

## *Contents*

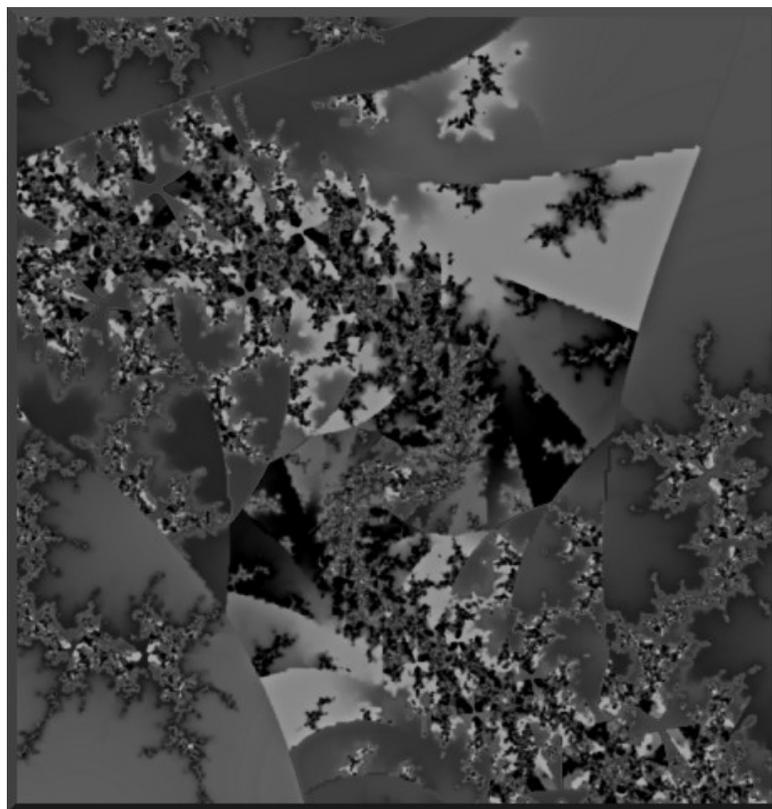
**The Jewel of Practice** ~ *Maylie Scott*

**Haiku for Maylie** ~ *Denise Homer*

**In Memoriam: Bill Devall**

**The Pea Knows** ~ *Theresa McLaren*

**Things I Say Instead . . .** ~ *Suzanne M.*



*Sangha*

## **The Jewel of Practice**

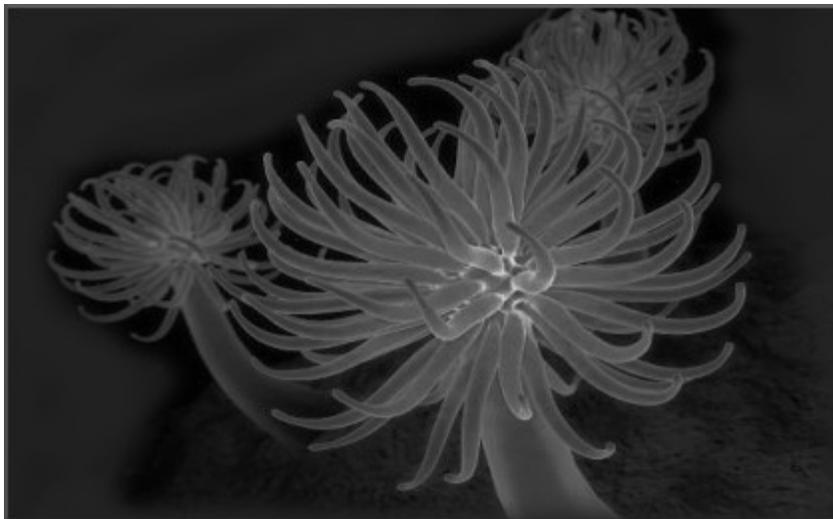
*Maylie Scott*

*extracted from the 6/97 AZG Newsletter*

The jewel of the AZG practice is its sangha reliance. Reliance on the sangha was born of necessity in the group's early years; a small, persistent number of practitioners was all there was. In the six years I've come, I've watched the development from a kind and tolerant and diffident group to a kind and tolerant and committed group. Discovering harmonious and functional sangha structure takes years and is the hall-mark of mature practice.

