

ARCATA ZEN CENTER NEWSLETTER
October, 2001

#Time Changes: October 17-20 Sesshin#

Lead by Daniel Terragno, a South American born Zen priest with both Soto and Rinzai lineages, sesshin will start at 6 AM, and Dharma talks Thursday & Friday will be at 7:30 PM; it will end Saturday at 4:30. See December sesshin info at end of newsletter for other details. Daniel will give a talk at the Aikido Center on Sunday, October 21 at 9:30 AM. The Arcata Zen Center will host a brunch for him at 740 Park Ave. following his talk. All are welcome.

STUDENT TALK: October 28

NOVEMBER ONE-DAY RETREAT

Rescheduled to November 3, from 6:30AM to 5PM, this retreat will be lead by Angie Boissevain. On Sunday November 4, Angie will give a talk at the morning sit at the Aikido Center. She has been a student of Soto Zen teacher Kobun Chino Roshi for 25 years, first at Haiku Zendo in Los Altos then as head student teacher and director at Jikoji, a retreat center in the Santa Cruz mountains. Ordained as a lay priest in 1989, she now meets weekly with groups in the Bay Area. She has raised three children and is a published poet.

The retreat and meals will be in silence. Meals will be oryoki style; bring three nesting bowls, chopsticks, spoon, towel, and napkin. Oryoki and sitting instruction available. Cost is \$20 / sliding scale / scholarships are available. You must register for this retreat; registration forms are due October 27. The next one-day retreat will be in January (see calendar in December newsletter).

WEEKLY SITTING

Sundays: 8:10/8:50AM (Northcoast Aikido Center, Arcata, off parking lot at 8th & F St.); two 30 minute sits with kinhin, followed by reading, discussion. Second Sunday: the sangha brings readings to share. Fourth Sunday: student talk.

Weekdays: Monday-Friday 5:30/6:20AM; two 40 minute sits with kinhin, followed by short service. Thursday 7:30/8:10 PM, two half-hour sits, with kinhin.

Meditation Orientation: Tuesday 7:30 to 8:30PM; instruction, guided meditation, and question and answer period; for both experienced students and beginners. Weekday sits are at Rin Shin-ji Temple.

DECEMBER THREE DAY SESSHIN

Layla Smith, a dharma granddaughter of Sojun Roshi who received transmission from Norman Fischer, will lead the December 5 - 8 sesshin, which will begin at 7 PM Wednesday; daily sitting will be from 6:30 AM to 9 PM. Please consider sitting for the whole day; otherwise, come for a block of time. It is also possible to spend the night(s) at the Temple.

The retreat and meals will be in silence. Meals will be oryoki style (see November retreat info). Oryoki and sitting instruction available. The retreat will end 5 PM Saturday, followed by clean-up. Sesshin cost is \$20/sliding scale (scholarships available). You must register for this retreat (see below); registration forms are due November 28.

On Sunday, December 9, Layla will give a talk in the Aikido Center at the morning sit.

SANGHA MOVIE NIGHT

October 24 7 PM "The Cup"

A 14-year-old Tibetan novice monk convinces first the assistant abbot and then the abbot himself that the monks should be allowed to rent a TV and watch the final game of the World Soccer series. 94 minutes. In Tibetan and Hindi with English subtitles.

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PRACTICE

A recurring question since 9/11 for many group members has been, What are the shapes and shades of practice, as a group and as individuals, in a time of war? The following begin to look at that question, as well as offer information and media alternatives to explore.

When Maylie came to Arcata after the Gulf War started, she presented this story from Returning to Silence by Dainin Katagiri, whose commentary follows the story:

There was once a time in India, long ago, when diplomatic relations were going well between the neighboring countries of Magadha and Kapilavatthu, where Shakyamuni Buddha and his people, the Shakya clan, lived. In those days it was the custom for nobility to marry only nobility, so the king of Magadha asked the king of Kapilavatthu to send a princess to marry his son. The king of Kapilavatthu sent a woman to Magadha as he had promised, but rather than a woman of noble birth, he sent a housemaid. Not knowing this, the king of Magadha went ahead and celebrated the wedding. Later, when

the prince took over his father's position and became king, someone told him of this scandal and he became very angry. He wanted to attack Kapilavatthu at any cost.

