



2727 Highland Ave.
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www.swzc.org

Fall 2006

Volume 1, Number 1

Noteworthy Events

Visioning Day

The Sweetwater Zen Center invited members and interested friends on March 1, 2004 to a day of activities whose goal was to create a Vision Plan for the Zen Center. The resulting plan included a SWZC Mission Statement and Vision Plans for the next one, five, and twenty years. Much has happened since then and the SWZC Board has proposed another Vision Day to be held on Sunday, October 29th from 9:30am - 4:00pm. The day will include zazen, a review of our progress over the past 2 1/2 years, lunch, some exercises in Visioning and Abundance, and of course the creation of a new Vision Plan. We would like all members and residents to please join us on October 29th in this process.

New Year's Sesshin:
December 29th – January 7st

[Please visit the website for all schedule information.](#)



A Message From Our Abbot:

Open Heart—Generous Mind

Attention! Roso asked Master Nansen, “A man doesn’t know the wish-fulfilling mani jewel. It is set down intimately in the Tathagata’s storehouse. What is this storehouse? Nansen said, “It is the give-and-take of you and me.” Roso said, “What about no give-and-take?” Nansen said, “That’s also the storehouse.” Roso asked, “What about the Jewel?” Nansen called his name and Roso answered. Then Nansen said, “Leave. You don’t understand what I’m saying.”

The Book of Equanimity Case 93

In considering this koan and the wish-fulfilling jewel during the Wednesday council, many questions came up. Isn’t Zen practice about relinquishing all desires? I thought the point of practice was to give up all desires and be satisfied with what I have. Didn’t the Buddha teach that our suffering comes from our attachments? Is wishing ok? Isn’t wishing part of magical thinking?

The Tathagata’s storehouse or the storehouse of suchness is just this life as it is. But what is life as it is? Our practice is to directly experience this moment free of mental and emotional hindrances. This wish-fulfilling jewel is set down intimately in the Tathagata’s storehouse, which means it is the storehouse. My life, your life is the wish-fulfilling jewel.

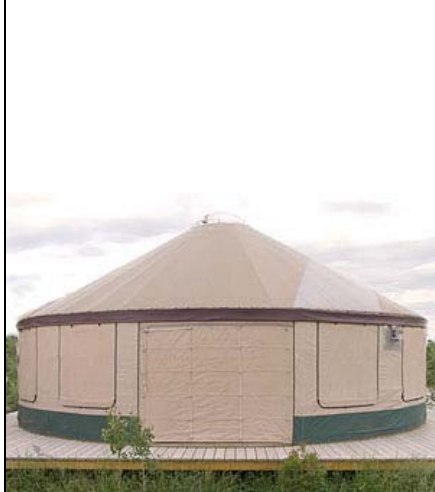
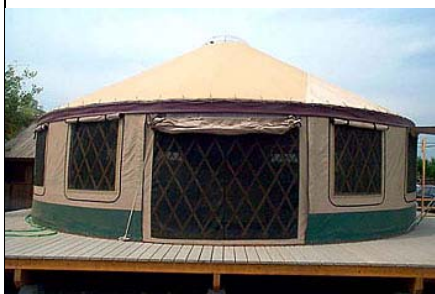
This is the Zen opening. Open up to the wealth and richness of this moment and of your life. We get into trouble when we focus on one thing that we absolutely need in order to be happy. If we open up to the spaciousness of our experience we can begin to see that when one door shuts many others open. Instead of focusing on the wish that didn’t come true, look around for what other surprises are waiting around. This is the give and take that Roso talks about. Functioning fluidly, sometimes we hold on and sometimes we let go.

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Community Yurt

The design for the SWZC Yurt includes:

- Four sides that roll up;*
- An insulated roof;*
- Eight windows;*
- French doors in front;*
- A regular door in back;*
- A vent for a heater;*
- A vent on the top and a ceiling fan.*



As the Sweetwater Zen Center expands its membership and its community presence in the South Bay area, the Zen Center must expand its sitting space and facilities to accommodate its growing membership and friends.

The Development Committee is very excited about meeting our facility needs by constructing an all-season structure on the deck behind the Zendo. The Board of Director's has approved a capital campaign to fund the construction of a yurt, which is a round, semi-permanent, wooden and canvas structure.

This new space will become an integral part of the Zen Center, as it will be frequently used to accommodate up to sixty people. This space can be used for services and meditation, while also accommodating lectures, workshops, classes, ceremonies and other community functions. Affiliated groups can also rent out this space for similar purposes, which would augment the Zen Center's program offering, while providing additional income to the Zen Center.

We estimate that this structure will cost \$25,000, including hard wood floors and an efficient heating/cooling system. We are asking that you to make a special donation this year to help fund our new structure. We are hoping to make this new sitting space available to the community as soon as possible. Already, the contractor who will direct volunteers in erecting the yurt has pledged his time as a donation.

We hope that the Sweetwater Zen Center, Seisen and its membership have made a positive impact on your life, and in those of your close friends and relatives. Contributing to this Capital Campaign is a great way to give back to the Zen Center and show your appreciation for what the Zen Center has done for you. As a sign of the Zen Center's appreciation, we would be very happy to lay a brick on the entrance to this new structure, inscribed with a personal message or acknowledgement of your choosing, for every \$250 donation received by a person or organization.

