

ARCATA ZEN GROUP NEWSLETTER
April, 2000

WEEKLY SITTING

Sundays the AZG meets at 8:10 AM at the Northcoast Aikido Center, located off the public parking lot at 8th & F Streets, Arcata. Two half-hour periods (second sit at 8:50), with kinhin in-between, are followed by reading and discussion. Maylie Scott, Soto Zen teacher, gives dharma talks on the first and third Sundays of the month. On the second Sunday, the sangha shares poetry and other readings brought in by individuals.

Weekday Sittings are held at Maylie's house (740 Park, Arcata) Monday through Friday at 5:30 AM (second sit at 6:20). Two 40-minute periods, with kinhin, are followed by a short service. Thursday evenings two half-hour periods, with kinhin, begin at 7:30 PM (second sit at 8:10).

Meditation Orientation, at Maylie's on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 PM, offers orientation to Zen meditation through instruction, guided meditation, and a question-and-answer period. This is open to both experienced students and beginners.

The above events are all free; sangha and friends are welcome. If there are any questions, please call Maylie . Parking is limited at Maylie's; carpooling is helpful. Please remember to use the driveway, the areas in front of the house, or Fickle Hill Road; do not park across the street. Also please do not use any scented products (perfumes, deodorants, soaps, hair and shaving products, moisturizers, etc.) before AZG events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY RETREAT

Rose Madrone has offered the use of her cabin and surrounding land in Southern Humboldt County for a two-day, overnight retreat May 12 and 13. We will meet at Maylie's at 7 AM and carpool to the retreat site, about two and a half hours from Arcata. Bring tent, sleeping bag, etc.

Anyone interested in attending must call by May 5* since, if fewer than five people sign up, we will instead hold the regular one-day Saturday sit May 13 (from 6:30 AM to 5 PM) at Maylie's. The cost in either case is \$20 per day; scholarships are available. Please call Maylie if you have any questions. *(Before May 1, call Maylie; on or after May 1, call Suzanne)

BIG FLAT SESSHIN

Our sesshin on the Lost Coast will begin June 1 at Black Sands Beach just north of Shelter Cove. We will meet at Maylie's house (740 Park Ave., Arcata) at 8 AM on Thursday to carpool. The drive takes about two hours and we hope to start hiking by 10:30. We will hike 8.5 miles along the beach in the King Range Wilderness to the homestead at Big Flat. Hiking time averages 5-6 hours. We will walk to Big Flat in silence and observe silence during the rest of the sesshin. We will return by the same route on Monday, June 5. Hiking terrain varies from rock rubble to packed and loose sand. There will be stream crossings and large rocks to negotiate. Headwinds are sometimes encountered. The weather in early June is variable - rain is always possible and days can be foggy, damp, and cool. As with any wilderness hike, it is important that participants be confident in their ability and be prepared for the terrain and distances involved.

Our gear will be brought to Big Flat by small plane or boat, so daypacks need only carry sack lunch, drinking water, jacket/rain gear, and any other personal items necessary. The owners of the property at Big Flat have requested that we minimize the amount of stuff we bring; pack for this trip as you would for a backpacking trip. Transport space is limited so consolidate your gear. If you have never gone to Big Flat &/or would like an equipment list, please call Suzanne. We won't be bringing zafus or zabutons on the boat or plane; if you want to use a zafu during sesshin, please feel free to carry one in your daypack. Extra sleeping bags and pillows are available at Big Flat to serve as supports and pads. There are also some usable tents on-site; those tents we do bring must be small/backpack tents. The details of what we transport will be worked out with those who sign up for sesshin. You will need to bring your gear, ready to transport, to Maylie's at least several days ahead of time.

During our stay at Big Flat a regular sesshin schedule will be followed. We will have use of the kitchen, zendo, sauna, and hot tub. We will be sleeping in tents near the house. All jobs will be shared. Fees reflect the cost of food and transportation plus \$60 per person for the use of the facilities at Big Flat. We estimate a total cost of \$150 per person. Partial scholarships may be arranged. Call Maylie as soon as possible as space is limited and several people have indicated they want to be signed up. Please also send a \$60 deposit to the AZG, 740 Park Ave., Arcata CA 95521 ASAP. Bring checkbooks or cash to our meeting area on Thursday so we can settle the balance while we are all together. Questions about the hike, equipment to take, or any other aspects of the trip should be addressed to Mark, Gordy, Maylie, or Suzanne.

