



## ON THE ROAD: VISITING AND SHARING MID-STREAM CHAPTER 3 SUMMER 2018 BY MARCIA LIEBERMAN

Hello again and welcome to my annual summary of summer teaching. Can't think of a better way to begin than with this comment—

*"For my part, it is really helpful to spend time with experienced practitioners, who have managed to do this practice within the confines of a life with many other moving parts - family obligations, work commitments, artistic vocations or avocations. Your visit suggested to me the way in which your practice enhances the rest of your life. It is easy for me to fall into a trap of thinking that my life and practice are somehow at odds. Of course, this is silly. I see that more easily when I see people like you doing both with real commitment and attention."*  
Billy Sothern, sangha member of Mid City Zen Center, NOLA

The South and East corridor was my route this summer. **June** started at Mid City Zen Center in New Orleans. Here with able resident priest Michaela O'Connor Bono, we focused on three groupings of curriculum:

- Aesthetics of Zen--art and the dharma especially altar form and flowers
- Pen to paper—the history of enso and sutra copying
- Host and guest—way of tea and oryoki practice

Using the back porch for our sutra copying, we had a spacious and quiet place to settle. Together we worked on the back garden to remove weeds and re-route rainwater. Weather being so warm, we even served mocha ice cream one day for our tea sweet!



**July** I headed for Washington DC and a chance to visit All Beings Zen Sangha and head teacher Inryu Ponce-Barger. Each week I paired a dharma talk related to a field of study followed by a weekend workshop on that same subject. Together we had a chance to consider the ethics and aesthetics of zen—tea, wabi-sabi, host, oryoki, beauty of restraint, history of form. Along the way we whisked bowls of tea and arranged garden flowers for home-made altars. Rocks from the roadside became make-shift Buddhas on each altar.





In **August**, All Beings sangha traveled to a farm in Maryland for sesshin. The retreat was based on nature and zen. We followed the ancient form of noting the seasons with a Saijiki practice. Each morning in a pop-up tea room I had the delight of making tea and talking with individual participants. There was lots of oryoki practice and kinhin under aged trees near the red barn. The days were filled with dragonflies, dharma talks, farm fresh meals--- the evenings with cicadas, dark starry skies and fireflies.



I love this opportunity to travel and meet practioners who have gathered along 'the stream'. I am grateful to Steve Weintraub, the Branching Streams Liaison, who supports and shapes this project each year.

Who knows which road I will be on next summer. If you would like to know more about this program, or are interested in Marcia visiting, please contact her at <mailto:beezen@sfzc.org>--Marcia is the beekeeper at San Francisco Zen Center.

