
520

*Sangha, a collection of creative work by friends at the Santa Cruz Zen Center, is being published as a guest issue of **Hoto**. We are most grateful and honored.*

道
曲
久
寫
書
久
久

*Do not seek him anywhere else
or he will run away from you!
Now that I go on all alone,
I meet him everywhere.
He is even now what I am,
I am even now not what he is.
Only by understanding this Way
can there be a true union with
the self-so.*

*In Zazen
the mind drinks cool water
As birds awaken with song
the sun visits us again
Each day . . . One Breath.*

++

*dawn
dewdrops
No fog
just rose-blue
My mind . . . clear
deep as the sky.*

Feb 1

*above the valley fog
at sunrise
frost on the grass
feet half frozen
snow on mid-mountain.*



May 6

*the rapids below
grizzly creek,
rock and green water
blue ceanothus
covers the banks
blowing in the wind.*

June . . .

*A mid-morning
mountain breeze from the south
green sunshine & fern shadows.*

*deep
brown bottomed
pools
in the Tuolomne
are upside down
sky
for fallen aspen.
Yellow leaves
slow tumble
in hidden currents
turn,
over and over.*

*Deserted mountain ridgetop road.
Driving . . . loving the road on bright spring dawn.
Windows closed I'm a tourist through what is
exquisitely familiar to me.
I don't want to jump out to inhale deep breaths of
cold mountain air.
No . . . I'm invincible in my car, like a pebble
dropped in a pond.
This spring air can't touch me. My winter cravings
for it would overwhelm me.
I chuckle as I drive through . . . Oh, no, I'll just
see it today.
Run through and savor it without being within.
The pleasure of the beach without swimming.
Blazing dawn blinds me, leaping out in front of me
on this lonely road.
Invading the impregnable encapsulated me.
Sun blind I am mocked by the jays as I pull off the road.
No longer the pebble I'm a stone in the honey jar.
I step from my car and spring drowns me.
See touch I must
Alone, alone, a lone a lone whisper so crisp and clear,
Can I be so quiet?*

4/21/79

*descent
downward walking
slowly—
feeling rocks and moss with bare toes—
and wind blowing across me,
across the ridge.
puff and gasp of mist are
the breath of wind.*

*down
down
down*

*I feel
the earth rise and receive each step
I look
at my body walking—
my belly, my breasts, my thighs, my arms.
and I leave
the mountain space
to return to valley space.*

A History of SANTA CRUZ ZEN CENTER from 528 B.C. to 1979 A.D.

About 528 B.C. Siddhartha Gautama, after six years of arduous practice, discovered Where It's At. During the next two and a half millenia his wisdom was gradually conveyed westward from his homeland of northern India. In the summer of 1970 A.D. it reached Santa Cruz, California through the efforts of Kobun Chino, and Ryan Brandenburg.

At first, the only activity of the Santa Cruz Zen group was to meet each Tuesday night for sitting, service, and lecture by Kobun. These first meetings were held in a small Unitarian church on Center Street, rented for the occasion. The following year things started getting serious.

In 1971 several regular members of the group rented a house at 114 Swift Street and converted the living room into a meditation hall. Now, in addition to Tuesday lectures, people could join in daily group sitting, attended mostly by the few people living at the Swift Street house. Much of the money, materials, and encouragement needed for sitting practice during the Swift Street Era were provided by Ruth O'Neal.

In the spring of 1972 Kobun led the first weekend sesshin in Santa Cruz. Also that summer the group held its first business meeting. The meeting was generated by the following events: (1) The owner was selling the Swift Street house, and everyone would have to move. (2) The group was flat broke. (3) Ruth O'Neal was leaving for Japan.

The first problem was solved when Jim Goodhue offered his living room as a temporary zendo. In September 1972 the zendo was moved to Jim's house at 113 School Street. At that time Jim was living with a group of people whose only common characteristic seemed to be that they were all friends of Jim Goodhue. When a few of them floated away the following year, they were replaced by people who wanted to live there so they could better establish their zazen practice.

