

ARCATA ZEN CENTER NEWSLETTER
December, 2000

WEEKLY SITTING

Sundays the AZC 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, generally 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.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER SESSHIN

There will be a retreat with Maylie Scott from December 27 through 30 at her home. The retreat will begin at 7 PM Wednesday; daily sitting will be from 6:30 AM to 9 PM. Maylie will give a talk each day at approximately 10:50 AM. The retreat and meals will be in silence. Sesshin meals will be oryoki style; bring three nesting bowls, chopsticks, spoon, towel, and napkin. Both oryoki and sitting instruction will be available. There will be sign-up sheets for the jobs at sesshin as well as for dokusan. On Saturday, the retreat will end at 5 PM, followed by clean-up. On Sunday, the group will meet as usual at the Aikido Center at 8:10 AM; Maylie will give a talk at approximately 9 AM. The cost is \$20 per day; scholarships are available. Mail checks to: AZC, 740 Park Ave., Arcata 95521. For more info, and to help us estimate the quantity of food needed for each meal, please call Maylie.

NEW YEAR'S EVE SESSHIN

To bring in the New Year, we will begin a sit at 8 PM Sunday, December 31, alternating half-hour zazen with 10 minute kinhin. Starting 108 minutes before midnight, we will ring the bell every minute. A ceremony and service will follow. Call Maylie for more info.

ONE DAY RETREAT

On Saturday, January 20, a daylong retreat will be held at Maylie's home from 6:30 AM to 5 PM. Bring an oryoki set (three nesting bowls, chopsticks, spoon, towel, and napkin) for meals. Please call Maylie for information and if you plan to attend breakfast and/or lunch to facilitate meal planning.

DAY WITH SOJUN ROSHI

Sojun Roshi, Abbot of the Berkeley Zen Center, former abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, will offer a one day teaching on Saturday, January 27 at Rin Shin-ji Temple. The subject will be "Exploring Koans." This will be an opportunity to interact with and learn from one of the senior dharma teachers in this country. Bring three bowls wrapped in a napkin or dish towel, spoon and chopsticks. Cost is \$25., sliding scale. Attendance limited to 15, so register early. Please plan to attend for the whole day. Sojun has requested NO COMING AND GOING. Call Maylie to register and with any questions. The schedule is as follows:

6:30 zazen	12:00 formal lunch and break
7:00 service	1:30 teaching
7:15 formal breakfast and break	3:30 forest kinhin
9:00 zazen	4:00 zazen
9:30 kinhin	4:30 kinhin
9:40 teaching	4:40 zazen
11:10 kinhin	5:10 end
11:50 service	

MEDITATION WORKSHOP

There will be a weekend workshop March 3 and 4 on how to teach meditation to people who are dying. Please

contact Maylie for further information.

LETTERS

LETTER from Maylie Scott

Dear Friends,

2000 was an astonishing year that brought Rin Shin-ji (Forest Heart Temple) into being. Starting just at the beginning of the rainy season, Rob and Dan, together with a band of dedicated volunteers (most often Mark as well as Gordy, John, Pete, and many more) tore down roof and walls of the large garage. We were unusually lucky to have Rob in our group - a skilled carpenter and designer as well as a steady practitioner, who kept his robust cool, accommodating whatever circumstances arose, with apparent ease. I usually made lunch for the workers and the cooking and the appreciation of it was a significant factor in making me feel more deeply at home in the new sangha family.

The remodel was done in April and Sojun, Abbot of Berkeley Zen Center, came up to formally open the zendo. He gave a memorable talk at the Aikido Room and then we all returned to the new temple for an Opening Ceremony. He painted open the eyes of the antique Chinese Buddha on the altar (who has presided over ceremonies in at least three countries in the last 500 or so years). Fragrant flower petals strewn over the assemblage completed the celebration.

Meanwhile, in January nine people had begun studying the precepts and sewing rakus, in preparation for Jukai, the Soto Zen lay ordination ceremony. Rebecca came up three times from Berkeley and Amy once to hold sewing classes. Unbelievably all the rakus were ready in time for me to inscribe them with English letters and Japanese kanji and we were all completely ready for the ceremony on July 9th, assisted by Rebecca and Mary Mocine, who had orchestrated many such ceremonies at San Francisco Zen Center.

Projects abounded and were completed - the grand "tool shed" (that looks like a dokusan hut), the raised beds for vegetables in the apple orchard, along with deer-proof fence that sprung up in one long afternoon under Gordy's hands. Pete built a fire-wood shack and a charming work altar. Rob, Dan, Mark, and others designed and erected a graceful bamboo fence, marking off the orchard from the parking strip. Finally two substantial donations - one anonymous, the other from the Berkeley Zen Center - made the laying of the zendo tan-oak floor possible.