Seisen Sensei and the Development Committee look forward to providing a larger and more comfortable multi-use space where we can accommodate and assist more people in need and more people looking for a positive change in their lives. Please give generously.

Thank you in advance for your generous, kind and loving support.

Sincerely,
The SWZC Development Committee
Glenn Kanpo Friedman, Chair
Robert Kugai Wishner
Larry Gacho Spencer
Anne Seisen Saunders, Abbot

Begging Bowl



Volunteers are always needed at the Zen Center. We could use a Volunteer Coordinator as well as gardeners, a Membership Coordinator and eventually several people to help put up the yurt. Please let us know if you can give some of your time to the Zen Center. It is always much appreciated!

A Note From The Editor:

This is the first edition of the SWZC Newsletter and we have dedicated it to the theme of giving. I hope to print quarterly installments of the newsletter and include all the latest information about the Center's activities and programs. Please feel free to email me with any comments and suggested improvements. I also hope that many of you might consider sending me your latest news as well as poems, photographs, insights, and articles for upcoming editions. Thanks for giving me this great opportunity to practice in a dynamic community!

***In Gassho,
Enju***

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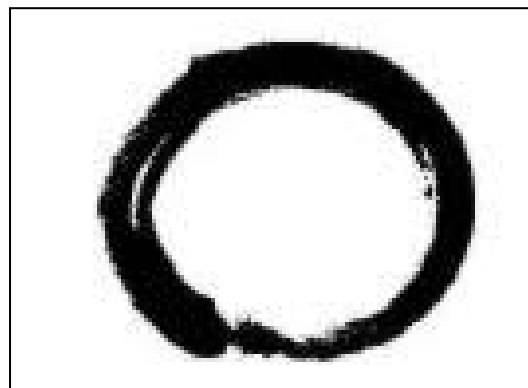
The Buddha Ratnasambhava is the Buddha of the ratna wisdom family. He transmutes the poisons of pride, covetness, greed and selfishness into the wisdom of equality and selfless generosity. He holds the wish-fulfilling jewel. The ratna energy of the five wisdom families is the energy of generosity. When we fear not-knowing, ratna manifests as anxiety about having enough. The distorted ratna energy is desperately holding on with one hand and reaching for more with the other. The liberated ratna energy realizes the richness of all existence and lives with open hands. With open hands we can let go of all we have and accept all that comes our way.

So how should we look at wishing? In the same way that clinging to desires restricts the ratna energy, just being satisfied with this moment is also restrictive. Our practice includes the power of vows or wishes. The four vows that we chant every day are the biggest wishes imaginable. We wish for enlightenment and the end of suffering for all beings. What could be bigger than that!

We have been focusing on abundance practice at the Zen Center, which is the practice of liberating our ratna energy. Realizing the richness of my life I am free to wish for my heart's desire and I am free to give it away. In practical terms the Zen Center is wishing for a yurt to hold our growing Sangha and for more programs. There are three kinds of giving: the giving of wealth, the giving of Dharma, and the giving of fearlessness. Since dharma is the teaching of no fear and we need wealth in order to create a training center, giving for the creation of more program space gives us the opportunity to give in all three ways.

I encourage all of us to practice opening up to the wish-fulfilling jewel that is our life. Allow all the wealth of the world into your life and let it flow through your life into the lives of others.

*Seisen
October 2006*



What Does Giving Mean To You?

Members of SWZC were asked this question and here are some their responses:

I prefer to see it as a question of sharing. In many areas of my life, I have been blessed with abundance. I choose to share what I have with those who need it. I give whatever money, time and possessions I can whenever someone requests it or I see that it is needed. So often, I am not using whatever is requested at the moment. How much better that someone else should benefit from it!

Ando



Giving is opening your heart to the world, sharing your true self and supporting others to realize their path.

Kanshin

Giving to me is a very personal dynamic. True giving is first of myself with interest, compassion and oneness with others. Second, though as important, are the gifts of time, energy and, of course, money.

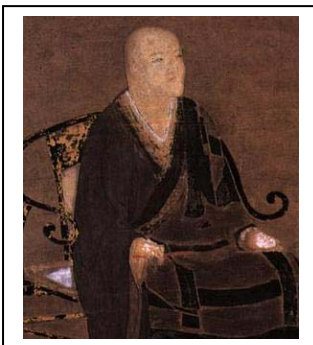
Gacho

Giving to me is about waking up every morning and asking myself how I can serve others with all the ingredients I've been given today.

Enju

Giving means friendship. Giving can be nice. *Sofia (age 5)*

Giving means like a present with kindness. *Nadia (age 8)*



Dogen writes, "If you study giving closely, you see that to accept a body and to give up the body are both giving."

SWZC Mission Statement:

Our purpose is to end suffering.

Our practice is to study the self, maintain the precepts and serve others.

Our mission is to provide the teaching, training and transmission of Zen Buddhism; to be engaged with our community and with interfaith activities.