Gradually, without anyone noticing, the temporary zendo became permanent. Eventually Jim discovered that his house had been taken over by Zen. In revealing this insight to the other Sangha members he was quick to stress that it was fine with him. With the understanding that 113 School St. was a "Zen house" began the never-ending debates on life-style and practice in such a place: Who can live there? How should the house be organized? What is the relationship between the house members and the larger Sangha? What *is* practice? Should people wear shoes in the house? . . .

After months of work by a few people, the group became an official non-profit corporation with official by-laws, an official board of directors, and an official name: "The Santa Cruz Zen Center." (Other suggestions had been "Zen Center Santa Cruz" and "The Wall of the Western Barbarian.")

About the same time Jim announced that he was going to Japan for a very long time (he's still there at this writing). In an effort to sever his ties to Santa Cruz, he offered to give the two School Street houses to the group if they would pay off his debts. His debts were nothing compared to the total payments he had made on the houses, and the loose cash available in the group was nothing compared to Jim's debts. Everyone took a deep breath and agreed to come up with one hundred dollars each in three weeks. Everyone did; Jim disappeared into the mysterious Orient; and the Santa Cruz Zen Center, after an even more mysterious real estate transaction, became the owner of a valuable chunk of Santa Cruz.

Concurrent with these events, Mrs. Frances Brier, who had been living at 115 School Street for 25 years, decided to move to a nursing home. A burst of group energy transformed this building into the present zendo.

The Zen Center also had its first sandwich booth at the Santa Cruz Spring Fair that spring. Although we were obliged to eat leftover soybean spread for many weeks, it was agreed that the project had been a success. Participation in the Spring Fair became an annual event and soon led to a then undreamed of solvency.

These changes did not occur without due misgivings by most of the members. Events had seemingly conspired to transform this loose collection of itinerant nere-do-wells and unreconstructed hippies into a corporation, complete with real estate, by-laws, and a board of directors. We were being dragged (kicking and screaming) into the straight world. When someone remarked that we had just witnessed the end of the Golden Age of the Santa Cruz Zendo, many heads nodded agreement.

Some of the "friends-of-Jim-Goodhue" group were still living in the house at that time. Those not interested in Zen practice were less than excited about the changes in the house; and, before the last of them left, conflicting opinions led to some very painful and educational episodes. Life at 113 School Street then was further intensified by the huge population density. At that time only the house and garage were used by the group. Three bedrooms were shared by as many as eight people; and the zendo occupied all of the first floor, except the one-lane kitchen, which became the only communal space.

The initial uneasiness was soon replaced by excitement as everyone joined in the work of transforming the two old houses into something more closely resembling a "Zen Center." Building, painting, gardening, and house repairs continued throughout the year of 1974, until somewhere near the end of that year the Santa Cruz Zen Center became, in a sense, "finished." Overwhelming material problems were gone as was the feeling of careening from one crisis to the next. Everyone living in the house had their own bedroom (now five in all); there was a kitchen to cook in, a dining room to dine in, a living room to live in, and a zendo to sit in. We were all ready to practice . . . whatever that was.

Everyone agreed that it had to do with sitting, and participation in daily sitting and sesshins increased. In 1976 the Santa Cruz group organized its first seven-day sesshin and began monthly, one-day sittings. Kobun's support remained strong, but his direction was becoming less specific. The attitude toward those activities surrounding sitting was becoming more experimental (i.e., we were winging it). Daily services were discontinued in 1976 and decreased during sesshins. Sesshins became generally less elaborate and more rigorous. Excerpts from general meeting minutes illustrate the changes in practice over the last four years: At a meeting in 1975 the following suggestions were offered for a practice period: learning new sutras, full-moon ceremony, and demonstrations of calligraphy, tea ceremony, and archery by Kobun. The most recent practice periods have offered little more than increased opportunities to sit. These changes are not welcomed by everyone and should probably not be cited as a trend. However, changes have been generally accepted in the spirit of trying to learn how this practice can best fit into this society.

Improvements in the houses and grounds continued steadily after the first burst of activity. The presence of Jim Goodhue is still felt in the gardens which he started, and a number of erstwhile gardeners have continued and expanded his work. A combination library-dokusan-guest room was completed in 1977. Somewhere around that time the rate of repairs seemed to catch up with the rate of decay.

