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## ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER REPORT

Students and teachers, both men and women, have been hard at work at Zen Mountain Center since late last winter when it became possible to purchase the buildings and land of Tassajara Hot Springs instead of the undeveloped mountain land nearby. We began immediately in order to fulfill our responsibility to our supporters who had made the first two payments on the land, and to the many students who already wanted and needed a place like this. Now, after the hopeful beginnings, many students are studying Zen Buddhism full time at Zen Mountain Center/Zenshinji (Zen Mind/Heart Temple), with the example of a Zen Master.

Much hard physical work has been done improving and taking care of the facilities and grounds. The few skilled students have trained and led the other students in this work. Hyakujo, the famous Zen Master who established the rules for Zen monasteries centuries ago in China, said, "a day of no work is a day of no eating." A construction company owner who visited Zen Mountain Center estimated that it would have cost more than \$50,000 to pay for the work the students did in the spring and summer, and more for the general clean-up and gardening. The whole plant was improved and gardens and landscaping begun.

This was only the outside work. The inner work, the real reason for Zenshinji was to found and create the conditions for individual-group practice. It is difficult for each student to realize and continue his own Zen practice, to find ways to live and practice with others when the examples and tradition are so new to him and unexplored, and when the necessities of an American outlook seem sometimes incompatible with the essentials of an ancient Oriental tradition. But out of the determination of these students to make Zen Mountain Center work and with the accepting spirit and example of Suzuki Roshi, constantly renewing solutions were found for nurturing this 'baby monastery.'

But there is no guarantee of the continued existence of Zen Mountain Center if the upcoming December 15, 1967 payment of \$40,000 and the twice yearly pay-

ments of \$20,000 through 1972 are not met. We have spent most of the spring and summer trying to give flesh to the possibilities for a Zen meditation center in the United States; now we must come back to the independent necessity on which depends all else: completing the purchase of the property and buildings.

#### WINTER AND SPRING

Turning this wild land and old resort buildings into an actual functioning practice center with a Zen Master, other teachers, and the right conditions for Zen practice, was a job that surpassed in time and effort any boundaries we imagined. In the winter and early spring there were only a few students there, along with the caretakers, Jim and Laurie Holmes and Bill and Kathy Parker, who were living at Tassajara when it became Zen Mountain Center. Jim and Bill taught us how to take care of Tassajara. Howard Campbell was the first regular Zen student to live there and he began the first zazen periods.



*The early morning sun slants into the valley on a spring work meeting led by Jim Holmes.*

By mid-spring the number of students living at Tassajara had increased to about thirty. A professor of philosophy from a New York university and a Jungian analyst joined the regular Zen Center students. Ed Brown, a Zen student who had been the assistant cook at Tassajara the previous year, returned this spring in the capacity of head cook. At this time Dick Baker and Silas Hoadley, President and Treasurer respectively of Zen Center, could only come down on weekends or for a few days each week because of the immediate pressures in San Francisco to work on business matters from that end: insurance, purchases, how to meet the payments, how to organize the practice period, etc. Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, the Abbot (Docho Roshi) of Zen Mountain Center and head of Zen Center, also had many responsibilities in San Francisco, both with Zen Center and with the Japanese congregation, and he was unable to be at Zenshinji more than every other week or so. As a result, much of the moment by moment responsibility for finding a way to live together, to complete the necessary work, and to develop a Zen practice, rested with the students themselves, some of whom had very little Zen experience. But with the help of Suzuki Roshi and the older students, and perhaps because of the balance and communal feelings inherent when people meditate together, things developed well.

Our biggest difficulty was getting essential supplies and people in through the springtime mud and snow. For a period of about three weeks in April, Zen Mountain Center was cut off entirely. The students could have walked in or out, but vehicles could not travel on the road. In San Francisco we raised \$3,600 to purchase a four-wheel drive Toyota station wagon, and one day we spent twelve hours battering the Toyota against hood-deep snow until we were stuck and had to be winched out by a Jeep which followed in our tracks. Finally Bob Watkin's truck, carrying men and shovels in its camper, made it out the sixteen-mile road in three days.

In late May and June Suzuki Roshi was able to be at Zenshinji more of the time. One of the most helpful experiences for the students was to work with him or just to watch him working. This was the first time most of the students had had the opportunity to be around him for more than a period or two of meditation a day in San Francisco. The need for such an opportunity was the main reason we began Zen Mountain Center.

Roshi has had considerable experience in Japan with stone masonry and the caprices of mountain streams because he has lived at two or more remote temples. But it was not just his skill in moving huge stones to direct the course of a stream, or in shaping stones to rebuild the large supporting wall under the bridge that affected the students so directly. It was the energy and attention with which he did his work. He seemed able to work without rest all day long, even when moving bigger stones than anyone else, and by mid-day to completely tire out the strapping students who were working with him. Everyone wondered what his secret was. One student who was helping him finally observed that Roshi was always at rest, unless he was directly pushing on a stone, and that even when he fell he was relaxed and found his balance naturally. Suzuki Roshi is very modest, even embarrassed about this and says that he is too attached to hard work; but to the students he is what they hoped a Zen Master would be like.



*Abbot Suzuki Roshi*

All the work in these two months was directed toward the opening of the summer practice period in July and August. Three jobs took priority over all others. Though urgently needed, the building of a new kitchen and other jobs had to wait. The first was putting in a new floor for a zendo on the ground floor of the dormitory building. This became a bigger job than was expected because the sixty-year-old building had slid toward the stream and everything was out of level. This first zendo seated thirty-six students and was not adequate for the overflow work crews who came down from Zen Center for the weekends. So the deck on the east side of the building which overlooked the intersection of the two streams was turned into an outside extension of the zendo that seated another thirty-five students. This was also used while the new floor was being laid. During the practice period this first zendo and deck were further rebuilt and modified and were used as the guest dining room during the fall guest season. This winter it will serve as the common room for the students.

The second job was turning the upstairs level of the same building into a dormitory for male students. This also we thought would be a small job, but the replastering and painting took several weeks. The third job was converting the former office, bar and lounge into the main zendo which would seat seventy people. This was completed the night before the opening ceremony. All of the construction on the zendo was being done while Suzuki Roshi was completing work on the caved-in bridge wall. Tassajara remained open to guests during the rebuilding and remodeling. The kitchen had to prepare three meals a day for the forty guests in addition to the vegetarian meals for the students.

At the same time in San Francisco we were trying to cope with the quantity of applications for the practice period that were coming in. More than two hundred applications were received—many more than we had expected—and daily, people came into the office at Zen Center or walked or drove into Tassajara over the trails and the precipitous road, asking if they could stay for the practice period. We required of the prospective students some experience in zazen, straight-forwardness, an ability to convince us of a serious interest in Zen, the balance to respond quickly and honestly to disconcerting questions, the willingness to sit first at Zen Center or with some other Zen group, and finally the determination necessary to sit through the three (now five) days of tangaryo (all day sitting, with breaks only for meals, to face oneself and one's reasons for wanting to practice Zen life). Out of all the applicants about 85 were chosen. Only 70 of these students were willing to enter the first tangaryo; about 55 stayed through it; by August there were 68 students and 4 priests.

#### SUZUKI ROSHI WRITES ON THE PRACTICE PERIOD

Through the practice period Buddha's way will be known in America. The practice period originated with Buddha's sangha (community of disciples) during the rainy season in India when the monks could not go wandering from village to village begging and teaching. In Japan only certain Zen temples are given the privilege of being able to hold practice periods. Now this indispensable practice has begun in America and it must not be discontinued. Each year we must have at least one practice period; it is indispensable for the students at Zenshinji and for the existence of Zenshinji itself. Strict observation of the practice period with qualified teachers and qualified students is one of the foundations of Zen Buddhism and is the most important reason we started Tassajara.



*Opening Ceremony. The Buddha has just been installed on the altar by Abbot Suzuki Roshi (in the center) and Bishop Sumi Roshi (in the light robe). Chino Sensei on the right is beating the large heart shaped mokugyo (wooden fish) leading the chanting of the Shingyo (Prajna Paramita or Heart Sutra). The sound of the mokugyo is like a deep heart beat beneath the chanting. In front of the mokugyo is the large bell which begins the chanting and bowing.*

There are not many teachers in this world, and there are many students. Of course teachers and students are not different, but we must begin with a teacher. The teacher works and practices under the same conditions as the students. But there is some difference. The student perceiving this difference is shown the way to the Buddha in himself and the Buddha in his teacher. This is the most fundamental way to help others. So direct contact with the teacher, listening to his lectures, working with him, receiving personal instruction, is very important. By this we can go beyond any physical, mental or emotional ideas we have about practice. It is possible to practice by yourself, but when we practice in a group we can help each other; and by practicing with people under the same conditions we can eliminate self-centered practice. When there are not many teachers, group practice is the only way possible to have direct contact with a teacher.

The purpose of group practice is not the observation of rules and rituals. Although the rules do allow you to focus on your practice, and to live according to the essentials needed to practice together, the purpose is to obtain freedom beyond rules and ceremony, to have naturalness, a natural order of body and mind.

To live in this world means to exist under some condition moment after moment. We should have the flexibility of mind to adjust our being to these conditions so that when we do change our attitude or circumstances, there will still be a fundamental imperturbability to our minds and bodies. This imperturbability gives us absolute freedom and we should practice our way until we obtain this. Group practice is the short cut to the imperturbable mind which is beyond concepts of personal or impersonal, formal or informal.