As the visible temple came into being, the sangha became more articulated. The Tuesday evening "orientation" group became an on-going practice and discussion forum. A Social Action committee was born and a Garden Committee to envision a landscaping plan will have a first meeting. A web-site is underway. Suzanne continues to produce lively newsletters that keep us all in step. Erika organizes our library. Monique, in her efficient background way, keeps our data base, financial records, and tax preparations all in wonderful order. The Practice Committee and the Board of Directors continue their steady work. A small and devoted band of early morning sitters are learning the intricacies of Soto services. Classes, sesshins, and a six-day-a-week sitting schedule keep the beat of practice going.

We enter the millennium with a running start, hopefully ready for challenges that lie ahead. How do older students deepen and share their practice? How do we continue to attract and orient new students? How do we make ourselves available to the wider community through social service and social change work? The tolerant and generous spirit of the group is an enduring asset, growing more vigorous in its exercise, providing each of us with precious opportunity.

In deep appreciation of sangha effort,

Maylie

SANGHA FRIENDS

If anyone can regularly give someone a ride from Eureka to the Tuesday night sit and back, please contact Mitch.

CURRENT AZC DISCUSSIONS

PRACTICE COMMITTEE

December 3rd's meeting covered the schedule for the rest of the year and the calendar for 2001 (see below). Discussion also included how to clarify what is scheduled for each Sunday (such as Dharma talks, poetry/sharing time, etc.) as well as the procedure the Sunday leader should follow. Any book recommendations for the Sunday reading should be directed to Maylie as should suggestions for changes to the Beginner's Handbook, which is being revised.

The positions of archivist (to keep writings and pictures) and tape monitor (to be responsible for recording and copying tapes of talks) are available for committed involvement, as is librarian's helper (to assist Erika). A bookcase no wider than 36 inches is needed for the library; please call Erika if you have one to donate.

The next PC meeting will be January 7 and will include discussion of the Sunday morning process and of the April 8 potluck. The annual general meeting will be January 14 to elect new board members. Ballots will be sent to all members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the November 12 meeting, members discussed landscaping, and agreed to begin looking for a landscape architect who will draw up a general plan, in consultation with a Garden Committee, which will be formed. Sangha members are invited to join the Garden Committee (see below). Maylie reported that she will be obtaining new zabutans and support cushions in Berkeley soon to supplement AZC's deficient supply. The election process was discussed, and Gordy reported on the financial condition of the Arcata Zen Center.

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.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The committee met November 5 to view Emelia's video on the Trinity River and afterwards talked about further actions. It was decided that we would pursue a project that is being developed by a coalition of environmental groups that will become a bill for congress to act on. We will adopt a wilderness area (to be determined) that is not more than a 2 hour drive away and "advocate" that it remain roadless. We will begin to determine what advocating means to us in this context. At the December 17 meeting, Bill presented possible sites and acquainted us with the larger project in more detail. We will plan trips to visit at least two areas to choose for adoption (the Trinity Wilderness and South Fork areas). Call Maylie for information on the next meeting. The following call to action was written and read by Bill Devall:

As Gary Snyder would say

coming out of the Sidelines Bar

in Arcata California

back to the cold fog

overflowing with Sierra Nevada

the pale ale that John Muir never knew

chanting the urgent mantra

"where to pee

where to pee"

back to the real work

the work that must be done

this is NOT your Mother's garden party

burn it, baby

burn it now.

fire on the mountain is a signal

not a sign

"The Buddha said to Subhuti, "In a place where there is something that can be distinguished by signs, in that place there is deception. If you can see the signless nature of signs, then you can see the Tathagata.""

take action

or don't take action

it doesn't matter

a bodhisattva is not concerned with outcomes

what we have learned through all the empty eons

nature is self-organizing

out of chaos is order

out of order is chaos

do you have the guts to practice deeply CPR?

conservation of integrity of natural systems
preservation of the wild for "in wilderness is the preservation of the earth"
restoration of primal mind "be here now"

that's the way it is

if you have the right stuff
for the real work
be there now
heart of the forest temple
1100 hours

take action now committee
Arcata Zen Center

GARDEN COMMITTEE

A committee is forming to plan landscaping at the zendo. A landscape architect has been selected and has met with an initial committee. Water features, kinhin paths, a memorial garden, and benches are among the ideas presented, as well as the moving, removal, and addition of various plants. Plans will be drawn up and discussed at later meetings. Contact Maylie for more info if you're interested.

FUNDRAISING NOTE

Now's the time to make that end-of-the-year gift to the AZC. Even modest landscaping plans, with the grunt work done by AZC volunteers, will require more funds, as will the purchase of new zabutons and support cushions. Please send your tax-deductible donations to the Park Avenue address.

2001 CALENDAR

January	20	One-day sit
	27	Day with Sojun Roshi
February	21-24	Three-day sesshin
March	10	One-day sit
April	8	Zendo Anniversary & Buddha's Birthday Potluck
	18-21	Three-day sesshin
May	12	One-day sit
June	7-11	Big Flat Retreat
July	14	One-day sit
August	8-11	Three-day sesshin
September	8	One-day sit
October	17-20	Three-day sesshin
November	10	One-day sit
December	3-8	Rohatsu sesshin
	31	New Year's Eve sit