Social events including the whole sangha increased during 1975 and 1976. These events have included the full range found in our society: ordinations, weddings, teas, breakfasts, pot-lucks, picnics, and drunken bacchanalia. Another group endeavor was the preparation of the first volume of this journal (you are reading Volume II), which appeared in 1975.

So many individuals have made contributions to the group that it seemed best to give only those names necessary for continuity. Also it seemed that this history is history of a group and not separate people. What has happened to the group, however, is so invisible and difficult to express. We can agree that something called "strength" of the sangha has increased steadily over the years, always saving us from the more visible flakiness of our operation. An apology is due those people who have never lived at School Street for the way this history gives the impression that everything important happened there. Surely School Street is only the visible tip of the zenberg, its invisible foundation being infinitely larger.

As this journal is being prepared for printing, Santa Cruz Zen Center is preparing for its next cycle of rapid change. The Santa Cruz group has always been associated with the Los Altos and Spring Mountain sanghas through Kobun and in other undefined ways. These three groups constitute the organization called "Bodhi" which has just purchased property in the Santa Cruz Mountains intended as a focal point for future practice. Since this property is about equidistant from Los Altos and Santa Cruz, the center of gravity of Bodhi will be shifting in the general direction of Santa Cruz (from its present location in Los Altos). What will be the involvement of the Santa Cruz sangha with this new property? Will Santa Cruz become less isolated and less independent? What will become of our beloved "Santa Cruz style"? Can we still wear our shoes in the house?

February 13, 1979

Inside My Laughing Face (part 1)

*Inside my laughing face
is the heart to say*

I care,

To give

What I fear to lose

I don't want to lose I don't know what

It's not even close to being close to being Freedom

or

sowing wild oats, or

What is a real feeling?

This feeling?

*What I truly feel floats
like an ether*

just beyond my reach

When I reach for it

When I reach for you

Everything changes and

I'm holding

Nothing

Except a real

pain.

Part II—On the Other Hand

*I like your Woon-der-bar-ness
Your individual talents
far exceed expectations
I have the knowledge
that it's all illusion
I love you
for who you are
Child of light
Radiant
In a clown suit
Your eyes are
Truth*

Love

Beauty

Divine Reality (this could get out of hand)

*I see you as my
impurities allow
What they don't allow*

will have to wait

for

Another poem.

++

Three Cases

One

*Perhaps
Ikkyu just
liked to
complain.*

Two

*Isan
Isan
Isan
didn't
say a
thing.
Today
the
old house
flourishes
right
here.*

Last Case

*

*(*no footnote)*

Dance/Contact

*A bird,
Male dance, intense . . .
Indifferent female,
I have been dancing 7 years!
And in one day darted through a cleft in your freeway
world to plant flowers in your open hand.*

*World to plant flowers in your open hand.
You put them in a simple jar
On the hearth,
And listened for an hour. Said little Still hidden.
Ryan played at the window. Eros in the light.
You said you had seen few small children lately.
May the buds bloom in your body's deepest heart,
Like seeds,
Melting shell into sun and nourishment.*

July 27, 1977

Glenice

*She appeared on the new moon,
And left . . . We ate Japanese food
and I saw the slimness of her and the moon
over the ocean, a clear night, her laughter.
The nights are still clear and warm,
And the moon grows so slowly!
I remember a dream I once had, long ago,
Where we asked for a rare bottle of wine
All along the boardwalk, playfully,
And never found it, it was gone for good.
But a man gave us a warm bottle of something else,
And we were glad to have it.*

++

*This morning
I awoke early—
Rooster crowing, no hens around.
Checked to see if you are still there.
Suddenly afraid you will disappear again
That I will never see you again.
My whole body aches for you,
Will you come?
I want to be with you, to know you have tea.
Soon.
Or shall I come and bring some wood
We could light a fire in your fireplace and not talk.*

Aug. 7, 1977

You saw me

*Tho' I even kept watch at the door
and listened for footsteps*

Tho' clothed,

You saw me, naked,

*(the piercing view of your penetrating insight bit through
the wrappings)*

*With all my fears and aspirations
tagged to my shying face;*

Nothing could be hidden from you.