At first group practice seems restricting, but later you will find the freedom in it. At the same time, of course, it is easier to observe some rules rather than to practice your individual way or to practice in various ways. A person may be said to be a good Zen student if he knows his own way in its true sense; but it is very difficult

to know what your own way is. For finding what your own way is, group practice is best. For example, a woman will go to a store thinking that she knows exactly what she wants. But when she gets there and sees all those things, she may no longer know exactly what she wants. So she may buy many things, and end up wasting money. So we limit our life to find our true way. It may be how to know your way in the grocery store! Of course the best way is to use something when you have it; and if you buy things, at least you can use them until you know why you don't want them. Then you will have some sense of choosing things as your own.

So through group practice you find out how to know your own way. For example, Buddhist ceremonies are too complicated to do perfectly and so in our observance of them we can see our own way and not just the way of the ceremony. And in learning to accommodate ourselves to the practice of others and to our teachers, we will find out how to communicate with others and with all worlds and their various Buddhas. This is not just verbal communication. It is more direct than that. It is person to person and beyond any specific way. This is known as the Bodhisattva's way.

#### THE FIRST PRACTICE PERIOD

In the evening before the practice period opened, the first ordination ceremony at Zenshinji took place when Dick Baker had his head shaved, was given the name Zentatsu Myoyu, and was appointed Shuso or head student for the first practice period. The next day at one o'clock, Bishop Sumi Roshi, Suzuki Roshi, Katagiri Sensei, Kato Sensei, and Maezumi Sensei opened the practice period and installed the Buddha in the zendo. This ceremony gave the students a sense of respect for the tradition which brought Buddhism and the teachers to them, and also an awareness that what is Japanese in Zen cannot be made American all at once. If the tree that has been transplanted at Tassajara is stripped of its branches and bark it will die, but if it is nourished and allowed to take root the new soil of America will subtly bring the tree into accord with its new life.

*Bishop Togen Sumi Roshi, Head of the Soto Zen School in America, with Suzuki Roshi and Chino Sensei preparing for the Opening Ceremony.*





*About 9 p.m. in the middle of evening zazen. The "flying saucers" above the students on the far left and right are reflections on the camera lens from the kerosene lanterns. The bright light on the altar is a candle. On the altar, center left and right, Roshi and Sensei; on the far left and right, Dick Baker and Phil Wilson.*

But the students also learned that they could not leave all the changes and adaptations up to Suzuki Roshi's successors. These adaptations can only have life if they are guided by Suzuki Roshi's sense of and insistence on keeping the essentials of Buddhism intact.

This sense of how Buddhism should exist in America was in sharp focus during the practice period when we were faced over and over again with details like: Do we wear robes or not, and what kind of robes? Shall this ceremony be simplified? How? Shall it be in English? Should we chant in English or Japanese? Japanese has more resonance but English we can understand. Should there be three, five, or seven days of tangaryo? How much zazen, study time, work time should there be? Should the organization and spirit of the practice be along the lines of original Buddhism, or present-day Buddhism in Japan, or what combination of these? How strict should the practice be made? Should we follow the Soto way completely, or should we apply the approaches of various schools according to the needs of the students? To what extent should the experience of zazen, koans, mantras, and the other techniques of Buddhism be used? These questions, many of which may seem superficial, actually helped to deepen our real experimental unknown practice (the student himself doesn't know what will unfold next in his practice), suggested guidelines that pervaded our whole practice, and perhaps prepared some of the ground for Buddhism in America.

#### TANGARYO

The practice period began with every student doing tangaryo. Previously we had debated whether tangaryo should be three days or the seven which is traditional in Japan. Since many students had insufficient experience in just sitting, three days was decided upon for entering the monastery during the practice period, and five days thereafter.

The students were not told what to expect from tangaryo. Suzuki Roshi liked it that the American students could come less prepared for tangaryo than their

Japanese counterparts, because they could come without preconceptions. All Roshi said was, "Be prepared to sit." And that we did, for three days straight from four in the morning until ten at night with no breaks except for eating.

If you go through tangaryo the value of this experience is apparent. It tested us to our utmost in a way most of us had never experienced before. And yet we knew the test was an encounter with ourselves in a way and in a situation which could only help us. Many experiences come out of a practice like this. After tangaryo there was a kind of alert joyful feeling at Tassajara that lasted throughout the practice period.

But if you have not been through tangaryo it is difficult to understand it. The advice to just "be prepared to sit" means that the student should be inwardly prepared to have an experience that, like most life experiences, there are no guidelines for, and that you must structure and solve for yourself. The student must decide for himself how long he is going to sit in one position, how long he will change his position, with what dignity and composure can he live during the time of tangaryo, and how he should react to his own confidence and discouragements. It is a kind of time/space experiment which the student freely enters into by himself, in which his own functionings become the unavoidable subject of his attention. It is here that he decides whether this practice which throws his self and being into such relief is what he can and wants to do.

#### THE SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is the first problem the new American student faces. The usual attitude towards schedules is that they are trifling and irritating. But it is important that the schedule in a Zen monastery become second nature so that the student does not have to think about the details of time, but only in concentrating on what has to be done and how to do it. So Zen practice is limited to essentials so that things are done for themselves, in terms of the relationships within the situation, and not in terms of what your limited self, or small ego, thinks should be done.

For example, the wake-up bell is rung only 15 minutes before you should be in the zendo. This gives just enough time to dress and wash and get to the zendo during the second round of the han (wooden sounding board), and little time to consider how you feel about getting up. So what is hardest on the beginning student is dealing with the lack of personal time he has to think about things. You learn to have everything you need moment after moment without thinking about yourself, and so gain the awareness that at each moment you are perfect.

The daily schedule for students was: rise at 4 a.m., 50 minutes of zazen beginning at 4:20, breakfast, a three-hour work period, mid-day zazen, lunch, rest period, study period, a two-hour work period, bath time, supper, lecture, and one or two more periods of zazen before bed at 9:45.

We experimented with the schedule several times during the month of July trying to find out how tight the schedule should be and what combinations of zazen, work,

study and rest time were most satisfactory. A Japanese monastery schedule cannot be adopted without modifications since a schedule for American students must be related somehow to the life they had before coming to the monastery. It must make some sense to them and must be related to their own limitations and Zen experience, particularly during this first incubation period; otherwise they cannot follow the schedule at all. By the beginning of August we had a good working schedule that still followed the basic patterns of Chinese and Japanese monasteries enough that a professor who had been a long-time student of Zen both in this country and in Japan, and who was a student at Zen Mountain Center during this period, said, "Tassajara has everything Japan has and more."



*Chino Sensei hitting the han (wooden sounding board). Almost hidden behind the drum is the large bell.*

on either the han or bell, with each round having a different number of beats in it. But often the sound was a combination of several instruments. Lunch is announced by three such rounds on the han and the food is brought after three rolls on the drum (Buddha's thunder). The time is sounded in the early morning and late evening by hitting the drum once for each hour and the bell once, twice, or three times, depending on which third of the hour it is.

Several students were given the responsibility for hitting the instruments. The daily schedule was such that each sound or series of sounds had to begin and end on

#### TIME SOUNDS

In a Zen monastery the day begins just before sunrise with the sound of a hand bell and then a wooden board being struck by a mallet. Bedtime comes sometime after dark with the slower ringing of the same bell. The times and activities of the day are sounded throughout the monastery by a combination of either the han, a piece of ash planking 4 inches thick with a concave surface in the middle which is struck with a wooden mallet; the bronze bell which is made from a wooden mold carved especially for the bell and then discarded; or the drum, which is more than 3 feet in diameter and was made from a single tree trunk. These were paid for by a contribution from the Soto Zen Headquarters in Japan and were engraved or carved with Zen Mountain Center in Japanese and dated "In the time of Shunryu." Their design originated over 1000 years ago in China and has remained the same since, except for the drum support which was heightened for Americans.

The basic sound pattern lasts fifteen minutes and is composed of three rounds

time so that the students could pace themselves accordingly. At first the students found it difficult to be so in tune with time. The moment a sound began they had to immediately begin to change what they were doing so that they could be punctual for the next period and everyone could begin at the same time.



*Above: Student Gary Hayes reading in front of his cabin.*



*Left: Second cook Mike Daft and helper Louise Welch making dinner on the old platform outside the kitchen.*

## FOOD AND MEALS

In the spring and summer we experimented with the basic diet at Tassajara. We had two styles of food, Japanese and American, and ideas, both Buddhist and our own. The first was that you should eat only what you need, and as simple as possible protecting your health; and second, that you should eat what is offered, without discrimination, but that a simple, non-meat diet is preferred. Working with these things, several combinations were tried out, and the final diet was chosen for its spiritual and nutritious qualities rather than its nationalistic. The food was vegetarian, but because of the great amount of outside work that was done, and because of the need to balance the transition from the previous diet of the students to the new monastery diet, such protein staples as eggs and cheese were added to the diet. The soup usually had miso, a paste made from fermented soy beans, in it, because of the high protein content of soy beans. On the other hand, brown rice was used instead of white because of the great nutrient value of the rice hull, despite the apathy with which Japanese usually greet brown rice at first.

