, the Great Wisdom Beyond Wisdom Heart Sutra is chanted often. Perhaps you have wondered what it means? Basic teachings of Buddhism, as understood by the Mahayana school, are included within it. We will unpack these teachings and focus on how they impact our daily lives. A reading list will be provided when you sign up. We will use the lively text by Red Pine The Heart Sutra: Womb of the Buddhas. The classes, led by Sara Hunsaker, will be held at the Cherry Center, Carmel on Saturdays, September 10, 17, and October 1, from 10:30 to 12 noon. Suggested donation of \$10 per class or \$21 for all 3. Sara will also be leading a sutra copying workshop at her home in Carmel Valley on Sunday, September 25, from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon. Please call Sara at (831) 915-4736 for more information.

REMEMBRANCES OF BLANCHE--WITH GRATITUDE

One summer a long time ago I went Tassajara to check it out – looking for something. Blanche Hartman happened to be the first Zen priest I met. Over the days I was there, as a guest student, she took the time to answer all questions I asked. Very generous. Before leaving I thanked her and she asked, "Might you come back?"

For the next few years she was there every time I returned and every time she had time for me and always asked or teased me about returning. Once my car broke down on the way out and she said, "I think the Universe wants you to stay here a while." Thoughts create conditions.

In 1992 Blanche led a trip to Japan where 12 women trained for a month at Rinso-in (Suzuki Roshi's original temple). Blanche had been there before and knew Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi, his son. She was both a teacher and a student. She modeled practice for us. I felt I could trust her. She shared her self-doubts and her realizations – was grounded and real. When we took trips she strode ahead of us.



Blanche made sure that sincere and diverse students had the opportunity to deepen practice. She was not a soft or easy teacher. She had standards and kept close to them. As she said, "I wouldn't know how to begin to change our practice. I can't tell the difference between the baby and the bathwater."

At my third practice period at Tassajara, I was given the honor of being her personal attendant (anja). I was to be the fly on the wall, meaning not seen and out of the way. It was a dance slipping in and out of the abbot's cabin, building her fire, cleaning, setting up for dokusan, making tea in the early morn. She taught me to make macha (powdered green

tea). Each morning, in silence, we had a “tea ceremony”: I whisked and offered her the bowl of tea and she then did the same for me. We bowed to one another: Two Buddhas. That is her spirit.

When I developed serious difficulties with practice, I turned to Blanche. She offered advice that reflected me back to me; I had to look at my self; I didn't want to. Months, even years, later the wisdom got through to me. Like she said, “The problems you have now will never go away.” They never have gone away but they change; I change; and she has now gone. The very thought of her brings me back to practice.

After priest ordination I went to SFZC for a two-week retreat; I was asked to wash windows and floors. One afternoon, feeling very tired, I decided to quit early. I was on my way up to my room when, looking up, I could see Blanche, the sleeves of her robes rolled up, on hands and knees, scrubbing the landing in front of the Ancestors' Hall. She did not look up as I passed by. And now she has 'passed on.'

-- Sara Hunsaker

THE HUMMINGBIRD BLESSES THE DAY

A Haiku Writing Workshop with Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts

The Hummingbird Blesses the Day

First one flower, then
another. No lingering.
So quick. There. Here. Gone

Elliot Ruchowitz Roberts will lead a writing-intensive workshop which will explore the ways in which the writing of haiku can, like the hummingbird, bless each day. A Professor Emeritus at Monterey Peninsula College where he taught introduction to poetry and creative writing, Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts is co-editor of the college text *Bridges*; co-editor/co-translator of two works from the Telugu, *Sudha (Nectar)* by Chalam and *The Selected Verses of Vemana*, both of which have been accepted into UNESCO's Collection of Representative works: Indian Series; and co-author of *Bowing to Receive the Mountain: Essays by Lin Jensen and Poetry by Elliot Roberts*. The workshop will be held on Saturday, August 20, 2106 from 10:30 to 12:30 pm at the Carl Cherry Center, northwest corner of Guadalupe and Fourth Ave., Carmel. Please bring bag lunch. Suggest donation of \$30.00. Scholarships are available. For more information, please contact Susan at (831) 601-7590.