We are beating our way through thickets of decisions and patience is tested and practice challenged. Our most important ally is good process; agreeing to guidelines that manifest the Dharma and sticking by them. This is the solid base of harmonious sangha; we continue to work at it "stitch by stitch."

The sangha has been called "the matrix of enlightenment." It is the joint expression of personal and social transformation. Each one of us plays a unique part in its support. May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.



### *Haiku for Maylie*

Denise Homer

*In the wake of your  
being, the plankton is rich  
still feeding our hearts.*

## In Memoriam



### **Bill Devall**

*December 2, 1938 - June 26, 2009*

Sangha included the Buddha and the Dharma. Sangha includes all those who practice among the mountains and rivers until they become the mountains and the rivers becoming themselves.

*~ Bill Devall, June 1997*

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Often he would travel to the desert  
to view the flowers in the spring.  
A witness to the transformation of  
dry and barren land into  
a wonder of purple verbena  
A pilgrim to the land of  
thorny cacti and horned lizards  
Himself a spare, dry figure seeking silence  
in the shadowed, jagged beauty of mountains  
surrounding the carpeted valley  
Knowing well the transience of beauty and life  
he could meditate upon the fleeting array of blooms.

And so he would return to his habitat  
the land of misted redwoods  
his beloved wilderness peaks and watersheds  
his fiercely cherished sangha  
he would come home  
renewed by the image of  
a flowering ocotillo amidst a field of dune primroses.



*~ Lynda McDevitt*



Bill Devall, environmentalist and professor emeritus at Humboldt State University passed away peacefully in his home in Trinidad, California on June 26, 2009. Widely known for his writings on Deep Ecology, Bill dedicated his life to protecting Nature. Inspired by the works of Arne Naess and Gary Snyder, his first book, *Deep Ecology*, with George Sessions introduced the philosophy and practice of Deep Ecology to the North American audience in 1985. Widely cited as the key reference text for Deep Ecology, and to this day, it still remains in print. Following its publication, according to the San Francisco Chronicle, “Deep Ecology is subversive, but it’s the kind of subversion we can use.” The intention then was to reorient environmental thinking and action from one that is just reformist to a new ecological philosophy and

practice. For Bill, the continuing environmental crisis was one that has to be understood as a crisis of character and of culture. What was needed was a shift from a view that is anthropocentric to one that is ecocentric. This call does not need something new, all that is required is to reawaken something very old, something what he would term Earth wisdom – the dance of unity of plants, animals, humans and the Earth. Bill’s subsequent books, *Simple in Means and Rich in Ends* (1988) and *Living Richly in an Age of Limits* (1993) put these ideas into practice. *Living Richly in an Age of Limits* was written as a manifesto for America’s middle class then. His last book, *The Ecology of Wisdom*, appeared late last year.



By no means was Bill’s effort to saving Nature only devoted to authoring books. As a Deep Ecologist, he was involved in the practice of conservation and environmental action at both the local and national levels. At the local level, he was a founding member of the North Coast Environmental Center based in Arcata (California), and was very active in efforts to establish recycling and the protection of the local beaches, forests and endangered species. Nationally, he was actively involved in the protection of the ancient forests of the