Our desire for simplicity and to hold to Buddhist traditions where possible, determined what foods should be eaten at specific times. On alternate days breakfast consisted of either rice gruel, pickles and fruit, or hot cereal, a hard boiled egg and fruit. Lunch was soup, salad and bread, and fruit for dessert; dinner was brown rice, salad and another vegetable. Seconds were served on the grains, the soup at lunch, and the salad at dinner.

How the food was prepared was determined by tradition and by the experience of Ed Brown and Bill Kwong, the cooks. The gruel was made from rice cooked with leftover vegetables and soup, and has become the favorite meal of the students. The bread was both leavened and unleavened; the salad was made of various kinds of greens and had one of many kinds of dressing on it, ranging from garlic to honey and vinegar. Some of the guests who ate with us in the zendo were disappointed that we ate so well.

*Ed Brown, the Head Cook, also helps serve. Here it is soup at lunch after the practice period was over.*



Ed was so involved in making the kitchen work and finding it necessary to make rules that he wrote:

A dull knife will not cut,  
Nor a cracked bowl hold water.  
Putting your mind and body in order,  
How useful everything becomes.

Looking for the knife  
Which is not there—  
How hard to find.

Washing rice, kneading bread,  
Chopping carrots, peeling oranges,  
Slicing pickles, saving crumbs,  
No time for living, no time to die.

These were the rules for his helpers. "That's what the kitchen does to you, you know," says Ed.



*Lunch during the practice period was outside in front of what are called the Pine Rooms. Breakfast and evening meals were in the zendo. The three bowls of the oryoki were used outside as well as in the zendo.*

The meals were eaten in silence using an oryoki, or set of bowls and utensils. The oryoki is comprised of three bowls that can be set into one another, chopsticks, a spoon, a setsu (utensil for scraping and washing bowls), a sheath that holds the utensils, a napkin, a dishtowel, and a large cloth in which to wrap all the bowls, utensils and cloths together. Each act in eating with an oryoki is prescribed: how to untie the wrapping cloth with certain fingers, folding the corners

so that a square is formed under the bowls, how the bowls and utensils are taken out and placed, how to hold the bowls while eating, how each bowl is washed with water that is poured into the largest bowl by a server and how the water is poured from bowl to bowl until each utensil and bowl is washed and dried except for the last which is emptied into a bucket the server returns with, and finally how the various pieces are reassembled into the oryoki and the ends of the wrapping cloth are retied in a half-bow.

But the use of the oryoki is more than Zen etiquette. When each act is accounted for you become aware of each moment and of the difference between one moment and the next. It is perhaps the simplest possible way to eat (no dishes to wash) and each motion is reduced to the absolute essentials. It requires concentration and attention—an alert clear mind—to eat this way. You no longer have to be bothered with what you *should* do moment after moment and are able to act perfectly in each moment without thought, to be able to just eat when you eat.

Eating with an oryoki becomes an important opportunity in our practice. At first the student's reactions were that they were being programmed, even though eating with an oryoki was a Buddhist tradition that originated with Buddha carrying his bowl in his sleeve. But many students left Tassajara with the feeling that perhaps the most important thing they'd learned there was how to eat in a satisfying and simple manner.

## SESSHIN

The practice period ended with an intensive seven-day sesshin; 40 to 50 minute periods of sitting meditation (zazen) alternated with 10 to 15 minutes of walking meditation (kinhin) from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. Interposed between the 18 hours of zazen and kinhin were three meals, a tea service, an hour work period, a half-hour for bathing, and two lectures. There was no talking except for the minimum necessary during work period, and of course, the student could speak to the Roshi during dokusan (sanzen, or personal instruction) or the discussion that followed the lectures.

The students looked forward to sesshin with anticipation and dread. Sesshin demands a great deal: the schedule is long and hard enough that each student is required to fully explore and make use of his sources of energy. But sesshin is not so hard once you are actually participating in it. You have to be attentive to only one thing, and there is much satisfaction in concentrating on your practice intensively with others.

Zazen should permeate one's life so that everything becomes practice. This is the point of sesshin. And sesshin also gives one the opportunity to focus, with a minimum of distraction, on the essence of one's life or life problems, or on a koan or mantram, and more particularly, to let the happenings of one's mind and body come and go without interference, until one knows his mind and body before it takes on any activity or knows any form, until one knows emptiness itself. We say, "to know your original face.

Suzuki Roshi meditated with the students and lectured twice a day. The lectures were on the Prajna Paramita Sutra (which we chant several times daily), the Genjo Koan by Dogen Zenji, and the meaning of zazen and practice. They were often followed



*Students during the seven-day sesshin ending practice period.*

by questions and discussion. Part of the Genjo Koan and one of the sesshin lectures and discussion are printed in this *Wind Bell*.

When Suzuki Roshi was not in the zendo he was giving dokusan (personal instruction). Anything may happen in dokusan, from questions to complete silence, and what does happen is between the Roshi and the students and is not talked about with others.

Sesshin ended with a formal question and answer ceremony in which the students presented questions to Suzuki Roshi about Zen and their practice before all the other students. Students stood together on one side of the zendo and each in turn walked to the front, bowed to Roshi and presented his question in a strong voice. Each received an answer from the Roshi, thanked him and returned to make way for the next questioner.

Some of the questions and their answers were:

"For the big mind the bridge flows. If everything has such independence, how can we find our responsibility?" "Your responsibility is on your own, under your own feet."

"If there is no beginning, no end, and no existence, what is the use of a question?" "To call back something which is unknown; to address Buddha."

"Docho Roshi, do you have some question?" "Yes, I have a question. Why are you so serious?"

"Using the mantram you gave me I broke through one dam of spiritual tension. Should I continue to use this mantram to break through further dams?" "As long as you are directed single-heartedly to your attainment you can use that mantram. You cannot use it for other purposes."

"In Zen we often hear of doing what one must do rather than what one wants to do. Is it possible to know what one must do before one has the desire to do it?"

"Your teacher will put you in those circumstances. Follow our way. At first you think you are following the way, but soon you will drive the way."

"Why is it necessary to have some unusual experience in order to practice Buddhism?"

"To open up your mind wider and wider."

### SHUSO CEREMONY

Traditionally in a Soto Zen monastery the Discussion Ceremony (Hossen Shiki) between the Shuso and students would take place at the end of the practice period sesshin, but because there were so many students, there was not time for both it and the Question and Answer Ceremony with Suzuki Roshi. There was also some delay after the end of practice period until Bishop Sumi could attend. On September 19 the Shuso Ceremony was held in the zendo at Tassajara with the students who had participated in the practice period.

Suzuki Roshi described the Shuso Ceremony in this way: "Each practice period we appoint a Shuso to be head of training and leader of the disciples. For the student the experience of being Shuso, head of the monks, and being tested by the other students in the Discussion Ceremony marks the second stage in priesthood. For this first practice period at Tassajara, Zentatsu Myoyu (Richard Baker) was appointed Shuso. He was the first priest appointed Shuso in America."

The Discussion Ceremony is very old. It originated in China and still exists in Japan. However, in Japan it is often more of a formality than anything else—the Shuso is often a young student without the experience necessary to answer questions about Zen that presuppose some maturity. The young Shuso is given the answers to questions which have been given out to the students.

In America the ceremony has returned closer to its original content and feeling. Zentatsu, Richard Baker, is well into his practice and somewhat older than his Japanese counterpart. No questions were given out. Chino Sensei told the students to choose questions which demonstrated their own understanding of Zen and which probed the understanding of the Shuso. The question could be discussed until they felt the matter was resolved. Sensei described the ceremony as Zen 'combat.' Something was obviously expected from the Shuso and the zendo was charged with skeptical excitement—how can a student answer questions usually asked a Roshi—about to be resolved one way or another.

The priests sat together on the altar-platform in scarlet robes and ceremonial kesas. A strange bamboo root stick, called a Vajra (Diamond-Lightning) Staff, which had been made by Chino Sensei, rested on a low table in front of Suzuki Roshi. After chanting and offering incense, Dick walked slowly to face Docho (Abbot Suzuki) Roshi, bowed and received the Vajra Staff from his teacher. He returned to his seat on Docho Roshi's right, pounded twice on the tatami with his staff and announced, "I am ready for your questions."

The first student began a long stare at the Shuso, leaped to his feet, stamped and shouted *KWATZ!* Then he turned slowly and formally and walked toward the door. There was a tense pause and the Shuso asked, "Do you have anything else to say?"

The student turned, stamped, and walked back, bowed to the Shuso, and sat down.

Student after student brought forth his question to the Shuso. "What do you make of my transparency?" "What transparency," answered the Shuso, "You seem to be there to me. I can't see the wall through you." Or from another student, "Why did Suzuki Roshi come to San Francisco?" The Shuso answered, "Buddhism neither comes nor goes. Suzuki Roshi can study Zen as well here as in Japan. The question is, what is this 'you' that you think comes and goes?" Sometimes there was a debate: a student said, "I don't accept your 'if' in that answer." "You are right," said the Shuso, "No if." And the student, "Me asking, you answering—is that a comparison?" The Shuso answered, "No 'me', no 'you'—just questioning is all that exists here." The atmosphere lost none of its solemnity and power, but changed slowly to admiration for the Shuso and to gratitude for the pulsing life that has carried the ancient Zen traditions to Tassajara.