When the Shakya people realized that the king of Magadha was planning to attack them, they asked Shakyamuni Buddha to stop him and he accepted the task. Even though the Buddha was an expert in using weapons and was well trained in the martial arts, he didn't fight. Instead he tried to negotiate with the king in many ways. However, there was one person near the king who persistently encouraged him to fight and to destroy the Shakya clan. So the king couldn't hear the Buddha; the inside of his mind wouldn't stop burning and finally he decided to attack.

Shakyamuni Buddha knew the king and his army were coming, so he sat in zazen under a dead tree on the side of the road leading to Kapilavatthu. As the king traveled along this road with his army he saw Shakyamuni Buddha sitting under a dead tree. Since it was very hot, he couldn't understand why the Buddha was sitting under a dead tree; usually people sit under beautiful green trees. So the king asked, "Why do you sit under the dead tree?" The Buddha calmly said to the king, "I feel cool, even under this dead tree, because it is growing near my native country." This really pierced the king's heart and he was so greatly impressed by the message of the Buddha's action that he could go no further. Instead of attacking, he returned to his country. But the king's attendant still continued to encourage him to attack and finally he did so. This time, unfortunately, Shakyamuni Buddha didn't have time to do anything. Without saying a word, he just stood and watched his country and his people being destroyed.

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There are two important points to this story. The first point is that real peace is not a matter of discussion. This is why Shakyamuni Buddha sat under the dead tree, realizing real peace, moving toward real peace, merging with real peace beyond the idea of peace or no-peace. If we look at the human world, we cannot believe there is peace. If we debate peace, the world appears as "no-peace." But originally the world is real peace; trees, birds, spring, winter, autumn, and we, sitting here, are already peace. We are peace before we discuss whether there is peace or not. However, if someone says, "There is no peace," and then we argue this point with him, finally we will be fighting about the idea of peace itself. This is not real peace.

Working toward world peace is not just dealing with nuclear weapons. Who created nuclear weapons? We created them. We already have the embryo of nuclear weapons in each individual mind. Remember this. It is very important. When the time is ripe and conditions are appropriate, nuclear weapons are created. They are not produced by politicians or scientists. They are produced by individual human life. We should look at this. The embryo of nuclear weapons and everything else that human beings create is always rooted in human life.

How then can we achieve real peace? According to Shakyamuni Buddha, real peace is completely beyond whether there is a way to stop the king from attacking or not. Buddha knew how to use the weapons of those days, but he didn't use them. He just sat. Just sitting is peace - Buddha's peace. He didn't say anything, but his sitting was perfect peace, real peace that he could create from moment to moment. Even though Buddha didn't say anything, the king was very impressed because Shakyamuni Buddha manifested himself as real peace beyond any discussion of peace.

The second point of the story is no matter how long we emphasize the need for real peace to all beings, there are still many individuals who won't accept our peace. If people don't accept our peace, where can it be found? Peace has to be found in us. We have to digest, we have to chew real peace in our hearts by ourselves. It is pretty hard. This is why Shakyamuni Buddha just stood and watched his native country being destroyed. No one accepted his peace, so finally, real peace came back to Buddha himself. There is no other way. This is why he just tasted, chewed and digested real peace within his own life.

The more Buddha chewed real peace in his heart, the more he realized how stubborn and ignorant human beings are. Human beings are very ignorant. The nature of ignorance is to lack deep communication with nature or with the universe. It is to separate, to isolate, to create discrimination and differences, so that finally we cannot communicate as a harmonious whole. These differences we create appear as fighting, anger, hatred and war.

We are always trying to fix the surface or object-discriminating aspect of the human world. In this aspect of the world there are countless holes through which ideas are leaking - the idea of nuclear weapons, the idea of peace or no-peace, the idea of armament or disarmament. But if we want to fix some aspect of the world, if we want to have a peace movement, it is necessary to remember that armament and disarmament are the same thing in a sense; they are a principle or doctrine created by human ignorance. If we attach to the idea of disarmament we create a problem.

