



# The Floating Zendo News

For the students and friends of Angie Boissevain, Sensei

Winter 2009-2010

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## Waking Up

A Dharma talk by Angie Boissevain, August 2008 Floating Zendo Sesshin

We see everything through words. We're entangled in words. Of course, they're extremely useful, and they've allowed us to do all the marvelous, incredible things we've done, like flying airplanes full of hundreds of people through the sky! That's incredible. We couldn't have done that without words. And not just words, but written words, so our ideas are placed outside us. Everything becomes objective, everything becomes a "something." We lose our sensuous relationship with things. There are just "things," not "beings," almost nothing seems alive. Even live things don't seem alive. We easily cut down a tree without thinking what it is, where it came from, or how long it's been there.

It seems we've lost respect. Our "spect-" words come from the Latin "spectare"--to inspect, to respect, spectacles...It's about sight, and to re-spect is to see again. Usually we see things in a shallow, quick way, with prepared terms for all we see, and judgments: "I like that, I don't like that, I want more of that, I don't want that at all." We rush through our life this way. We have to. It's how we can get from point A to point B in the fastest way. But a huge element is missing, and it's that element we're longing for, that we feel so much bewilderment and confusion about: "Where is my real life?"

This is often what brings us to the cushion. We laugh about how simple our practice is, how ridiculously simple. Nothing's happening! We just come and sit and look at a wall! And yet sitting opens up a whole world of living, a world that is touchable, and feelable, alive. In a way, it's hard to tell whether what we feel is our life or the world's life--because in the end it's the same thing. I believe it's crucial for us as human beings to not lose our sense of the life of things. Of course, life can't really be lost, even if the whole world blows up, or infinite numbers of universes. But this world is our own precious one, this is our treasure. We sit in order to wake up in it and as it, to be truly awake and conscious in order to not only know how we are, but how each thing that we meet is--to be willing to meet every blade of grass, every stone and star. It's a big job.

But it's not like we're trying to perfect ourselves, to make some glorious, marvelous, impossible being out of our so-called self. What Buddha meant is that we're already there, right here, and waking up to it all the time. Because our brains are constantly squirting thoughts, we get caught by ideas, by words, and we begin to feel that the thoughts are real. We have visceral reactions to them, and we can easily get scared by a thought when in fact we're just sitting in peace and quiet. So our practice is attention to what's really happening, is to study, as Dogen says, to make a close study of what happens as we live our life, not just on the cushion, but everywhere. We don't have to throw ourselves away. Couldn't if we tried. In fact, it's important to take very good care of ourselves. When we take the Precepts, we come to the last Prohibitory Precept, which is "No abusing the Three Treasures. No abusing the Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha--that's us."

*Transcribed by Ellie Leishman*

## News and Notes:

**Ordination~** On Nov. 14, at the end of the Arcata sesshin at Rinshin-ji, **Jane Jasper** received priest ordination from Angie in the presence of many of the Arcata sangha. A long time student who lives in Las Vegas, New Mexico, Jane has accompanied Angie to Arcata sesshins for a number of years, and also has joined many Hokoji and Jikoji retreats with her teacher. She is the second priest, after donnalynn chase last year, to be ordained in the Floating Zendo lineage. She received the name Auspicious Study, Ancient Path: Shogaku Kodō.

*Angie Boissevain*

**Transcripts available soon~** For those of you who have been requesting transcripts of Angie's talks, we are pleased to announce that this resource will soon be available. These are dharma talks from the 2008 and 2009 sesshins. We will post the list and contact information on the website, and announce to the Yahoo listserv when editing is complete. There are many more talks to transcribe, so volunteers are always welcome. (email [wendygra@ix.netcom.com](mailto:wendygra@ix.netcom.com)) Gassho to Ellie Leishman for working on this series.

**In Memoriam~ Arthur Greeno** died April 14, this year, 2 days after receiving Jukai and the name Hosan Shinshu: Dharma Mountain True Practice. He and his wife Ginnie lived at Hokoji for a number of years. He managed temple affairs and was a constant presence in the zendo.

**Lorie Levison** died September 15. She had received Jukai in 2008, her ordination name was Myomon Choshin: Subtle Gate; Clear Mind/Heart. She contributed to Hokoji sangha in innumerable ways and held nearly every practice position through the years, as well as shared her tea ceremony practice with the sangha, especially during sesshin. They are both sorely missed.