*After shouting "Kwatz!"  
Bill Kwong walks slowly  
up the aisle away from  
the Shuso on the altar  
with his Vajra Staff.*

When all the students had presented their questions, Chino Sensei said, "In a vale of these deep mountains a disciple of Buddha comes to teach. Let us hear congratulations." Congratulations came spontaneously from the students throughout the zendo. Bishop Sumi Roshi gave a short moving talk. Docho Roshi concluded the ceremony with his congratulations, saying how he felt the ceremony was a beautiful expression of his faith in the Shuso and in Tassajara.

## OUR NEW PRIEST

We have known for years that we needed additional priests in America. There have always been many more students than teachers. But the problem was how do we find the right teacher for America. Kobun Chino Sensei is that right teacher. We knew it as soon as he arrived—a brilliant, twenty-nine year old priest with a deep sense of practice. We are fortunate to have Chino Sensei here to help Suzuki Roshi and Katagiri Sensei.

Kobun-san, as he likes to be called by his friends, came to America in June at Suzuki Roshi's and Katagiri Sensei's request. We had heard good things about him from Philip Wilson and Grahame Petchey when they were in Japan. The second head of the Soto Zen sect agreed that Chino Sensei could come to America, even though Chino was to have been his personal attendant—a position of great honor and opportunity for learning. Chino Sensei had been studying in a special sodo (monk's hall) for teacher training to instruct other teachers. He was hesitant about coming because he doubted that anyone in America would sincerely wish to study Zen. Now he is head of monk training at Zen Mountain Center and is impressed with American students. He intends to stay in this country.

Kobun Chino was born at his father's temple, Kotaiji, and was in junior high school when his head was shaved. He joined the priesthood five years later. By then he was enrolled at Komazawa University where he studied Buddhist logic, languages (Kobun Sensei knows Sanscrit, Tibetan and Chinese, as well as English), and archery.



Later he transferred to Kyoto University and there continued his study of Buddhist thought from its early Indian sources to its intellectual peak in the ninth century. But Buddhist study, Kobun emphasizes, for all its importance, is secondary to zazen. While Kobun was still studying zazen at Kyoto he was recognized by his master as being a dharma teacher or one who is capable of transmitting the Buddha Mind. Upon completing his master's degree, Kobun returned to his father's temple for another year of practice and then went to Eiheiiji in early 1966. He is welcome in America.

*Kobun Chino Sensei. (We shave only every five days in a monastery.)*

## STUDENTS, MEN AND WOMEN

In Buddhism a student is anyone who follows Buddha's way. Even Suzuki Roshi is, for himself, still a student finding his way in each moment with his beginner's mind. So whether a man or woman is young or old, a new or experienced student of Zen, he or she is still a student. But the usual sense of a student as someone who is beginning his studies, applies as well to most of the members of Zen Center, because in a lifetime study like Zen, 3 or 4 or 7 years is a relatively short period.

This beginner's spirit pervades the practice and activity in San Francisco and Tassajara. Everything is done by students and there is little distinction between leaders and workers. We grow as much of our food as is possible, cook for and serve ourselves, repair, maintain and build the facilities, raise the money to purchase them, administer the monastery, and develop the practice there. We had learned how to find our own way by having experienced eight years of taking care of Zen Center in San Francisco. By not having many explanations from Suzuki Roshi on how many sesshins there should be, how often we should meditate each day, or as to why we bowed, chanted, or meditated in a certain way, we developed over the years an independence and an understanding of our own practice and how to take care of group practice. Thus we knew something of how to approach the development of Tassajara, and to come to our own determination about the need for strictness and freedom in Zen practice.



*Above left: Silas Hoadley*

*Above right: Tim Buckley*

*Left: Dick Baker in his cabin office. The generator is not on very often and so for light two or three kerosene lanterns and one coleman gasoline lantern are used. Through the window is the far bank of the stream.*

Although Tassajara was developed by the group as a whole, there are certain individuals whose contributions deserve mention. Richard Baker, the President of Zen Center and Director of Zen Mountain Center, knowing that Suzuki Roshi would like land for a monastery, found that land, conceived and wrote about it in the first brochure, led the fund-raising and was the first Shuso. Silas Hoadley, the Treasurer of Zen Center and Associate Director of Zen Mountain Center, led the fund raising with Dick Baker, organized the guest season, and was able through the confidence he generated to get large contributions from friends and acquire loans during difficult periods. Peter Schneider, the Assistant Director, ran the guest season and directed the day by day operation of the monastery, and is now working on the *Wind Bell* and fund-raising. Ed Brown, the head cook, ran a family-sized kitchen and fed up to ninety students from it, or forty guests and forty students eating different meals. Tim Buckley, the Office Manager this summer, has assumed most of Peter Schneider's responsibilities and is now General Manager. Yvonne Rand carried on the day by day work at Zen Center better than it had ever been done before while most of the experienced students were at Tassajara. Paul Discoe, the construction foreman, with his exceptional carpentry and skills in almost every trade, made it possible for us to build without the help of outside contractors. Bob Watkins, the work foreman, led the work crews with such an unassuming spirit that no one knew he was leading. Clarke Mason kept our five vehicles operating better than the dealers had. Doug Anderson and E.L. Haselwood replaced section after section of root-infested pipe. Kathy Cook worked out with Suzuki Roshi the design for the student robes which she and the other women then made. Loring Palmer was second cook during the practice period. Fred Stoeber redid all of our outside electrical wiring. Dan Welch encouraged the other students with his imperturbable zazen.

The students came from all over the United States, and more from Texas and Minnesota, for some reason, than any other state except California. A few came from other countries for short stays. At present there is a permanent student from Denmark and another who was born in South America. Most of the students were between 18 and 35, but several were between 45 and 70. The occupations of the



students varied from kindergarten teacher to gold miner. We had four or five college professors, a psychiatrist, a Jungian analyst, an importer, a bookstore owner, two technical writers, a naval commander, and many others including college students and housewives.

Zenshinji is unique because unlike most monasteries it has both men and women. We are surprised this is not more common because it works very well at Tassajara. Each married couple has a separate small cabin. The single men live in either quite small single rooms in a nine-room dormitory, or two to a room in four-room cabins. The single women live in similar four-room cabins. Both sexes seem to be equally a part of the development of Zen in America.

*Peter Schneider*

A sage's virtue is like the ocean,  
His character like the great mountain.



*Jane Westberg gave Zen Mountain Center an ancient stone seal which was dug up in Korea. It is a beautiful, orange-grained, smooth, alabaster stone, standing about three inches high and about four inches across. It is carved with trees and mountains winding along its sides and portrays Seki Heki, a famous place in China. It seems to belong in its new mountain-valley home so near the Pacific Ocean. An impression of the seal carved on its bottom surface is reproduced above. Its translation expresses something of how Zen students feel about their teacher.*

#### STUDENT RESPONSES

Student reactions are hard to describe. For many students their life at Tassajara is the most real, difficult and satisfying experience they have had. They are always filled with a mixture of not being sure they want to stay, and of knowing they have to stay for the sake of their lives and practice. Of course no one can stay at Tassajara permanently; it is a special period during which they can hone in on their practice, i.e., on the central problems of their life, and of their death. It is a very serious time, and in the midst of the humor and good feeling you can see on the faces of the students probably the deepest feelings they have known.

A number of students gave us poems they had written during the practice periods. Here are lines from two of them: "There is no longer I/ but a new realm that moves in silence." "Free of all restrictions/ the barriers, the barriers, the barriers/ are down/ and yet it is in such movement/ here that I will give myself up/ to the conditions that prevail."

Usually Zen people do not talk about their experiences, but we mention them here because many readers of the *Wind Bell* have only read about Zen and may not know what to make of the long periods of zazen or the intensive daily schedule. Zen may seem a kind of asceticism or masochism to them because they have not experienced this simplifying and focusing practice which opens up daily life. And they may not know about the good feeling which permeates Zen practice.

Even people who know more about Zen or who have practiced Zen a little, often feel such experiences as satori, or kensho, or enlightenment, or a clearly focused practice with a group of students exist only in history books, or in Japan or China, and do not seem to be real possibilities existing in each of us. Some students do have satori experiences; the practice and sangha are real. This encourages us and expands our own potential and our feelings about the potentialities of others.

#### GUEST SEASON AT TASSAJARA

This year Tassajara was open for guests during May and June, and September and October. Approximately two hundred persons, families or groups came, some

as many as four or five times. There were some problems in learning how to run a resort-like operation, but most guests seemed pleased.

However, they were anxious about whether Tassajara would be eventually closed to them. They were assured this was not the case, that we felt a commitment to them, since land, particularly this historical California hot springs of such great beauty, should be open as much as possible to those who want to use it and have been using it for years. It is also important that Zen Mountain Center not be isolated from the communities around it, as a monastery is where students are trained so that they can go back into such communities.

Many guests expressed a desire to help us; some by giving clothes to the students, by taking pictures for our publications, by giving money for the payments, or offering to help in fund raising. One guest is planning to give a benefit party in Monterey. A local doctor offered free medical care to any student who could not afford it, or would refer him to a colleague if he couldn't help. A lawyer in Carmel gave several mailing lists and much advice on how to raise funds locally. A dentist said, "You have an obligation not to close Tassajara. We are learning from you."