On the other hand, if we attach to the idea of armament we create still more problems. Look at both sides. Which is better? Temporarily we use disarmament as an idea through which we can approach real peace. But this disarmament is just an idea. We cannot hold on to it as opposed to armament, because if we do, finally under the beautiful flag of disarmament we fight - about the idea of peace, we fight. What kind of peace is this? It is nothing but an idea. So why don't we see the idea of peace as just an idea that can be used temporarily in order to approach real peace. There is no other way to approach peace.

To approach real peace requires a very strong, stable, spiritual commitment, a vow. Just take a vow. Make a

commitment toward real peace, just like Buddha sitting under the dead tree. But remember, even though we do make a commitment toward real peace, there will be many individuals who don't accept our way. So finally, where can real peace be found? With us. We ourselves must remain with peace. This is pretty hard, but we cannot stop. Buddha has to continue to sit under the dead tree. This is our sitting.

The more we sit like this, the more we realize the strength of human ignorance. There is no reason why we create this terrible situation, but we do, constantly. When we make a spiritual commitment toward real peace, day by day, we have to go beyond whether people accept peace or not. This is not a political matter. It is a spiritual commitment toward peace. We have to taste it and digest it, constantly. Next we have to live it. This is pretty hard, because the more we taste and chew real peace, the more we realize human ignorance. But the more we realize human ignorance, the more we cannot stop teaching real peace, living real peace. - submitted by Gael

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Practice in a Time of War: Sangha Responses

Diana . . . my two favorite news sites are:

www.commondreams.org (see esp. Robert Fisk's analysis) and www.csmonitor.com (the Christian Science Monitor tells it more like it is).

Unfortunately my favorite reading these days is a little book by Mark Zepezauer called The CIA's Greatest Hits (from www.amazon.com). It's too hard to always be working against things, so my other favorite book is Raising Spiritual Children in a Material World by Phil Catalfo. That's something I can work for. I also ordered several text books from the Center for Teaching Peace and am considering how to get balanced information into high schools.

I've joined a local group to do draft counseling, military counseling and counter-recruitment work. Also Redwood Peace Coalition (redwoodpeace.org), which is coordinating information about organizing for peace and effecting positive social change. And I write almost daily letters to the major administration players and our people in Congress, requiring a lot of reading of alternative and foreign news sites . . .

It's amazing how many good people are wanting more information now, people who don't fully trust the government, and wish for peaceful solutions that will work in the long run. So I talk over the back fence, in a grocery line, at the gas station - trying to understand together and articulate why the USA is hated, where we can read less biased news, and what each of us can do to act for peace.

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Michael . . .

Of the many dramatic images of anti-war protests 30 years ago, one of the most profoundly disturbing to me was the violent self-immolation of many Vietnamese Buddhist monks in the public squares and plazas of Saigon. To this day I am shocked by these images, saddened by the loss of life and the self-sacrifice of these monks, and overwhelmed by the force and strength of their convictions and their compassion in trying to end the violence of the Viet Nam war through their suicides.

Today I am more disturbed by the suicidal missions of Sept. 11, which took the lives not only of the perpetrators (all of whom were presumably filled with righteous conviction) but which also caused the violent deaths of thousands and horrendous suffering throughout the world. Moreover, it appears that these suicides were undertaken not to end the violence of war, but to provoke Jihad, the final great Holy War against evil.

. . . President Bush likewise promises to "search out and eliminate evil in the world;" both the Taliban and the Bush Administration vow together to eliminate evil from the world. Pema Chodren, in When Things Fall Apart writes, "Not causing harm means staying awake."

At a recent Arcata City Council meeting, a man rose to ask the Council to take a formal position against the US/UN sanctions in Iraq which, he said, had so far led directly to the deaths of over one million Iraqi adults and 500,000 Iraqi children since they were imposed ten years ago. One and one half million sentient beings who suffered and died as a direct result of official American policy. After September 11th, he might have noted that this number of American-sanctioned Iraqi deaths is the same as a World Trade Center disaster happening every two weeks for the next ten years.

May we awaken to the suffering and grief that is always around us, especially to the ignorance that is at the root of all the harm we cause.

Suzanne - this poem has been teaching me for 30 years...