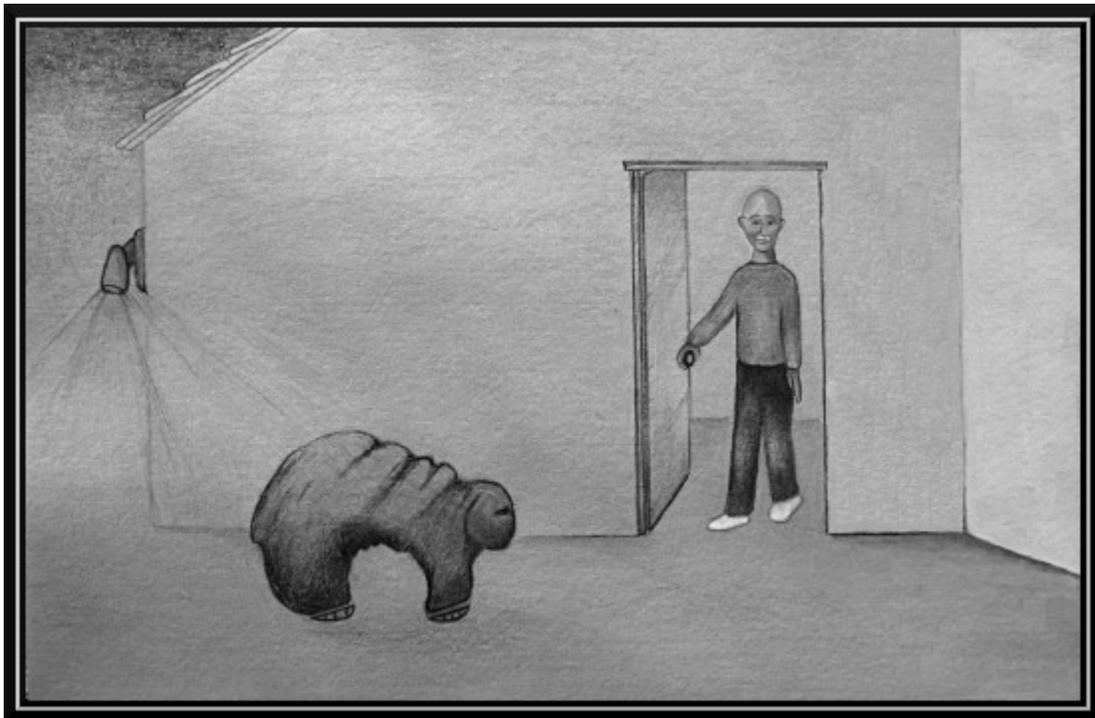
*Bill's chair at the Westhaven Zendo*

Pacific Northwest. He was frequently the target of anti-environmentalists in their writings who associated his conservation work and philosophy with Earth First! Alston Chase’s book, *In A Dark Wood*, repeatedly identified Bill as one of the main political ideologists of the radical environmental movement coupling him with Dave Foreman. Bill’s efforts in Redwood Summer – a summer of blocking access to the ancient forests of northern California and lumber production -- in 1990 led to a national campaign to bear witness to the clear cutting of our ancient forests. Funded by the Foundation of Deep Ecology, the national campaign led to the Sierra Club publication of a pictorial book, *Clear Cut: The Tragedy of Industrial Forestry* (1995), edited by Bill.

Bill was also a teacher. Born in Kansas City, he went to University of Kansas, Lawrence, for his undergraduate degree followed with graduate degrees at the University of Hawaii and the University of

Oregon. He taught briefly at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and spent the rest of his teaching career at Humboldt State University. At Humboldt, he taught courses on the forests, radioactive wastes, and issues on the wilderness – courses that were not within the confines of sociology where he was a tenured professor. Throughout his time at Humboldt, his home in Trinidad was a place whereby students, professors, and environmentalists met to discuss ongoing environmental campaigns and issues. There were always house guests. Most of his students went on to lead productive careers and always return to visit Bill. Bill also spent his time practicing Buddhism which gave him solace and comfort having to live in an anthropocentric destructive world. As a friend, Bill was always there for you. Even at the end, he was a ‘warrior’ for Nature.

~ *Sing Chew*



The bear pays Bill a visit ~ *Mark P.*

Bill Devall was an absolute original, courageous enough to see humanity as it is.

