

P R E F A C E

The second *Tassajara Stories* book continues the saga from 1968 in Tassajara's second year as the San Francisco Zen Center's monastery founded by Shunryu Suzuki. Tassajara Zen Mountain Center was not like any Buddhist monastery that came before it. There were men and women, married and unmarried couples, and children during the summer guest season. Students came for a period of concentrated Zen practice in a remote environment before returning to practice at Sokoji, Suzuki's temple in San Francisco, or wherever they lived in the outer world.

The primary practice was zazen, Zen meditation. Before Tassajara, the most one could do was to go to Sokoji a couple of times a day to sit with others and chant a brief sutra afterwards, attend an extended Saturday schedule, and go to a couple of lectures a week. At Tassajara, there were two forty-minute zazen periods early in the dark morning, two at night and often one before lunch. We rose at the same time in our cabins and rooms, had meals together in the zendo, the meditation hall, following an ancient ceremonial way of eating called *oryoki*. We'd work together and bathe together with sexes separated in the hot springs water. There were concentrated weeks of zazen called sesshin several times a year and, unlike the sesshin in the city, they continued until bedtime.

The first book covered the story of how the Zen Center came to buy Tassajara Hot Springs, located deep in the Ventana Wilderness of the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey County, California,

and continued through 1967, the first year. This book follows me, others, and the evolution of Tassajara through the last four years of Suzuki's life. As with the first book, it also includes a great deal of what had happened and was happening outside of Tassajara—through the stories of what influenced us and how we got there, stories from and about our guests, friends, and neighbors. The action takes place mainly at Tassajara, but not entirely. I include here a paragraph from the preface to the first Tassajara Stories book.

You may notice there's a lot in these pages that didn't happen at Tassajara. That's because my life, our life at Tassajara, didn't exist in a vacuum. Just like each of us, it had no separate existence. *Shakkei* is a Japanese term referring to a garden's "borrowed scenery." It's the outlying mountains and trees and whatever else one can see from a garden. If we look at what happened at Tassajara as being the garden of the book, then the other content is the *shakkei*. This borrowed scenery sets Tassajara and our experience in that valley in a broad context that gives background and color to who we were and how we got there, and includes the mountains, the woods, the road, our neighbors, the city, the times, the war, the counterculture, what was happening all around us.

This second *Tassajara Stories* book can stand alone, but there is a lot of introductory and background material on the characters that is in the first book. So ideally it should be read or listened to after reading the first one.

These accounts come from decades of research, remembering, and archiving that evolved along with the books I've written and the labyrinthine *cuke.com* where so much of the material has been embedded in interviews, podcasts, correspondence, the SFZC's *Wind Bell* publication, and narratives. *Tassajara Stories* meshes with

my prior books, especially *Crooked Cucumber*, sometimes covering the same material from another angle or with an updated, elaborated, or corrected telling. Go to cuke.com/ts for notes on all this and much more including an index, glossary, photos, sources, errata, and maps.

I hope you enjoy *Tassajara Stories* as much as I've enjoyed living it and getting these slices of that life down to share with you.

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Sanur, Bali
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