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

- Dylan Thomas

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan't crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

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Beth . . .

. . . I've been frustrated by feeling relatively powerless, by the limited time and energy even to be as informed as I'd like, by the interference of absorption in my own small struggles, which have left me grappling with feeling a responsibility to act while feeling I've not yet found an avenue that feels appropriate to my personality and abilities. Maylie once told me she thought it was very important for everyone to find their voice. I'm still unearthing mine.

I grew up in a conservative family and activism isn't in my blood. Yet I have strong convictions - fortified by my practice - that hatred, killing, and retaliation are not the answer. I am also vulnerable to doubt fueled by the overwhelming tide of popular patriotic sentiment and aggressive reaction to those who urge peace.

How have I responded over the past month? Like many, I donated to a survivors' assistance fund, gave blood, called the President, wrote letters to our Congressional representatives, and signed petitions. I share important news and events via email, and I've been attending meetings - making myself available to learn and to be ready to step in to help out where appropriate.

I also continue to sit almost every day. I see that all I've touched on here is material in my practice - for me to know myself, to be awake to the universality of suffering, to build stamina in the effort to be awake, and to learn to find the balance in every moment between being with things as they are and doing what I can to help.

The Redwood Peace site has a list of relevant broadcasts on Channel 12, including "What I've Learned about U. S. Foreign Policy," a video compilation tracking the CIA and covert operations (Sunday, Oct. 14, 9 PM). They also have a list-serve to share information. Other sites: Afghana.com and Indymedia.org.

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The following is a list of websites Mark, Rose, and others have used for alternative news and information, as well as various government sites.

Google.com/news has an extensive list of international news sources, relief funds, support resources, and official U. S. government sites. Commondreams and the BPF have lists of articles from non-mainstream media. Subscribe to Redwood Peace Coalition list serve at: groups.yahoo.com/group/redwoodpeace-discuss

If you do not have access to a computer and want to check out these sites, try calling the Main Library to see what resources are available.

www.peacelearningcenter.org

slate.msn.com

news.npr.org (National Public Radio; 90.5; KHSU)

www.bbc.co.uk (on the radio at 91.5 FM)

www.fcni.org (Society of Friends)*

www.bpf.org

afghan_web.com

freespeech.org

webactive.com (including Democracy Now)

www.co.humboldt.ca.us/board/ (local Supes)

www.assembly.ca.gov (CA state assembly)

rawa.org (Afghan Women's Revolutionary Asso.)

salon.com (some articles cost)

* The following is the Friends' recommendations for non-military action: http://fcni.org/issues/air-violence/terror/stmt_tenpoints.htm

In addition, both Gael and Michael sent pieces which can be found on the internet here:

The Story of Prince Dighavu from the MahaVagga, found in The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha: accesstoinight.org/canon/vinaya/mv10-2-3.html

"Rest In Peace" by Frederic & Mary Ann Brussat:

http://www.spiritualityhealth.com/newsh/items/blank/item_3297.html (scroll about halfway down)

SANGHA

Lloyd Fulton

Lloyd, a long-time member of the Arcata Zen Group, who so generously gave of his homes, zendos, and unique work projects, passed away last month. Gael wrote her thoughts down the day after his passing:

I have many images of Lloyd Fulton in my memory bank, from his brilliant two-hour lecture on the whole history of India when the Religious Studies Department offered a course about the film, "Gandhi," to his cutting brush on West End Road, white headband wrapped around his forehead Japanese style.

I knew him for over 20 years both as an HSU colleague and as an early member of the AZG in its several chameleon-like manifestations.

I admired his honesty and the ability to change his mind. When Maylie was first here, I think he wasn't sure of her - a little suspicious because first she was a woman (Lloyd had had his share of "woman problems") and secondly because she might lack the imagination to appreciate his unique style of zen practice - from earnestly clearing a path in the woods to building a waterfall. Yet, as Maylie came to appreciate his particular style and I think to encourage him in it, I could see his attitude toward her changing. I feel there was mutual affection and admiration between them.

He was one of the most creative, intelligent, imaginative and wild men I have ever known. Who can replace him?

May we each live our lives as free from conventional constraints as Lloyd lived his.