*Left: A guest room. Through the door is the bathroom overlooking the stream. To the left in an adjoining room is a fireplace and beyond that a kitchen.*

*Right: A guest swimming and a student's wife.*

#### RESTORING TASSAJARA

Tassajara Hot Springs is at the end of a long dirt mountain road which is nearly impassable a good part of the year. The buildings are forty to ninety years old and are interlaced with ancient wiring and root-filled plumbing. Maintaining this 160 acre site and its facilities with supplies brought in over the long road requires year-round work from a large crew of men. Maintaining the ten miles of Tassajara-owned telephone line alone means that periodically a crew of four to six men must go out camping for several days, following along the line as it wanders through the trees and over mountains and canyons until it connects with the Bell System. Branches must be cut away, grounds located, insulators replaced that have worn out or been shot away by hunters, and sections replaced that have been downed in storms.



*The big four-wheel drive station wagon was bought new to assure bringing in supplies and people over the muddy or snowed-in road. Behind it is the Volkswagen bus that had been cut away to make a truck. It came with the purchase of Tassajara. The Dodge Power Wagon dump truck, also four-wheel drive, was purchased for a bargain \$250 and is indispensable for the heavy work we do every day. Not shown is the rebuilt pick-up truck with a camper we bought from a student, the only vehicle with a large enough enclosure to bring all our laundry out and food in. Above right is student Clarke Mason, an excellent auto mechanic, who keeps all the new and old vehicles in service. Below left is the shop and two men who brought in a gift of ten hives of Italian honey bees.*

It is a wonder that previous owners have been able to maintain the Hot Springs at all, let alone improve or renovate the facilities considering that the resort income was small. Yet somehow Bob and Anna Beck, mostly by their own efforts, were able to maintain and improve Tassajara each year. We have tried to continue their efforts and with the large crew of students living there all year have been able to complete work that Bob and Anna have wanted to do for years.

Within the past half-year the appearance of Tassajara has changed considerably. The stone and stucco building, built in 1906 and used intermittently as a dormitory for the Chinese cooks, as a barbershop, a bar, an antique store, and as living quarters for the owners, was entirely rebuilt. The nine rooms upstairs were painted and made into rooms for male students; the porch overlooking the intersection of two creeks was redesigned to fit the natural curves of the 19th century stone-scaping; the partitions downstairs were removed, a hardwood floor laid, the walls replastered, unnecessary door openings closed and walled in, windows replaced with full panes, handmade redwood lamps put in the ceiling, and the interior furnished with tables with legs carved from old fence posts and a unique, freestanding fireplace welded from two oil drums.

The oldest building, a slate stone dining room dating from the late 1870's, was converted into a zendo by removing the old bar and the office behind it, covering the open hearth at the opposite end with an altar, and running four rows of tatami down both walls and the center. The office was moved to what had been the storage and then the conference room. The multicolored but faded cabins were painted in either white, green or grey, and partially or completely reshingled. To conform to the health code, the cold water and hot springs reservoirs and the springs themselves were reroofed, and the old bath house by the pool was torn down. To follow



*The Guest Dining Room. A new floor was put in while this was the first zendo. Then walls were plastered, tables built, single panes of glass put in overlooking the stream. Today a handsome fireplace sits between the two windows. The room becomes the students' common room during the colder months. A broad deck overlooks the streams.*

the fire regulations, thirty-foot areas around each building were cleared of grass and brush, all the scrap lumber was restacked, hoses were hooked up so that every building could be reached with water immediately, and about a dozen fire extinguishers were hung. The local rangers were so delighted they gave us fire-fighting tools and are now trying to find trees for us to reforest with.

At the same time these major projects were going on, maintenance and cleaning work was being done throughout Tassajara. A vegetable garden was planted, landscaping started, including rock gardens and a stone patio. It took two persons most of each day just to keep up with the watering. Stone walls were dug out from under weeds. All the outside electrical wiring was replaced, and much other work was done that has been mentioned elsewhere in this issue.



*Smaller cabins on the left. Large student cabins on the right. These cabins were painted and in many cases reshingled. Karen Pomeroy is doing maintenance chores.*



*The main zendo and altar being built for the practice period. In the new zendo shown in the architectural plans elsewhere in this issue, this room will be enlarged a little and will become one wing of the 'L' shaped zendo. This room was originally the resort lounge and bar. The altar platform was built over the original stone hearth.*

*Chino Sensei standing in the rock garden and terrace being designed and planted by Suzuki Roshi. The Guest Dining Room is through the doors and above is the student dormitory for men.*





*This platform is used for washing dishes and other outside-the-kitchen jobs. It was the site of the main resort kitchen which had to be torn down. Our present kitchen is under the roof to the right. The mountain behind is called Flag Rock and stretches more than a thousand feet above the valley.*

#### NEW ZENDO AND KITCHEN

Architect Joe Drosihn (of Reed, Drosihn and Stevens) volunteered his exceptional skills to Zen Mountain Center and has just completed plans for extending the present zendo and combining it with a new kitchen. The present zendo can seat from 50 to 70 students for zazen, lectures and meals, but the lack of space prohibits using the zendo for sleeping, as is traditional in Zen monasteries. With the expanded zendo, 60 students will be able to live entirely in it, with each student assigned to a separate tatami. The extension also includes an upper room overlooking the zendo, where the kitchen help can eat and where guests and students in tangaryo can sit. This loft will seat approximately 25. The present kitchen is located in what was once the staff kitchen and the proposed unit is more than twice as large. The students have already begun working on it and it must be finished by next May if Tassajara is to be reopened to guests, according to county health department requirements. Then construction will start on the new zendo.

Flat stones have been gathered from the creek bed to lay an all rock patio and garden between the dining room, the new kitchen/zendo and the creek. This done, the entrance to the zendo will be on the creek side, turning back into front—what Joe Drosihn calls his contribution to the spirit of Tassajara.

While Joe is volunteering all but the direct expenses of his work, we would like to pay him if possible. His bill would be already well over a \$1000. If anyone would like to contribute directly to the designing and construction of this new kitchen and zendo, we would be able to pay Joe a fair amount for all the work he has done, and we would be able to move ahead more quickly with our plans.

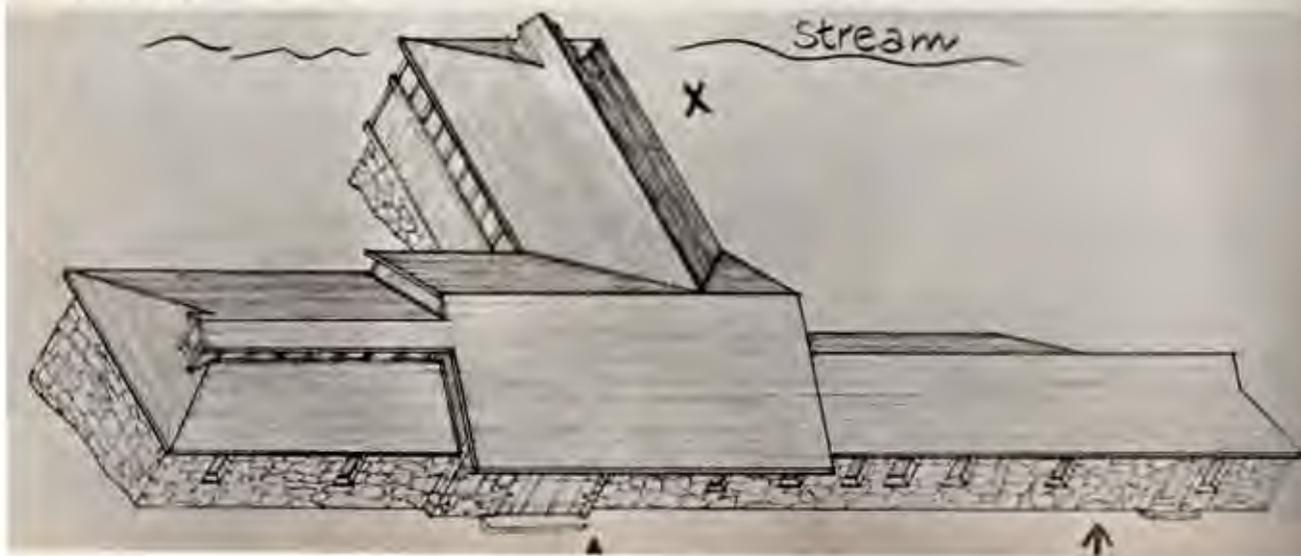
## FUTURE PLANS

The success of Zen Mountain Center the past nine months has been encouraging. There is a nucleus of students willing to concentrate their lives on building a Zen community in this undisturbed natural site. And there is a readiness among persons throughout the United States to study Zen. And so with a teacher all the ingredients are present. We do not know what will happen in the future; all we can say is that the facilities will be developed so that full-time students can study Zen there, and so that others—scholars, businessmen, housewives, etc.—can also participate in the practice. Specifically what buildings will be built and what new teachers will be trained or will come to Tassajara is not dependent entirely on our own plans, it will also depend on what people in this country want and how they express it to us.