Folding Her Clothing

Folding her clothing,
on my dead wife's black sweater,
a strand of her hair.

DIANE WELLS SHUSO

Congratulations to Diane Wells (Kanshin Zenki, Broad Heart Full Function). Diane completed her tenure as shuso (head student) for the winter/spring practice period with a closing ceremony at the Cherry Center in early April. Diane was selected by Robert Reese

to assist him with conducting the practice period. Diane organized the venue for the Sunday classes at Santa Catalina School, led practice teas, interviewed students, and led by her example. At the closing ceremony, sangha members expressed their gratitude for her practice and kindness during the practice period.

The theme selected by Robert for the practice period was “Returning to Zazen” and students studied Eihei Dogen's *Bendowa (Practice of the Whole-hearted Way)* with commentary by Uchiyama Roshi. Robert characterized the fascicle as Dogen's love song to zazen. In her way-seeking mind talk, Diane related that she had practiced with San Francisco Zen Center as a young woman. In one of her early meditation periods, she had an opening experience that still sustains her practice. Her life's journey has brought her to Monterey Bay Zen Center. She has returned to zazen.

Waka for Diane

*I can't find the words.
Yet no words can express it.
I can't find the words.
Can painted rice cakes fill us?
Sitting in silence I hear.*



KEVIN GRIFFIN AND COMPASSION

Save the date! On October 8, Kevin Griffin returns for *Loving Kindness: Buddhist Views of Caring, Compassion, and Non-Attachment*. The workshop takes place from 10:15am -4:00am at the Carl Cherry Center, Carmel and explores Buddhist teachings on loving-kindness, harmony, non-ill will, and non-clinging, including the Metta Sutta. We will practice metta meditation and mindfulness meditation. Suggested donation of \$60 which includes a vegetarian lunch. Scholarships are available.



Kevin Griffin is the author of *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps* and *A Burning Desire: Dharma God and the Path of Recovery*. A longtime Buddhist practitioner and 12-Step participant, he is a leader in the mindful recovery movement and one of the founders of the Buddhist Recovery Network.

For more information or to reserve your space, please call Matt Hammond at (831) 588-3787, or mhammond@compuserve.com.



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MONTEREY BAY ZEN CENTER

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We meet at the Cherry Center, 4th and Guadalupe in Carmel, unless otherwise indicated.

Tuesday Evening Service:

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

Monday, Thursday mornings:

Zazen 7am
(followed by service and soji)

Zazen instruction

First Tuesdays, 5:30pm

Ordinary Recovery

Saturdays 9-10am

Brown Bag Zen

Fridays 12:15-1:15
St. James Church,
High and Hellam Sts, Mntny

Mountains and Rivers Meditation

2nd and 4th Wednesdays 6:30pm
Carmel Valley. Call Patricia 659-3042

Chicken Coop Zendo

Jamesburg, Thursday evenings
5:30 -- 7 p.m. Call 659-2365

Bendowa class	Sun, Aug 7, Sept 11	10:00-12 noon Davi Bldg, Monterey
Rakusu Care	Fri, July 8	10:00-12 noon, Sara Hunsaker, Carmel Valley
Compassionate Comm.	Sat, July 9, Aug 13, Sept 10	6-8:30pm, St. James Church, Monterey
Breakfast with Poetry	Sat, July 16	9:00-11:00am, Earthbound Farm stand, Carmel
Full Moon Ceremony	Tues, July 19	6:30-8:30pm, Cherry Center
Introduction to Zen	Sat, July 23, Sept 3	10:30-12 noon, Cherry Ctr
Carmel River Meditation	Wed, July 27, Aug 24	6:30-8:00pm, Paso Hondo, Carmel Valley
Haiku Workshop	Sat, Aug 20	10:30-12:30pm, Cherry Ctr
Half Day Sitting	Sat, Aug 27	8:30-12:00 noon, Sara Hunsaker, Carmel Valley
Heart Sutra Class	Sat, Sept 10, 17, Oct 1	10:30-12 noon, Cherry Ctr
Sutra Copy Workshop	Sun, Sept 25	9:30-12 noon, Sara Hunsaker, Carmel Valley
Kevin Griffin Workshop	Sat, Oct 8	10:15-4:00 pm, Cherry Ctr