- September 3, 2001

Gloria and Alex have asked that donations made in Lloyd's name be made to the AZC.

PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The new fridge will be ready by October sesshin. Organizing the community room, an orientation booklet for

newcomers, and the instruction book for Sunday morning set-up have all been discussed. The Sunday reading book was discussed; one was chosen and others are under consideration for future reading. During the September 23 meeting, most of the discussion centered on practice during a time of war. The agenda for next time includes further discussion of ways to facilitate deeper practice at this time, book presentations, and review of practice committee process issues. Coordinators are needed for upcoming retreats.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the last two Board meetings items discussed included terms of the rental agreement for 740 Park, a decision was reached to rent only two of the bedrooms there. Funds were allocated for 1) a donation to the BPF 2) a fridge and 3) more zafus and zabutons.

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 Park Ave., board meetings the third Sunday. All are welcome to attend.

Thank You Times Three

From Rose - to everyone for all the help, cooperation, and living sangha experience which made the whole memorial weekend happen. Gassho.

From Suzanne - to all the teachers - Maylie's family and dharma sisters, brothers, father Mel, cousins, and friends - who have stepped into the breach to give us both instruction and a friendly ear, as a group and individually.

From the Sangha - to the generous souls who donated all the great kitchen stuff & the funds to purchase more!

Social Action Committee: Next Meeting 10/28

Prison / Jail Sangha Activities

Following Maylie's initial intention to bring the AZC into relationship with Pelican Bay State Prison, eight sangha members have applied for clearance at the prison in order to actively support inmates in developing their meditation practice. Four of us have been approved and are now driving up every other Saturday morning for zazen, kinhin, sutta services and lively discussions with about ten inmates in "A" yard.

After prison authorities clear more sangha members for visiting, we hope to drive up to Crescent City (about an hour away) every Saturday and to sit with the estimated 65 meditators in "B" yard as well. Our support is truly appreciated, and we feel welcomed by inmates and guards alike.

At the Humboldt County Correctional Facility in Eureka, where Maylie began volunteering with County jail inmates and administrators, AZC sangha members now teach beginning meditation classes every Tuesday evening. Two sangha members are also training in the "Framework for Recovery" volunteer program offered to inmates through the jail's Correctional Program.

For more information on how to join, call Michael.

Student Talks: If you are a senior student and have not yet given your student talk, please contact Rose so she may plan for the rest of the year.

Symbols and Logos

The Arcata Zen Center is seeking symbols, designs, and logos to use for letterhead and publications. Please send your illustrations to AZC, 740 Park Avenue, Arcata, CA 95521, or bring a copy to the next Practice Committee meeting on Sunday, October 28* at 11 AM.

Editor's Notes: *If you plan to attend the next PC meeting and don't regularly attend, please check with someone who does as there are a number of conflicting meetings potentially scheduled for October 28. Also, for those designing logos - the calligraphy on the top of page 2 is the one outside on the zendo wall: Rin Shin-ji, Forest Heart Temple.

Detailed Schedule Changes - October Sesshin

Zazen 6 AM

Service after breakfast at 9:00 AM

Zazen from 9:00 AM-11:40 AM

Lunch/Rest from 11:40 AM-2:00 PM

Work period and yoga Instruction Thursday and Friday afternoons from 2:00 PM-5:00 PM

Zazen and Daniel's Dharma talk Thursday and Friday from 7:30 PM-9:00PM

Saturday closing circle 4:30 PM

General Info - Registration

The sesshin cost is \$20/day sliding scale; scholarships available. Registration must be received by one week before the start of sesshin.

Registration forms and payments may be mailed to:

Arcata Zen Center
740 Park Ave.
Arcata CA 95521

Registration Form
November One Day Retreat
with Angie Boissevain

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

What meals do you plan to attend? (circle)
Breakfast Lunch

Must be Received by October 27. Please mail to:
Arcata Zen Center
740 Park Ave.
Arcata CA 95521

Registration Form
December Three Day sesshin
with Layla Smith

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

What meals do you plan to attend? (circle)
Thursday: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Friday: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Saturday: Breakfast Lunch

Must be Received by November 28.