He had a glorious lack of respect for "doing the right thing," as that concept comes packaged from the Pope, the Ayatollah, the Buddha-worshippers, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, or some poor French film student that a bunch of Tibetans think is a reincarnation. At the same time, he knew what was real when he saw it, and he respected Maylie enormously. Bill understood that there is a struggle in the world, and understood it's not just a struggle to feel "real good" about oneself, to ring the prayer bell with precision, or to chant as if you can speak Japanese. He cared deeply about the world, despite his painful understanding of reality.

He was a superb student of people, and took delight in nudging people off-balance, just to see what would happen. He always made life interesting.

I feel very lucky to have known him. He will live on in my memory and those of everyone who knew and loved him.

*~ Mitch Trachtenberg*



**The Pea Knows**  
*Theresa McLaren*

it is advantageous  
sprout  
climb & vine  
flower & fruit  
drop crinkled pods  
as the plant  
withers and dries

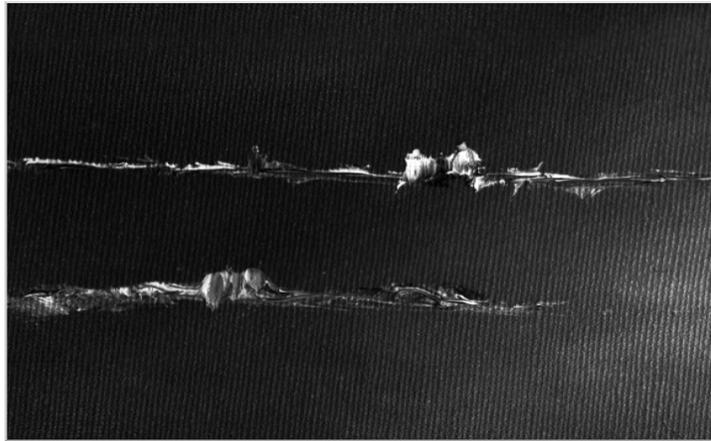
the pea knows  
the cycle  
contained in a single  
wrinkled seed  
transforming  
into abundance

green  
crisp  
sweet

and that it is not  
the honor  
to be chosen  
the best pod consumed  
but the knowledge  
contained in each pea  
in each pod  
left on the vine  
uneaten



*Lotus Blossoms on Pond  
(detail)*



### **Things I Say Instead . . .**

*Suzanne M.*

*Now we open Buddha's robe  
A field far beyond form and emptiness  
The Tatagatha's teaching for all beings.*

Form and emptiness, a concept we know so well from the Heart Sutra. Form is emptiness, emptiness form. Such a marvelous word, emptiness, replete and radiant with Buddha's teaching. Yet sometimes, of an early morning, when I lead the robe chant here at Westhaven Zendo, I don't say emptiness. A different word will slip out on its own, quietly joining the other words settling around us in the still, cold air.

*Now we open Buddha's robe  
A field far beyond form and ignorance . . .*

As we sit zazen, Buddha's robe spreads before us, a field far beyond what we think we don't know. The same is true of feelings, perceptions . . .

*Now we open Buddha's robe  
A field far beyond form and innocence . . .*

Form and perceptions beyond innocence, beyond the opening of mind and robe and emptiness. The Buddha's birth was not the beginning of emptiness mind but a blossoming of it. Petals peeling, withering, revealing the fruit and seed within.

*Now we open Buddha's robe  
A field far beyond form and disintegration . . .*

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no self beyond form and emptiness, no form and emptiness beyond self. Emptiness disintegrates, or there would be no soil in which the path can blossom.

*Now we open Buddha's robe  
A field far beyond form and illumination . . .*

No stopping, no path, no emptiness illuminating mind-consciousness until no old-age-and-death and also no extinction of it. After the last bows before the altar, I fold my rakasu and place it in its case. Stepping out of the zendo, we say good morning. The pine trees by the road lift their boughs in the freshening wind.