Of course there are many immediate plans. The new kitchen and zendo and other plans have been discussed elsewhere in this issue. We are also planning to put in a new sewer system and an improved water system; to terrace some places for fruit and nut trees; to plant some conifers and broadleaf trees among the buildings; and to develop the soil for a large vegetable garden. The second story of the building over the hot bath pools will be torn down. An outside hot bath and a deck will be built along the stream. The planning of these physical changes and additions are considered carefully, with concern not only for creating a satisfying human environment, but also for preserving the natural ecology and beauty of the area.

There is what we might call a human ecology at Tassajara too, as well as a natural ecology. This human ecology includes the resort guests who have been coming there for years as well as the new Zen students. The balance also includes both an Oriental tradition and American conditions. This symbiosis will be reflected in the architecture because among the new and old western buildings we will build one traditional Oriental building. A Japanese architect and master carpenter will be brought over to help us, and one of our students is going to Japan because he wants to learn the traditional techniques of Japanese carpentry. The mutuality of our

*This is the architect's rendering to show the probable relationships between the volumes and a possible way it will look when finished. Between the arrows is the present main zendo. To the right of the far arrow is the present office. To the left of the left arrow is where the kitchen addition will be built on the existing foundation. Above the new kitchen will be a skylight and a loft-zendo, seating 26, for students who are working in the kitchen and for visitors who wish to do zazen. This loft zendo will be open to the main zendo so that the bells and mokugyo can be heard.*



Western/Eastern relationship in this early stage of our growth is also seen in that we are receiving the help of an excellent English gardener with our fruit trees and vegetable garden; and the help of a Japanese gardener with Suzuki Roshi to design our rock garden, terraces, paths, and landscaping.

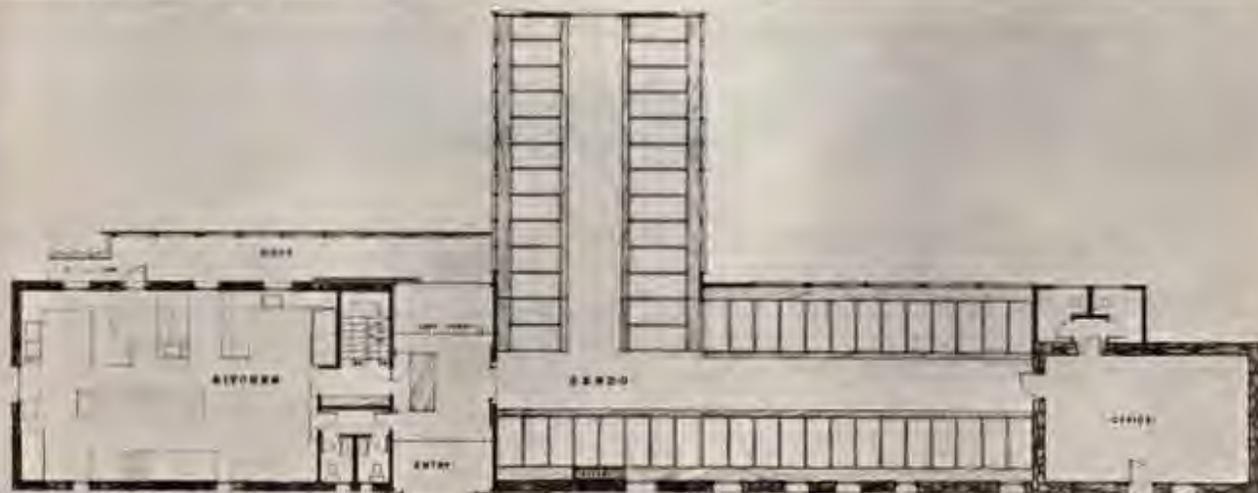
#### STUDENT AND GUEST COSTS

We try to keep the cost for students to stay at Tassajara at an absolute minimum. Students pay \$2 a day for the practice period and for stays under a month. For stays longer than a month, except for a practice period, students pay \$1.25 a day. We do not want to turn anyone away because of a lack of money, but there is a real relationship between eating, the production of food, trucks to haul food and supplies in, etc., and money. And this reality should be a part of the students' practice. The amount is small enough so that most students can earn enough at a job in several weeks to cover a stay of several months at Zen Mountain Center.

The guest operation should be self-supporting. In previous years when Tassajara was run as a resort with a bar and more guests than we accommodate, it was not making money. If the students who work for the guests were paid even low wages, the guest operation would at best probably just break even. But since we do not pay wages, what the students would be paid in wages becomes a contribution to maintaining Zen Mountain Center, i.e., buying building and maintenance supplies, and making the purchase payments.

The rates for guests are somewhat less than in previous years. Guest Members receive a reduced rate. The rates are \$9 to \$18 a day per person depending on whether one is a Guest Member or not, based on accommodations which include three excellent meals a day of traditional Western cooking and use of the natural hot baths, vapor rooms, swimming pool, and of course access to the area surrounding Tassajara.

*Until we can afford the materials and have the manpower freed from the kitchen building and other jobs, we must continue to use the present zendo. The new 'L' shaped zendo as shown in these plans for the future seats about the same number of students as the present zendo. However, it will be possible to arrange the tatami mats parallel to each other. In such a more traditional arrangement, each student may be assigned a tatami on which he meditates and sleeps (during sesshin and perhaps during practice period). Against the wall by each tatami will be a cabinet for each student's limited possessions and a bedroll. When rebuilt, the front of the building will open onto a deck facing a garden and the stream. It is an ideal solution which also makes the best use of the existing building and foundations.*



## ENCOURAGING LETTERS

When we sent out the first brochure we did not know what to expect. A great deal of money came back in the mail, for which we are very grateful. Many encouraging letters came back in the mail too, and these letters gave us a sense of how much people supported our interest in developing Zen Mountain Center.

The following are quotations from some of the letters:

"Am enclosing \$1 for Zen Center. This is a tiny drop but it is all I can afford. The need is so great for a place like this that perhaps even my tiny drop will help fill the bucket." *Tucson.*

"I wish you the best of luck in this venture. What you are doing is perhaps one of the greatest events in the religious life of America since the Transcendental movement." *Detroit.*

"I am very interested in the preservation of wilderness and park areas, as well as in Zen. Your project combines both. I have asked Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner, & Smith to send you 50 shares . . ." *Pasadena.*

"I can't express how I felt when I ran into your brochure. I feel that this is a great project that needs any support I can give to it. Being a high school student I have little money to spare; but if you will supply me with ten or fifteen of your brochures, I may be able to raise a little money for you." *Laguna Beach.*

"I have not attained enlightenment; however, after buying my food and shelter this month, I found I had \$5 free. Well, I said to myself, there's that old Zen Center in San Francisco needing money like crazy, And for a good thing too! Give 'em that drop of water you might waste."

"It is far more important to sit in the shade of a tree and watch a deer feeding than to build bombs, make money, or start peace movements. I would rather gaze at one blade of grass and somehow come to know its secret than fight all the wars in the world. Maybe I will have the chance someday at the mountain center. Thank you for letting me help in something like this." *Vietnam.*

"I would like to see more meditation among artists and young Americans whose primary aim is religion—no matter what religion. Then there would be the possibility that our religious life would take a fresh, new form, inspiring to all."

"I only wish I might be able to contribute the entire amount for the purchase of your Meditation Center. In any case, please accept the enclosed offering." *Hollywood.*

"Congratulations on your courage and good judgment in this venture which means so much in the meeting of East and West. You are bringing us what we sorely need." *Los Altos.*

## MYTHS

People find myths about things that move them, and a number of stories are told about Tassajara more for their mythic and enhancing qualities than for their

accuracy. The most common stories are about the American Indians who some Americans feel are more their spiritual ancestors than the Europeans. The fact that Indians and their medicine men used Tassajara's hot springs for spiritual regeneration and that coyotes, a magical animal for Indians, are seen around Tassajara, enhances the whole area for many people. Another story told us is that the Dalai Lama's brother said there are three great centers of spiritual vibrations in the world today, and one of them is the Coastal Range in the Big Sur-Tassajara area. Another more scientific story was circulated because of its connection with the Himalayas, the home of Tibetan Buddhism, and the belief that high mountains are spiritual centers. This is that according to geologists the relatively young (thirty million years) Coastal Range of California is still growing, crumpling and pushing in and upward a little higher each year over lighter rock deep underneath which the growth is trying to balance. They predict that the coastal range may one day be higher than the Tibetan Himalayas. (This kind of mountain growth may also explain why there are so many steep, accordion-like ranges around Tassajara. It perhaps also explains the hot springs' source which may be primary water being released from rocks heated and crystalizing from the great pressure of the mountain growth. The hot springs also may come from ground water collecting and being heated by volcanic gases near the surface.)

#### WHY TASSAJARA

There is more to the religious value of practicing in a place like Tassajara than the awe before natural beauty that some anthropologists say may be the basic religious impulse. The tens of thousands of acres surrounding Tassajara are one of the last areas in California with an undisturbed ecology, an environment much more complicated than a city environment which is limited to what man can think up and create. An undisturbed ecology is characterized by a richness and variety in its plant and animal life. The deer are few and healthy with enough food because mountain lions keep their numbers in check. Foxes, coyotes, wild boar, raccoons, snakes, gophers, and other ground animals go unobtrusively about their lives. On the mountainsides the pattern of the trees and plants is varied and gives one a satisfying feeling. Over the centuries many ecological niches have been created and filled—plants and animals create possibilities for other plants and animals which create possibilities, new environments, for others, etc. Tassajara Creek and the other streams in the area are clear, for the grasses, trees, and other plants on the hillsides prevent the soil from washing away. The night sky is clear and black without smog to diffuse the atmosphere. The natural ecological balance of an environment like this has a feeling of wholeness which is integrating for the persons living in it. Here is a sympathetic response with Zen practice which discloses an undisturbed balance and clarity in our own inner nature. The valley itself with its waterfalls at each end, the hot waters bubbling up from inside the earth, the old trees and buildings give us an ancient and pure feeling close to our basic nature.

