

# PUGET SOUND ZEN CENTER

## NEWSLETTER FALL 2003

Someone left a box of *Passion* tea in the Puget Sound Zen Center's kitchen and had penned in "Meditation" above the title. I recently came from a place of passionate Zen practice at Mt. Baldy Zen Center, and while that box of tea is still around it acts as a kind of beacon for me, reminding me that my hope for the next years is to help establish a place not only for quiet contemplation but also for passion.

One of the things I often appreciated about the practice at Mt. Baldy Zen Center is that it didn't duck from passions, either noble – for meditation, inquiry, or true nature – or base – anger, fear, or desire. I remember Roshi talking about desire once. Desire's OK, he said. Completely desire and you arrive at no-desire. I found life on Mt. Baldy refreshing and unorthodox in the way that it embraced our human condition with all of its passion as well as its serenity. As a result, people were down-to-earth, usually fraying at the edges, and often genuinely passionate. As I take part in the forming of a new Zen Center, I imagine a place dedicated to no-passion and in which passions and desires of life are shared and exhausted and born anew.

The Puget Sound Zen Center is a just a newborn now, without much strength or sense of itself, but with plenty of potential energy. I think it is an open and expansive (if a little awkward) time in the life of the organization. Here is roughly what has happened in its first year of life.

Last year on November 1, Soshin, Lars, and I moved up to Vashon Island, invited by John Candy and Karen Hersh. In mid-November we incorporated the Puget Sound Zen Center and started looking for a place to practice. In January we found a place, in the Human Touch studio, and in February we began services there three times a week. That spring PSZC joined the Northwest Dharma Association, bought some bells and a drum, formed a board of directors, and submitted our application to the IRS for tax-exempt status as a non-profit. In summer 2003 we began sitting on the full moon, started having guest speakers, held our first board meeting and our first day-sit. This fall we received our IRS non-profit status, and held our second day-sit.

All this activity has relied on all sorts of people. The board has kept us on track. The morning officers for June through December have helped with the weekly practice: Densu – Steve Roache, Mokugyo – Jeff Tipp, Jikijitsu – Koshin/Soshin, Shoji – Josh Jarman. The evening crew is: Densu – John Candy, Mykugyo – Daniel Delacour, Shoji – Elaine Hanowell, Jikijitsu – Koshin. Shozan Joslyn came down from Entsu-ji on Bainbridge Island to help lead our first day-sit.

Of course, the Zen Center has also relied on Soshin and me – it's been a busy year for us. We have been working out the details of living outside the womb of Mt. Baldy and in society. To support ourselves we've started a business, Still Sitting Meditation Supply ([www.stillsitting.com](http://www.stillsitting.com)), through which we sell the cushions and robes that we make, and Shoyeido incense and incense bowls. We've also done a variety of odd jobs from care-giving to knitting lessons. We are patching together a living in order to give us the flexibility and energy we need to work for the Zen Center.

That is the recent history of the Puget Sound Zen Center. There is no telling what the future holds, but here are some of the things planned for the Zen Center. In the short-term you can expect to see some classes on Zen given, retreats continued, a *han* (the block of wood struck at day-break and dusk) constructed, a couple of newsletters a year published, and the beginnings of a program for families and children. Sooner or later we hope to purchase or be given property that would belong to the non-profit, upon which we could either build a zendo or modify existing buildings.

Speaking for myself, I would love to be part of a dedicated and very human sangha. There is a Japanese phrase that is used to describe life in a Zen monastery: “mutual polishing.” When rough stones are put in a bag and jostled around, they knock into each other and wear off the edges, leading them to become smooth and beautiful. I would like to be a part of something bumpy like that, something rooted in Rinzai tradition and adapting to affect the lives of individuals living in this culture in these days. Whether our sangha gets involved with kids or academics or art or long retreats depends most of all on those who make up the Zen Center – the sangha itself.

Whether you are reading this newsletter on Vashon Island or in Seattle or on a Caribbean Island, please feel you can get involved. Your support and good wishes will keep us practicing with passion!

*Koshin  
Abbot, PSZC*

### **THANKS A LOT!**

Kathy Abascal for help with 501-C3 application  
Mark Byers for his donation  
Scott Gaul for layout help  
Debbie Gibbs for lots of zafus  
Elaine Hanowell for artwork, teacups, tea, and all sorts of goodies  
Josh Jarman for the beginnings of a website  
Renee Marceau for front page photo and reply card photo  
Oscar Moreno for his donation  
Ruth Parker for a PSZC brick at the Vashon Heritage Museum  
Jeff Tipp for Buddha on loan and clappers  
Sunday Morning Blue Heron Sitters for help in many ways  
Fey for donation of Trillium in July

### **HELP US GET STARTED**

We at the Puget Sound Zen Center would greatly appreciate your support. If you'd like to help please fill out the enclosed card. Whether you live locally or a long way off, your donation encourages the practice here and helps establish this new Zen Center. In return for your help we'll send you this newsletter. Your donation is tax-deductible. Thank you very much!

**PUGET SOUND ZEN CENTER  
WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Tuesday 6:30 – 7:45am  
Wednesday 7 – 8:30pm  
Thursday 6:30 – 7:45am

**ABBOT**

Koshin Christopher Cain

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President – David Scheuneman  
Secretary-Treasurer – Soshin Lidunn Cain  
Member – Ruth Parker

**Puget Sound Zen Center**  
PO Box 2644  
Vashon, WA 98070  
(206) 463-4332  
office@pszen.org  
www.pszen.org

PUGET SOUND ZEN CENTER  
PO Box 2644  
Vashon, WA 98070