And I cried

Not out of shame or pride

But because I was afraid this would happen someday.

Of course there was nothing I could do.

You were not fooled

By the apparent stillness of my sitting.

The chaos, like a holocaust

Was on my breath

And its vapor surrounded me

Like a billion maggots, a carcass

The knots of eons of my confusion.

Naturally tears came

When my facade that held a river of pretense

Ceased to hide what was precious to me

And its disclosure

A momentous water of truth

Unleashed.

++



Sightseeing in Genoa (Nebraska)

Breathing in the rain-cleared air

Upon this mountain here

Is like drinking Onion Beer

On a Saturday morning

Beside Yugoslavia, #1

Without a single care.

You saw me

*Tho' I even kept watch at the door
and listened for footsteps*

Tho' clothed,

You saw me, naked,

*(the piercing view of your penetrating insight bit through
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++



Sightseeing in Genoa (Nebraska)

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Upon this mountain here

Is like drinking Onion Beer

On a Saturday morning

Beside Yugoslavia, #1

Without a single care.

*Cornmeal
Wheatflour
baking powder
salt
eggs
milk
molasses
oil*

*mix it all together
bake while you sit
mmmmm, three layer kinhin.*

Equinox—Morning and Afternoon

*Board-straight, his corduroy playsuit
swings on the line, a saffron vane;
wind backs into the north, clearing.
So September's gift, second sight,*

*comes unexpected, after watching cabbage moths,
in pairs, spiral toward a white August sun.
Then they told us nothing about absolute summer
or its end; gone, their ragged course is clear.*

*You catch me humming while I fry the eggs.
Is it because I just saw—last year
I couldn't wait to strip the ripe corn
and chop it down, this year I let
the tall stalks stand and brown?*

*Or last night, the spider that lowered
just above our soup—we laughed to tears.
Is that it, something as slight, seen now
in an unwary moment while the eggs snap?
These are always the times, just after.*

* * *

Lecture Quotations

*Three mockingbirds wheel and fight
over this bright-berried holly tree—
fierce territorial birds, with music
that undoes us. But after noon three birds*

*with clashing cries are more than the ear
can hold: the coppery sun is too gaudy,
the air too vacant, the mind too stiff
with itself to let the brutal singing in.*

*By the toolshed wall we squat in shade,
watch a sullen child chew clods of dirt
from his torn plastic pail; he drools.
In no wind the dry corn hangs askew.*

*All disorder is perfection, we said;
at breakfast that's what we said.*

++

Question: "What does 'Gate Gate Paragate Parasagate Bodhi Svaha' mean?"
Kobun: "It doesn't mean anything, actually. Everything is falling apart. 'Fall apart Fall apart All together fall apart We cannot do anything about it.' That's what Gate Gate means, really! There is nothing to hang onto."

October 24, 1978

. . . . on the nature of mind in za-zen: "When you practice sitting in a very contented way, for many years, your understanding about mind and body changes. In our ordinary way, we usually separate this mind and body. Maybe invisible quality of human experience we may say is 'mind,' and visible quality of same thing we may call 'body.' When, year after year, your understanding about body and mind become more precise, you understand that two actually are same thing Physically you feel that there is no division between this physical body and air, maybe earth and solar systems. There is no there *is distinction* but there is no *division* between you and things. All are one piece of great happening."

March 14, 1978

Question: "Could you talk about the bowing we do in the service?"

Kobun: "It is a very powerful action, destroying continuous birth of the ego. Ego is nonsense. Also, if it is your own you have to suffer with it. So whether the ego arises or not go with it and don't just destroy it. Take all energy within and about with you. It is not a thinking process. It is an action. You recreate yourself. Most of the time we give freely to the life of egos One bow to somebody is a way to unite two as one. There is no discussion about it.

"Joined hands is a kind of sword (thrust) into others. If two bow together it is like two swords merge into each other. I don't know which is cutting which. If it is arrow two arrows merge into each other. (When we) get up two appear and since the body has a front, back, left and right side we bend like this throwing our body on the floor. Imagine if we have a completely symmetrical body; to bow only one way is to explode or to (implode) inside out.