*Angie Boissevain*

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## Ready for questions: Shuso donnalynn and counsel Ritu Goswamy, Aug. 2009

Photo by Todd Skyberg



On the last day of the August Sesshin the Jikoji parking lot filled up with honorable guests from near and far. After taking our places in the big Zendo we viewed a solemn procession of Angie Sensei, Shoho Michael Newhall, Shuso donnalynn chase and counsel Ritu Goswamy. Angie purified the staff with incense and presented it to donnalynn. Striking the staff on the ground, donnalynn took questions from the guests and retreatants. Shuso met each one face to face with courage, compassion, her truth and wit. She was composed at all times, even when Gerow Reece jumped up and grabbed the statue of Buddha from the large altar and asked: "Which one (of us) is the true Buddha?" The questions were followed by thanks and praise for donnalynn's many gifts to Jikoji, the Floating Zendo and her friends. Another quiet procession and we all exited for a wonderful buffet lunch prepared by our Tenzo and Fukuten, Jane McDonald and Ellie Leishman. For more pictures of the Shuso Ceremony, all by Todd Skyberg, go to [float-ingzendo.org](http://float-ingzendo.org).



# Calendar 2009-2010 for Angie and the Floating Zendo

## 2009

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Dec 12	San Jose	Rohatsu Full Day Sit	9:00 am– 4:00 pm
Dec 23	San Jose	Study Group	6:30—8:30 pm

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## 2010

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Jan 9	San Jose	Saturday Half Day Sit	9:00 am—noon
Feb 12—19	Jikoji	Jikoji Parinirvana Sesshin	Jikoji.org
Feb 16	San Jose	Guest Teacher, Misha Merrill	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
Mar 13	San Jose	Saturday Full Day Sit	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Mar 24	San Jose	Wed. Night Insight Meditation Grp.	7:30-9:00 pm sanjoseinsight.org
Apr 2-9	Hokoji, Arroyo Seco, NM	Buddha's Birthday Sesshin	info@hokojitaos.org
Apr 6	San Jose	Guest Teacher, TBA	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
Apr 17	San Jose	Saturday Sit	9:00 am—noon
May 8-9	Santa Cruz Mountains	Retreat	TBA
June 12	San Jose	Saturday Full Day Sit	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
July 8-12	Empty Nest Zendo, North Fork, CA	Women's Retreat	emptynestzendo.org
July 13	San Jose	Guest Teacher TBA	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
July 17	San Jose	Saturday Half Day Sit	9:00 am– noon
July 23– Aug 1	Hakubai Temple Boulder, CO	Kobun Memorial Sesshin	hakubaitemple.org
July 27	San Jose	Guest Teacher TBA	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
Aug 20-27	Jikoji	Floating Zendo Sesshin	floatingzendo.org
Sept 11	San Jose	Saturday Full Day Sit	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sept 24– Oct 1	Hokoji, Arroyo Seco NM	Denko-e Sesshin	info@hokojitaos.org

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2010

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Sept 28	San Jose	Guest Teacher TBA	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
Oct 9	San Jose	Saturday Half Day Sit	9:00 am - noon
Nov 7-14	Arcata, CA	Rinshijin Sesshin	arcatazengroup.org
Nov 9	San Jose	Guest Teacher, Misha Merrill	6:30 pm—8:00 pm
Nov 20	San Jose	Saturday Half Day Sit	9:00 am—noon
Dec 11	San Jose	Rohatsu Full Day Sit	9:00 am - 4:00 pm

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All San Jose listings are at the Friends' House. Weekly sit and study is on Tuesdays 6:30-8:00 pm at the Friends' House on 1041 Morse St., San Jose. Dokusan with Angie is offered during Full Day Sits, Sesshins and by appointment. Please contact Angie aboiss5@comcast.net to schedule.

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## Floating Zendo Study Group

Floating Zendo Study Group is a group which meets regularly to read and discuss Buddhist works. We are a flexible group and our time and place of meeting varies. Currently, we are meeting on Wednesday nights, every 4 - 6 weeks. Our study group aims to inspire our practice by providing a venue to discuss our Buddhist studies with others. We usually read works which involve a modern Buddhist authority expounding on an ancient Buddhist text. Previous books we have studied are:

No Time to Lose (Pema Chodrin): Pema Chodrin's commentary of the Bodhisattva Way of Life;  
The Heart of Being (John Daido Looi): John Daido Looi's commentary on The Buddhist Precepts;  
Refining Your Life (Dogen and Uchiyama): Uchiyama's commentary on Dogen's Tenzo Kyokun;  
Branching Streams Flow in Darkness: Shunryu Suzuki's commentary on The Sandokai.

We are currently studying The Platform Sutra. It is possible to participate in the discussion via phone. If you want to be notified of the groups schedule and the particular book we are discussing please send me an e-mail. My e-mail address is "[tipper184@yahoo.com](mailto:tipper184@yahoo.com)". Hope you can join us.

*Julian West*

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The teaching practice of Angie Boissevain is supported entirely by dana. The Floating Zendo budget covers rent of the Meeting House on Morse St., a working cash fund for our Sesshin and scholarships, the website, occasional publications (such as this newsletter), and contributions to our teacher. Occasionally we contribute to Zen Centers in the Soto tradition. We will be acknowledging future contributions over \$50 in our newsletters. Your donations are not tax-deductible. If you would like to specify the uses for your dana, suggested categories are below:

- Sesshin scholarships
- Teacher dana
- General Expenses (including Teacher)

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