

# Zen Heart Sangha

Issue 14

Spring/Summer 2008 Newsletter

## Special Upcoming Events

### Guest Speakers:

- June 16: Rev. Jill Kaplan (ZHS)  
June 30: Rev. Michael Newhall  
(Jikoji Zen Center)  
July 21: Rev. Shosan Victoria  
Austin (SFZC)  
July 21: Rev. Jane Shuman  
(Twining Vines Zendo)

### Special Events:

#### ZHS Practice Period (Zenshin Do)

May 24-June 22

#### Dharma Inquiry Ceremony

June 22

#### One-Day Sitting (Zenshin Do)

October 17

## Monthly Schedule

### Monday evenings\*

Welcome/Instruction	6:30 pm
Zazen	7:00
Kinhin	7:40
Lecture	7:50
Final Bows/Cleanup	8:45
End Evening	9:00

\* except 1<sup>st</sup> Mondays

### 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of month: Retreat

Welcome/Instruction	6:30 pm
Zazen	7:00
Kinhin	7:30
Formal Tea	7:40
Kinhin	7:50
Zazen	8:00
Final Bows/Cleanup	8:30
End Evening	8:45

### 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of month

Zazen	5:50 am
Kinhin	6:20
Zazen	6:30
Service	7:00
Community breakfast	7:20
Soji (Cleanup)	8:00
Zazen	8:40
Study/Tea	9:10
End program	10:00

Zazen – sitting meditation  
Kinhin – walking meditation

## A Whole Spell of Cold

*Without undergoing a while spell of cold that bites into your bones,  
How can you have the plum-blossoms regale you with their piercing fragrance?*

I attended my first Tassajara practice period in 1988. After a few weeks, I wrote a long chatty letter to my teacher about the mundane details of my new life. I anxiously opened his reply and found he had handwritten a famous poem by the Chinese master Huang Po and nothing else; he hadn't even signed it. Rather than wasting time on idle chatter, he had gone right to the heart of the matter, trying to gently remind me why I was at Tassajara: not to learn new forms or feel better trained, but to understand how everything is related and interdependent. How can you truly enjoy spring, if you have not gone through the bitter cold of winter? How can you understand joy if you have not undergone sorrow? How can you truly live life if you are unwilling to look closely at death? That poem is still taped to the wall of my little studio, to remind me of what is truly important.

During a recent sangha discussion, we read one of Suzuki Roshi's talks in which he comments, "There is a Japanese saying, "For the moon, there is the cloud. For the flower, there is the wind." When we see a part of the moon covered by a cloud, or a tree, or a weed, we feel how round the moon is. But when we see the clear moon without anything covering it, we do not feel that roundness the same way we do when we see it through something else." In order to see something in all its aspects, we can't just view it in an abstract way separated from everything else; we need to see it in its complete environment. If we just concentrate on one or two details, a simple character flaw may blind us to other admirable qualities. But if we observe people carefully in many different situations, we will begin to understand them in a complete way and then our vow to save all beings will be easy to keep.

Sometimes a gift wakes us up to the wondrous and complex present moment. A few weeks ago I was walking my dog at Lake Lagunitas at Stanford University. The lake was partially filled and hundreds of water birds were diving, soaring, and swimming in the shallows. As we skirted the marshy edges and started toward dry ground, the earth beneath our feet suddenly began undulating in all directions. Thousands of tiny frogs were hopping away from our feet and jumping for cover into the tall grass—now I understood why there were so many birds! I returned a few days ago and only a few frogs were left, making room in the environment for some other creature to emerge and for impermanence and complexity to express themselves again and again.

*Without stepping through a thousand frogs in spring,  
How can you have herons in the summer?*

*Bows, Misha Shungen*