MANIFESTO 2000

The UN and 23 Nobel Peace Laureates have issued a manifesto for a "Decade of the Culture of Peace and

Nonviolence,” beginning with the year 2000 as the “Year of Education in Peace and Nonviolence.” Since the original (1872) “Mothers’ Day” was conceived as a day for disarmament and an end to war, we plan to support the “manifesto” in a Mothers’ Day ad in the Times-Standard. This will coincide with the Million Moms’ March for an end to gun violence, taking place that day in Washington, DC. In September, signatures collected worldwide in support of the Manifesto will be presented to the United Nations. The AZG Practice Committee agreed to help sponsor the ad. A petition will be available for the next few Sundays at the Aikido Center for anyone who wishes to sign.

LETTERS

DHARMA TALK: Sojun Mel Weitsman

Part One of the talk given Sunday, April 2, the day of the Opening of the new zendo;

Part Two will be in the next newsletter

It’s very nice to be here, and I see some old friends [Ken Berman and John Coonan are mentioned].

I came here to open the eyes of the Buddha and dedicate your new zendo. It’s a wonderful occasion. I remember when I used to come to Humboldt County in the 1960’s, and there were people scattered around who were practicing, but no one could ever get together. People were practicing in their trailers or in their little houses in the woods, but it was a community of anarchists - everyone independent. The thought of doing things together in a sustained way was anathema to most people, and so my impression was that for Humboldt county northerners, it would take some extraordinary person to actually be a focal point for the practice, for people to come together. Maylie is the first person I know of who has been able to be that focal point and organize a practice in which people are willing to be part of a sangha. The non-joiners are actually joining together to do something, organizing a practice and keeping it going together. So to me, this is a minor miracle, and I really want to support it as much as possible.

We have the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, the Three Treasures. Some people are interested in the Buddha. Buddha is like the person, the teacher. Some people are interested in just the relationship with the teacher; they are not so interested in the dharma, not so interested in studying or learning about the dharma or the sangha. They don’t care about that so much; they really just care about a relationship with the teacher.

Some people are only interested in the dharma. They are interested in studying. They’re interested in leaning about Buddhism, but they don’t so much care about who the teacher is or they are not so interested in the sangha.

There are some people who are just interested in the sangha. It’s okay for the teacher to be there, and it’s okay to have study, but what they’re interested in is the social life. They want to be members in order to have a social life. But a well-rounded student is someone who has a relationship with the teacher, studies the dharma and is really interested in what Buddhism is about, and also feels an important part of the sangha. Sangha is like the foundation for the practice.

I think that there have been many people interested in Buddha, many people interested in dharma, but not so many people interested in sangha. But sangha is the support for making it all happen. It’s more than just a social life. It’s our combined effort to maintain the practice, to support each other. Mutual support may be the most important thing - I don’t want to say “the most important thing” because whatever we talk about is the most important thing,. So if I say sangha is the most important thing, and I think especially for a community where the people don’t live close together, it is easy for people to become isolated. It’s only the members together who can support a practice that is ongoing. So it is a very precious thing to actually have a practice that is supported by the members and that is ongoing.

There are several styles of practice - many styles of practice, in fact - but I want to talk about two aspects of these styles. One is the style of the sprinter and the other is the style of the long-distance runner. The sprinter does the 100-yard dash as fast as he can. The long-distance runner paces himself over a long distance. So the sprinter is like the one who is seeking some big experience, some big opening experience, and puts all his energy into doing something quickly or energetically in order to have some big experience, some kensho or opening.

The long-distance runner knows that practice is something for your whole life, not just to get some experience. We should have opening experience every moment. When you finally have an enlightened experience, you realize that you have been wasting a lot of time trying to have an opening experience because you are sacrificing this moment for a moment in the future. We should be very careful not to sacrifice this moment, this time, for some other time. That other time may not arrive. The practice of the long-distance runner is to appreciate each moment, not wait for some moment that you can appreciate.

If you read a lot of Zen literature, we have this stereotyped idea in the literature that some day you will have this big enlightenment experience, and that may be true. We say that enlightenment is the beginning of practice, not the end. The reason why you practice is because of the enlightened mind. Enlightenment brings us to practice, and it encourages us to practice in the dark. We all practice in the dark. In other words, we kind of feel our way along, stumbling along. [Laughs] Stumbling along is wonderful enlightened practice, stumbling along in the dark is wonderful enlightened practice. But we don’t necessarily have realization of what we are doing so it takes a lot of faith actually to practice in the dark - stumbling along, feeling our way without knowing what the end is. We know what the direction is even though we are not sure where the rest of the road is. When we finally do have an enlightened experience or some realization of our

enlightenment, then we really appreciate each moment's activity. We appreciate the bad things. We appreciate the good things. We appreciate our boredom. We appreciate the fact that just being able to breathe is enough. Then everything else is just candy.