“One bow has every sensation, excitement, regret, joy, appreciation, heat, cold—everything—that which we *are* actually. It has the same nature as za-zen so it is not a group ritual to do. Do it by yourself and if you have somebody you care for who is far away do it toward that person. If you have a beloved follower to transmit something to or someone with whom you are mutually realizing something bowing is an excellent gesture. If you have a great problem with the whole world situation because your (actual) perspective is contrary to your expectations to bow to the world is another way to get into it. Instead of running around and biting a bit of each part you swallow the whole problem as your problem. Because . . . it is all with you. We were born in the beginning like that. To be born on this earth is to have the whole thing. From the beginning there are these precise distinctions between things but the whole thing is yourself. That is how it stated. When we become so deeply involved in precise discrimination between things for such a long time we forget our original self. We don't lose that original nature but we forget. So, to sit is to recover that original nature fully and to stay with it for awhile. And to get up is to gain excellent relationships with other selves, many dilemmas, people, plants, birds, jobs, all kinds. Suzuki-roshi talks about this original self as the “Big Mind” in which everything exists without exception.”

October 24, 1978

An anecdote of Tozan:

Somitsu and Tozan were crossing a river together. Tozan said, “Don't make a mistake in where you tread!” Somitsu said, “If I don't make a mistake, how can I cross the river?” Tozan said, “Who is he that makes no mistake?” Somitsu said, “He who crosses the water with an enlightened man.”

translated by R.H. Blythe,
Zen and Zen Classics,
volume two.

*Moonlight Fireflies
dancing in the dewdrop
Touching the universe
in the speck of dust.*

guns.

smallpox and syphilis

missionaries

*wiped out
the Ohlone
of the San Francisco Bay*

One line left of their song:

"Dancing on the brink of the world."

Kings Canyon Practice

- I. Bivouac sack in Ionian Basin.
Thunder, snow, storm at 12,000 ft.
Flash Kaboom, cower and shake.
Flash . . . Crrack BABOOM, "OHHH!"
All night wonders . . . when I die, what?
. and why so afraid?*
- II. Sitting with a candle in the John Muir Hut—
Stone temple to originally wild nature.
Wind howls*

*Tonight thoughts lie awake,
and toss,
and turn.*

Rockwatching

*Come: look at this rock.
Stare at the hillside, squat here
and stare hard: you know how things
like to move and change and disappear.*

*Cars slip by on the road between—
a bus, more cars—colored shreds of sound
try to distract, but the rock stays put
in last year's brown bent grass,
this year's green stubble pushing through.*

*They said it was easy to watch a rock.
But things change, become lesser things
or greater, better and worse. This rock—
it wants to climb the hillside;*

*wants to become this morning's anger,
be your hunched, crippled father,
your gravestone, final entry to
the center of earth you craved.*

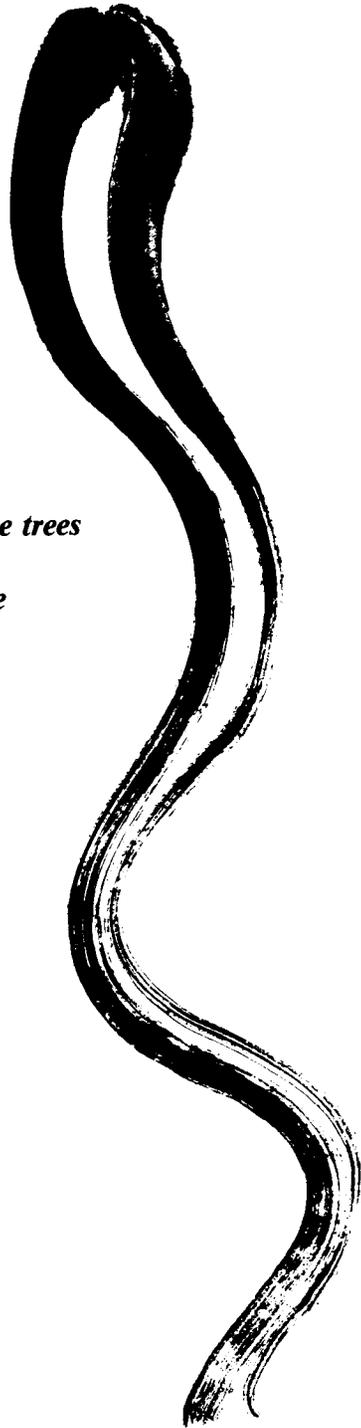
*Sit still. It trembles, wants to leave,
not to be just a rock stuck in the ground.
You won't let it; no: it's an old rock, it's
never moved—crumbled edges, grey lichen.*