For the beginner, particularly, it is very helpful to practice for some time in a place conducive to finding oneself. In Zen we should not be dependent on some particular environment for our wholeness. We should have this inherently as our own and be able to communicate it to the environment around us.

Dr. Albert Stunkard, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, was at Zen Mountain Center this summer. He wrote us, "At times in our busy lives the teachings of Buddhism can seem remote and even Zen practice may provide only a respite from our trivial and fond concerns. But at Tassajara it is different. There is the physical beauty, the considerateness of its monks, its thoughtfully ordered life, and the example of its teacher. Above all there is the quiet. Here Buddhism can be lived, and Zen practice seems the most natural thing in the world." And Joseph Campbell, the great Oriental scholar, wrote us, "The opening of the Gateless Gate through nature to our own nature is the great Zen gift to our age. I see in the founding of this Center such a disclosure of America as home." It is hard to believe sometimes when you drive at night up the road out of Tassajara after hearing the traditional Buddhist drum and bell sound the time, that back in that wilderness of mountains disappearing into a gigantic shadowiness, there is a community of Americans seriously studying Zen. The student believes it because he finds himself returning to the city in some way a new person.

#### WHY ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER

Zen Mountain Center has grown out of the years of Buddhist practice by small groups and individuals in the United States. It has benefited from the writings and translations of D. T. Suzuki, Ruth Sasaki, Alan Watts, Nancy Wilson Ross, Paul Reps, Joseph Campbell, John Blofeld, Evans Wentz, and others. We are not an independent occurrence. Robert Aitken, Chairman of the Diamond Sangha in Hawaii, wrote, "The development of the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in a deep American forest marks the transition of expatriate Buddhism to a native religious discipline—the fulfillment of eighty years of Western Buddhist history. Members of the San Francisco Zen Center are freely giving their life-energy to this project, and we can assure its success if we offer contributions in proportion to their trust and hard work." At the present time all the Zen groups in America—in New York City, Rochester, Hawaii, Northampton, Gardena, Philadelphia—are trying to find better places for zazen. The success of any one of these groups encourages the others.

One of the reasons for the great interest in practicing Buddhism in recent years may be that there is a basic change going on in the way people perceive things—perhaps as a result of the impingement on the consciousness of man of science, television, and the bureaucracies of a too populous society. But whatever the basic reason, or whether the appeal is to young people who are bored or opened up by drugs, many people today are dissatisfied with much of modern life, particularly its spiritual possibilities, and are turning to Zen for guidance, for some example of how to live their lives. Zen Mountain Center is assisting in making Zen Buddhism a viable alternative for Americans. The Center is a real experiment in finding out how an ancient tradition of Oriental wisdom can enrich the possibilities of modern life and help America find its own way in this confusing time.

Since taking possession of Tassajara Hot Springs in January 1967, we have directed every effort toward creating the conditions which would permit Americans to practice Zen together in a group. To practice together in this way, full-time without the relief of a job and ordinary American life, is more difficult than to practice in the city where the student's whole life is not with other students and is not fo-

cused solely on practice. But it is working very well. We have had many reports that it seems to be the most successful and inherently stable of any similar community effort in the United States. If this is so, it must be credited to zazen and the balance afforded by an old tradition, instead of trying to start everything new.

#### PLEASE HELP

Please help us continue these efforts. We have raised \$18,000 so far for this payment and need \$22,000 more by the end of December 1967 if we are to continue. We also have a \$10,000 loan that is due and need several thousand dollars to build the new kitchen. If we do not make the \$40,000 payment which is due December 15, everything we accomplished this year will be lost. Small contributions are as important as large ones. It is the small contributions which provided the largest proportion of our first two payments. We urge you to help if you want to see Zen Mountain Center continue.

Please let others who might be interested in helping know about Zen Mountain Center. If you send us their names and addresses we will send them a *Wind Bell* and a brochure; or we will send extra copies to you as you request them. Some of you may be able to raise more than you can contribute yourself by telling others about Zen Mountain Center.

#### FINANCIAL DETAILS

The specific schedule of payments for the 160 acres of land and buildings of Tassajara Hot Springs is:

- \$32,500 already paid on December 15, 1966
- \$45,000 already paid on March 15, 1967
- \$40,000 to be paid by December 15, 1967
- \$20,000 to be paid by March 15, 1968
- \$20,000 to be paid by December 15, 1968

and six more \$20,000 payments on the same schedule up to March, 1972, when the final payment is \$22,500.

This December 15, 1967 payment is the last major payment, and then the advantageous default arrangement goes fully into effect. If we default before making this December payment, all of the first payment of \$32,500 would be lost and a portion of all other monies paid. After making the December 15 payment, all payments up to that time would be covered equally by the default agreement which requires that all or no less than two thirds of the total paid be returned, based on its resale price or returned within ten years in case the property is not resold. If it is possible by April 15, 1967 to raise the \$222,500 left to complete the purchase, the price on the land will be reduced by \$15,000.

Zen Center is a non-profit corporation under California and U. S. federal laws. Contributions are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to Zen Center.

\* \* \*

For many people there are financial advantages to giving, and for your convenience we list some of these possibilities.

The Federal Government encourages you to support non-profit institutions by offering substantial income tax savings to both individuals and corporations.

*How may contributions be made?* Individual contributions may be made. Subscriptions are also being sought because the purchase payments for Tassajara are scheduled in March and December of each year through 1972. Subscriptions are payable over these years on terms set up by the subscriber.

*Individual contributions and subscriptions may be designated for specific projects.* Zen Center will apply contributions or subscriptions toward any specific aspect of the development of Zen Mountain Center which is of special interest to the contributor. For example, the completion of the kitchen or the zendo, paying the architect, the installation of a new Buddha, bringing another teacher from Japan. Of course, the majority of contributions must go toward making the purchase payments.

*Memorial opportunities are available.* Zen Center will be happy to discuss the opportunities for named gifts in memory or honor of individuals and families.

*Your personal contribution to Zen Mountain Center qualifies as a deductible contribution in computing your federal income tax, subject only to a limitation that, for tax purposes, your total contribution deductions may not exceed 30 percent of your adjusted gross income in any one year.*

*A corporate contribution to the Center entitles the firm to a deduction of up to 5 percent of its taxable income. Under a recent change in the law, both individuals and corporations are given a five-year "carry-over" for charitable contributions which exceed the applicable ceiling in any one year. Here is how it works:*

*For individuals:* Your adjusted gross income is \$20,000. You make a contribution of \$7,500 to Zen Mountain Center. You may deduct \$6,000 (30 percent of \$20,000) as a contribution in computing your Federal income tax for this year and may "carry over" and deduct the remaining \$1,500 in the succeeding five years until \$1,500 is used.

*For corporations:* If a corporation's contributions exceed 5 percent of its taxable income in one year, the amount in excess of 5 percent can be "carried over" and deducted in the five succeeding years until the excess amount is used.

*Giving appreciated securities* has two advantages: You pay no capital gains tax on the appreciation, and the full amount of the market value of the securities qualifies as a charitable contribution. (It is important that the securities themselves be transferred. If they are sold and the cash is given, the capital gains tax must be paid.)

In the case of securities which have decreased in value, the reverse is true. The securities should be sold—giving you a tax loss—and the proceeds given to the Center.

A deduction for your subscription to the Mountain Center is allowed for each year in which payments are made—and only for the amount paid during that year. Merely signing a subscription card does not entitle you to a deduction for the entire amount; your income tax deductions are determined by the amount you pay each year toward your total subscription.

For detailed information concerning your particular tax advantages, we recommend that you consult your attorney, banker, or accountant.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER

More than one thousand persons have contributed to the purchase and support of Zen Mountain Center. Although there is not space to list all the contributors here, this list acknowledges our gratitude to all the contributors who are making Zen Mountain Center possible. Names of contributors will also be listed at the Main Entrance Gate of Zen Mountain Center.

\*Active members of Zen Center

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None

## LOANS

These persons loaned without interest amounts ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 or stock worth \$14,000 to \$18,000 as security for loans.