The New Zendo
Lynda McDevitt

April 2 was the long-awaited dedication of the AZG's new zendo at Park Avenue. Sojun Roshi, abbot of Berkeley Zen Center and Maylie's teacher, officiated at the ceremony. It was a beautiful ceremony, including chanting the Heart Sutra and the names of Buddha. One of the highlights was the scattering of flower petals on and about the participants and the whole zendo. The symbolic 'Opening of the Eyes of Buddha' allowed for the interchange between participant and Buddha. The requisite speeches of appreciation were short and well-said.

After the ceremony, a scrumptious pot luck was shared by all the participants, including a number of local members from the Mount Shasta Zen Group. The warm sunshine and gentle breeze were wonderful accompaniments to this very auspicious day.

Two Poems
Maureen Foley

Refuge; Wisdom Mind
Free of Intellects Ego
Dew
Chooses the Heart Path

Let Go of Knowing
Stop. Sit. See. Sunlight, Earth,
Deep Beneath a Seed.

Heart of Compassion
Activities of Buddhas
Rest in Wisdom Mind

SANGHA FRIENDS

We are very grateful to the many people who have given donations to the AZG, as well as to those who make regular monthly pledges and to Rob, Dan, and the volunteers who worked on the zendo.

Bay Area:

Claire & John Rubin	Suzy & Jim Spradlin	Sandy Hunter	Andrea Pratt
Vicki Austin	Peggy Waldman	Peter Carpentier Mel Weitsman	
Vivian Pon	Gary Artin	Michael May	Keith Walker
Moffett Hall	Joe Cooney	Ann Kennedy	Luke Iwabuchi
Greg Fain	Annette Herskovits	Grace & Peter Schireson	
Dolly Gattozzi	Nora Mukai-Rosenbaum	Ann Greenwater Andrea Thach	
Paula Kristovich	Tim Zaragoza	Mark Boydston Marian Spotswood	
Katherine Thanas	Kathy Whilden	Paula Kristovich Ray McDevitt	

Local:

Jane Meyer	Bill Devall	June Davis	Gloria Davis
Erika Makino	Mark P.	Maylie Scott	Carol Boyd
Lynda McDevitt	Gordy Anderson	Cynthia Bassett Mitchell Boers	
Rose Brewster	John Coonen	Gael Hodgkins	Pete Kayes
Quynh Schafer	Dennis Shayne	Carole Melkonian	Margaret Howe & Gary Pace

CURRENT AZG DISCUSSIONS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Discussions at the March meeting centered around the by-laws, specifically the terms directors will serve, quorums

for meetings, and the annual meetings of both directors and members, which will be held the second Sunday of January each year. It was also noted that the Allen Watts Foundation has been asked for money in our name; there had been no determination as of this meeting.

PRACTICE COMMITTEE

March's meeting included discussion on the process by which the reading for Sunday mornings is selected. It was decided that Maylie would propose; the practice committee would dispose. When a book has been decided on, the PC will provide a copy. The library also came under discussion. Heidi volunteered to tend to the library, which will be in Maylie's downstairs room; the books will be available to members only.

The April 16 PC meeting saw discussion about the next book to be read on Sundays (Subtle Sound was selected), the retreat schedule for the next six months (see below for schedule and volunteer opportunities), the Big Flat sign-up policy (the current first come, first served policy remains in effect), the May retreat (see above), and Manifesto 2000 (likewise). The next meeting is May 7.

ed's note: complete minutes for these meetings are available Sundays at the Aikido Center; practice committee meetings are held at 11 AM the first Sunday of the month at Maylie's, board meetings the fourth Wednesday at 7:30 PM - all are welcome to attend.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next deadline is June 12. Mail your practice announcements, articles, reflections &/or poetry to Suzanne

SIX MONTH RETREAT SCHEDULE

July 8	One Day
August 17-19	Three Day
September 16	One Day (Dennis: Dharma talk)
October 11-14	Three Day
November 11	One Day
December 27-30; 31	Sesshin and, after a break, New Year Shindig

Volunteers are needed to help with various jobs - shopping, cleaning the zendo, etc. - before these retreats. Please contact Maylie if you can help.
(826-1701)

DATES	TO	REMEMBER
APRIL:		ASAP - Call Maylie re Big Flat Reservation & Send in Deposit
MAY:	5	- Deadline to Call Maylie re May Retreat (see note below)
	7	- Practice Committee Meeting
	12-13	- May Retreat (see inside for details re location)
	24	- Board of Directors Meeting
JUNE:	1-5	- Big Flat Sesshin
	12	- Next Newsletter Deadline

REMEMBER BIG FLAT SPOTS ARE LIMITED AND FILL UP FAST - CALL ASAP!
MAY RETREAT - YOUR RESPONSE DETERMINES THE LOCATION!