

Zen Center

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Minutes of the Business Meeting of September 12, 1964

Present: Reverend Suzuki and Reverend Katagiri

Trustees: Phillip Wilson, Betty Warren, Grahame Petehey
Jean Ross, Dick Baker, Mike and Trudy Dixon, Bill Kwong.

Members: Claud Dalenburg, Seiyo Tsuji, Irene Horowitz,
Ernie Davin, Pat Hazreshoff, Chick Reeder, Saul Warkev.

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. The minutes of the business meeting of August 1st were read; there were no additions or corrections.
- 2) The financial report was given by the treasurer.
- 3) The Old Business of the day concerned the making of the north-west corner of the theatre balcony of Sokoji Temple into a library for Zen Center. Other library locations (such as the Zenkai Room the storage room to the left of the Zenkai Room, the basement, the organ, public libraries at large) were suggested, but because of its proximity to Reverend Suzuki's office and to the main stream or Zen Center traffic, the balcony corner was considered the best site, despite formidable renovation difficulties. Chief among the latter were the dual problems of adequate room and light. Adequate room could be obtained either by the removal of the northern platform (to the left of the door as entering) or by chopping off approximately 6 inches of the western platform. The former alternative was out, it being necessary for the northern platform to remain in tact because of its usefulness to the movie projectionist. Two problems emerged with respect to the remaining alternative of carving off part of the western platform: first: who would or could do the job; and secondly: would the existence of a floor be revealed underneath the portion removed? As for the first problem, Mike and Trudy felt they might be able to enlist the aid of an amateur carpenter friend, who would not charge Union rates and yet who would do the job skillfully and quickly, i.e. in a fashion which would be acceptable to the Japanese congregation upon whose approval any prospective balcony alteration rests.
As for the light difficulty, the opening of a window in the side was impossible without incurring of an expense far beyond Zen Center's means. Therefore, we must depend upon electricity. But with the donation of a couple of lamps, the covering of the couch, and the addition of book-shelves, it was felt that the corner might develop into an attractive and servicable library, if the initial problem of enough space be solved.

The discussion then turned to the problems of maintaining a library. Why have one in the first place, when excellent public libraries (for eg. the Buddhist library in Berkeley) were available? Phillip pointed out that a library would be the germ for the future

growth of scholarly work done at Zen Center. Also, though much depleted from its original start, Zen Center's collection of books is still considerable. It was felt these books should be made more readily available than they are at present for the many coming to the Temple seeking knowledge of Zen Buddhism.

The main problem in the establishing of a new library system is the general library problem of control. The necessity for control was made evident in the fact of the loss of so many of the Center's books in the past. It was not so much the expense of these but the fact, which Grahame pointed out, that some of them (such as the Soto Approach to Zen, one of the few works in which Dogen's teachings are translated into English) are out of print and thus irreplaceable. Various means of control were suggested: 1) a locked glassed-in cabinet, with a limited number of keys, available perhaps to Zen Center members at large, perhaps only to Reverend Suzuki and the librarian in charge. (The expense of such a cabinet could be cut down through either purchasing at second-hand, or, as Betty suggested, making one by covering a regular bookcase with inexpensive window-frames available at Cleveland Wrecking.) 2) Another means of control suggested was not to have locked shelves, but to have special book covers, clearly identifying the book's linkage to Zen Center; 3) A third suggestion was library cards à la the public library system, which would provide at least a name and address for tracking down books. 4) Deposits required for books taken out of the library was suggested, as well as, 5) the provision of a librarian with regular hours, a job which could perhaps be rotated among several Zen Center members.

Although not much could be done until the carpentry to enlarge the corner was arranged for, it was felt that a study of possible library systems could begin. Trudy volunteered to draw up a library plan and submit it for discussion at the next meeting.

- 4) Under new business, the first item was a suggestion by Ernie Davin to raise funds for Zen Center by putting on a bazaar jointly with the Japanese congregation. We could, for example, have 50¢-a-plate dinners, bingo machines, booths, etc in the auditorium of Sokoji with the seats removed. The desirability of such would not only be the funds raised, but as Pat pointed out, it would be something the Japanese and Caucasian groups could share in, thus bringing them closer together (an objective much discussed at the Asilomar Conference of last summer). However, after some discussion it was generally felt that at least at the present such a plan was not feasible for Zen Center. This was because of the lack of time and enough people to do the job, although should the Japanese congregation initiate such a venture, we would be glad to help as we could. Phillip also felt that whatever we want of establish such as an habitual way of collecting money, and Grahame pointed out that we are not all that much in the hole; even if we are not saving, we are at least meeting expenses. Reverend Suzuki suggested as another way of raising money the possibility of Z.C. sponsoring a movie benefit, but he also felt that the primary concern of Z.C. was not to raise more money but to study more Buddhism. This was where our time and effort should go. If we lack money, it is better rather than trying to raise more, to cut off expenses. The traditional way is to add more water to the rice gruel. Irene did suggest that we could have smaller breakfasts!

Although Ernie's bazaar plan was not adopted at this meeting,

Phillip expressed the gratitude of all of us at Emie's concern and effort on behalf of Zen Center.

The second item of new business was the election of a new trustee to replace Bob Brown, who resigned because he will be away from San Francisco indefinitely. Nominations were Claude, Seiyo, Pat, Saul, and Irene. The new Trustee, elected by the vote of the extant trustees, was Seiyo Tsuji, whose term will expire at the end of this year.

- 5) The meeting ended with some miscellaneous business: ① a suggestion that the kitchen windows be washed, which Dick, who has performed the operation successfully in the past, volunteered to do; ② the decision to hold the next session on Saturday, September 26th; ③ a suggestion that an announcement of each business meeting be posted on the bulletin board one week in advance, and that the present schedule of one on the first Sat. of each month be held to, unless notice of cancellation be likewise ~~posted~~ one week in advance; and ④ notice by Reverend Suzuki of his forthcoming trip to Boston to visit Elsie Mitchell in Cambridge.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Dixon

Trudy Dixon, secretary