Ron Browning\*  
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Marian Derby\*  
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Dr. Joen Fagan  
Eugene C. Graham\*  
John and Elsie Mitchell

## CONTRIBUTORS IN KIND

These persons have made major contributions of their professional services to Zen Mountain Center:

Peter Bailey, Designer  
Robert S. Boni,\* Photographer  
Joseph Drosihn, Architect  
Henry S. Louie, East Wind Printers  
Graham Mackintosh, Designer and Printer  
Richard Werthimer, Attorney

## BENEFIT CONTRIBUTORS

These persons have donated lectures, poetry readings, paintings, sculpture, seminars on meditation and tea ceremony, concerts and dances:

American Society for Eastern Arts and their Artists:	Peter DiGesso*	Mahalila Society
Kodo Araki	Michael Dixon*	Fred Martin
Nikhil Banerjee	Walter Dusenbery	Charles McDermed
Kayoko Hashimoto	Betty Ferguson	James Melchert
Ali Akbar Khan	Harold Fore*	Daniel Moore
Ashish Kumar Khan	Jack Foss	William Morehouse
Mahapurish Misra	William Geis III	Bruce Nauman
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## BENEFITS

Ever since we first started this project people have offered to help us with benefit lectures, poetry readings, seminars, dances, concerts, and art exhibitions. In March the well-known poet and long time student of Zen, Gary Snyder, gave a benefit poetry reading to help support Zen Mountain Center. This reading was unique—it was the first time the new art of the light show and media mixing had been used to graphically illuminate a poetry reading. They called it mandalagraphy, from the word mandala meaning two-dimensional patterns which heighten and deepen spiritual awareness.

A group of Gary's friends calling themselves the Mahalila Society (maha=great, lila=joy or play) worked many months photographing, selecting, and finally scoring all the images to the poem in endless rehearsals. It was very successful. The following is an account of the reading and mandalagraphy written by the Mahalila Society.

### GARY SNYDER READING AT THE FILLMORE AUDITORIUM

Rainy Wednesday night. The Fillmore like it's never been before. The stage bare except for a prayer rug, a microphone, lamp, wood clappers, and candle. Flowers here and there. Smell of incense in the air. And in the center of the floor a paisley pavilion trimmed with blinking lights. Rugs between the pavilion and the stage and on the rugs oranges with sticks of incense stuck in them. Ashtrays. From the mirrored ball above spots of whirling light filled the room. In a corner Henry Jacobs at his sitar. Entering the room, holding flowers they'd been given at the door, people settled where they would—on the floor or on chairs arranged in an arc behind the open space. Gifts of food and flowers from Bill Graham and the Zen Center. A feel of comfort and warmth. Friends greeting friends. Sound of rain on the skylights. It was good to be inside. Where is coyote? An evening of poetry. Nine sections from *Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Gary reading his own poem for Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. He came on stage barefoot dressed in thin cotton clothes Hindu-style, beads, ear and finger rings. He sat half-lotus at the microphone. In the pavilion the Mahalila Mandalagraphers stood by their magic light machines. The house lights went down and Gary opened with a few words about the origin and structure of the



*Karen DePena stuffing zazen pillows with kapok.*

poem. Two sharp claps from the wood clappers and the reading began—"I was a girl standing by the roadside" . . . a girl's face five-prism-fold appeared on the screen behind him. And on with the show, through the American Northwest, Hindu and Buddhistic places, Kyoto, barbershops and Goodwills, Katmandu, San Francisco, Benares, South China Sea, Mt. Tamalpais, ships, bars, temples, mountains and rivers, in company with Shiva and Parvati, ship-mates, girls, poets, monks, Bodhisattvas, loggers, mountain men, truck drivers, lions, coyotes, deer, birds, dreams and visions, Heavens and Hells and this floating world. A trip. And images flash on the screen behind him or mandalas slowly churn in and out. Two hours pass like nothing. — March 15, 1967.

#### POETRY READING

Jim Koller, a young and very good poet, gave us a benefit reading in June. His poetry resonates with the *actuality* of the animal-plant-and-human world as it slips and grows by us in our attempt to make it ours. His poetry opens up a richness by giving a sense of the incompleteness in which we perceive things.

#### ZEN BONES

A benefit lecture by Alan Watts

Alan Watts is skilled beyond words and concepts. Perhaps the most emphatic point in his benefit lecture for Zen Mountain Center was the sharp crack of his fan against his hand. He has the ability through words to literally give an audience a sense of transcendental experience, or the experience of nothingness.

"Zen Bones" was given Wednesday evening, March 29, in San Francisco at the Avalon Ballroom (again through the generosity of Chet Helms). Alan began chanting a beautiful Hinayana sutra. Then there were five minutes of sitting quietly—500 people. This was followed by the Prajnaparamita Sutra being chanted by a large percentage of the audience. This sutra in translation carries the basic conviction that form is emptiness and emptiness is form.



*This bridge crossing to the other shore, hot baths and vapor rooms replaces one that washed out last spring.*

Alan spoke of the "bones" of Zen as the discipline which is necessary to tap, contain, and direct the immense, powerful energy of Enlightenment. And the "flesh" of Zen as the awakening to the truth of "suchness" (Tathagata) that reality, energy in ceaseless flow, is fully expressed in each existence. It is

expressed in the Vedic scriptures as "that thou art" or in our expression as "you are it,"

In the strict discipline of a monastery, it is often the highest masters who have the most common or generally considered low tasks like cleaning the toilets. It took Dogen Zenji, the founder of the Japanese Soto Zen school, many years of practice and search in Japan and China to answer the question: why if you are already "it," if everyone already possesses Buddha Nature, is it necessary to practice?

Alan ended the lecture by conjuring the whole audience through his voice and hands describing mandalas and energy flow into a sense of the vision in which all reality in its depth and infinity is seen as Zen Flesh and Zen Bones, just as you are right now IT.

### MEDITATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Charlotte Selver and Charles Brooks teamed up with Suzuki Roshi and Katagiri Sensei to give a benefit weekend in May for Zen Mountain Center called Meditation in Everyday Life. It was extremely successful. The two approaches go together very well, both pointing through the six senses at a deeper imperturbable reality. While Suzuki Roshi and Katagiri Sensei demonstrated zazen, formal sitting meditation, and talked about the practice of Zen, Charlotte and Charles talked and demonstrated their more mobile practice under the light of such ideas as 'Entering Experience in Depth' and 'Quiet and Reactiveness in Everyday Actions.' The seminar ended with the hundred and fifty participants attending to their breathing, standing, sitting, and lying in silence.

Everyone felt very good about the seminar. Suzuki Roshi thought we should know more about their work. Many Zen students want to study with Charlotte and Charles when they are in California again. And some of their students became interested enough in Zen to become students at the training period this summer at Zen Mountain Center.

### A JAPANESE-INDIAN MUSIC BENEFIT WITH ALI AKBAR KHAN

On June 25th, Zen Center and the American Society for Eastern Arts jointly sponsored an all day benefit concert for Zen Mountain Center and the School of the American Society for Eastern Arts. Ali Akbar Khan and the entire ASEA faculty, which includes some of the most famous musical artists in India and Japan, appeared on the program.

The concert began in the morning with sitarist Nikhil Banerjee and tablaist Mahapurish Misra in a moving, slow Alap and continued in the afternoon with Japanese music by kotoists Keiji Yagi and his student Kayoko Hashimoto and shakuhachi (bamboo flute) player Kodo Araki. The evening began with Ali Akbar Khan and his son Allaudin Khan performing a "light" raga on their sarods. In the final piece they were joined by Nikhil Banerjee and Mahapurish Misra. The virtuoso inter-

play between the instruments in this raga—answer following answer following answer—reached an almost astounding crescendo at the climax, with the audience that had been there throughout the day and evening on its feet with a standing ovation.

Robert Commanday said in his review in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, that "Misra, on the hand drums, has fingers like a hundred live locusts," that shakuhachi player Araki "communicated the profoundest sense of condolence with sharp tangs of dissonance," and that Ali Akbar Khan's "sarod sounded as if bursting to become a voice."

It was an interesting experience for Zen Center because we had to plan and supervise the entire program, arranging for the Masonic Auditorium, making the posters, finding gold screens for the Japanese musicians and a large Oriental rug for the Indian musicians, arranging the sound stage and system, selling tickets, ushering, providing all kinds of tea for the musicians, and finally working the whole day while we listened. This sort of total involvement was mirrored by Suzuki Roshi's lecture that afternoon on the practice of Japanese music. He described how the music student in Japan, like the Zen student, lives and works, doing the dishes, mopping, etc., for years before he begins to receive any direct instruction on his instrument. Special thanks for this benefit are due Samuel and Luise Scripps who are founders of the American Society for Eastern Arts.

## NEWS

### MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

At a Board of Trustees meeting this year it was decided that two classes of membership would be re-established: Practicing Members and Members. Several years ago we abolished similar categories because nearly all our members practiced regularly at Zen Center. As in the past, all those people who make a minimum pledge of \$10 a year are Members of Zen Center. This membership includes a subscription to the *Wind Bell*. Practicing Membership is dependent on the approval of the Zen Master and requires a pledge of at least \$4 a month for an individual and \$5 a month for a married couple. Practicing membership includes a subscription to the *Wind Bell* and the privilege of voting after having been an active member for six months. We have kept the cost of membership low for we do not want to exclude anyone because of money; but of course the minimum pledge from all members would not support the Center and its priests.

### ELECTIONS AND OFFICERS

At the same board meeting it was decided that Trustees (as in the past) will be elected annually to fill the expired positions on the board. Practicing Members will vote by mail this year since not everyone can attend a meeting. To reflect the growth of Zen Center the Board of Trustees will be increased by three members, and officers will be Trustees for the duration of their office if they were not Trustees at the time of appointment. The membership of the Board will consist of four members with a one year term, four members with a two year term, four members with a three year term, and the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary if they were not already Trustees.