

*Warm Jewel Temple, Santa Cruz Zen Center*

## **Ways to Deepen Your Zen Practice**

*“Although this inconceivable Dharma is abundant in each person, it is not actualized without practice, and it is not experienced without realization.” – Eihei Dogen Zenji*

### **Jewels in the World**

The year-long “Jewels in the World” program is offered for those who have begun Zen practice and want to take the next step, and for experienced practitioners who want to refresh their wholehearted dedication to the Way. The program is based on making a commitment to bringing present open awareness more fully into our zazen practice and daily life in the world at large, for the benefit of everyone including ourselves, and to studying the teachings of the Buddhas and Zen Ancestors carefully and thoroughly so as to transform our understanding and experience. “Jewels in the World” is a self-designed commitment to Zen practice and study, in which participants choose their own commitments such as daily zazen at home and Dharma study at home, as well as events at the temple such as zazen, sesshin, dokusan, talks, classes, work days, etc. Participants can be practitioners at Santa Cruz Zen Center, or live out of town. Anyone is welcome to join three times a year (at the beginning of the fall and winter Practice Periods and again in June), making a one-year commitment. There are monthly group meetings with Zen Center head teacher Kokyo Henkel on Thursday evenings, for discussing Dharma topics being studied and how they can be applied to daily life, as well as for checking in with each other about the joys and challenges of such practice. If people are participating from out of town, or cannot attend for other reasons, these monthly meetings can be attended live or afterwards via Google Hangouts video. Practice discussion (dokusan) with Kokyo can also be done via Hangouts or Skype for those who live out of town, and Dharma talks and classes can be downloaded or streamed from the website. There are optional group all-day sitting retreats twice a year on Saturdays. If interested in joining, please speak with Kokyo.

### **Receiving the Precepts, Bodhisattva Initiation Ceremony**

Jukai (“Conferring and Receiving the Precepts”) is a formal ceremony in which practitioners publicly take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and affirm their intention to live with awareness in harmony with all beings, in accord with the Bodhisattva Precepts of the Zen tradition. After requesting to receive the precepts from one of the senior priests (Kokyo, Patrick, or Gene), during the next half year or more students will, with the help of a sewing teacher, sew a rakusu (a small version of Buddha's robe) which will be given in the ceremony. They will also meet with their teacher in practice discussion (dokusan) twice a month to explore the meaning of living with the precepts. A financial donation for the ceremony is requested. Jukai students will normally have participated in the practice at Santa Cruz Zen Center for at least one year, and done at least one sesshin of three days or more, before requesting to receive the precepts. After receiving the precepts, they will be expected to participate in the ongoing practice at Zen Center, including zazen, ceremonies, practice periods, dokusan, filling doan roles, etc.