*It holds still in spite of the traffic
between you, the colored streamers
announcing a great change coming on . . .
Behind it, beyond the hill white puffs,
Summer clouds move south. Let them go.*

*Things are only what they are—
You chanted that a long time.
It would give some peace to trust
in one sure thing. Today, today
it's so, for nothing but a rock.*

*This too will pass, as the pavement's heat
warps the hillside the rock will waver,
bend into all the remembered things,
familiar, empty as the landscape of your
oldest poem, an old battlefield visited . . .*

++



*My time,
the path of water's rushing way
the wind, swooping to brush its hair in the trees*

*I, as the smooth stone beneath the surface
as the aging redwood evergreen.*

*At once awash with joy
and swayed with sorrow
at the brevity and the immensity
in this instant.*

*In the next
a grain of sand in the sea
a toothpick in the stream.*

Friends—

*A man in the Spanish tradition came to the mountain.
He asked me what I was doing?
"to begin with" I replied quoting ancient lines—"the truth is everywhere"
the universe is Buddha's breath, "Our life is like the dew . . ."
And too—I felt it necessary to renounce worldly feelings, follow
the precepts and make the enlightened mind our own—and so—like
the silversmith—extracting silver from the rock—I was about the
business of removing the impurities from mine—illustrated with a
history of intolerances. And thus—I hoped to manifest the mind—
"unforgetting of the truth" the mind at once and always soft, flexible
and serene—in short to do unmolested activity, to love freely
everyone—*

*He said my practice was deluded, the mountain an escape;
to accept my limitations and to burn the lotus books*

*The sushi man climbed the stairs and we talked about it over tea—
He saw in renunciation the tradition of the way and a challenge in
the purifying of the body and the mind.*

*I went to see the abbot and told him much the same—
He said all separatist thinking was delusion and morality
a relatively recent invention—then quoted from an ancient Chinese
poem:*

*"The stars are twinkling in the sky.
The plain is wide."*

*And today a singing pilgrim sang this song to me—
"The stars may be in the sky the moon appears there too
Yet how much fuller is their light
when we catch it in the river; when we find it in the dew."*

*So thanks to the man in the Spanish tradition
stars are stars and plains are plains
thanks to the masters old and new
the moon flows in the river, the river is the dew.
And thanks to you for being there all these years
sometimes "separations"—sometimes "all-is-one-the-same"
When in truth there is no contradiction between the two.
And so an end to letters, at least for awhile,
But continuing with you in the love that is, as always,*



*Windsongs of bells in Bamboo
And the cold crystal mornings by the sea
in winter
rekindles the last warm vision-essence
of you.*

*To each and future
treasured moments.*

Gassho

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Zazen: every day 5:30 & 6:10 A.M.
Wednesday 7:10 P.M.

Talk: Wednesday 8:00 P.M.
by Kobun Chino

Buddhist Studies: every other Sunday
7:00 P.M.

Zazen: Mon-Fri 5:30 & 6:20 A.M.
5:00 & 5:50 P.M.
reading

Zazen: MWThF 5:30 & 6:20 A.M.
7:30 & 8:30 P.M.
Tuesday 7:10 P.M.

Saturday 5:30 & 6:20 A.M.
Sunday 7:30 & 8:30 P.M.
Talk: Tuesday 7:10 P.M.
by Kobun Chino

Zazen: Mon-Fri 7:00 A.M.

Zazen: 9:30 A.M.
Tea and informal discussion: 10:30 A.M.

Zazen: 6:00 A.M.

SPRING MOUNTAIN SANGHA
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