



Berkeley Zen Center



January 2002 Newsletter

Changes and Gasshos... 2002 brings quite a few turnovers of responsibility at BZC. First of all, in March, Linda Eby and Bob Rosenbaum take over as co-Sesshin Directors. Thank you to Linda and Bob for taking this task on and innumerable gasshos to Paul Ridgeway and also Nancy Van House for so conscientiously performing the innumerable labors associated with this job for the last two years.

Other changes starting in January: John Andrulies takes over as bathroom attendant for Andrea Thach; and Leslie Bartholic takes over for Claire and John Rubin in taking care of the Dokusan Hut. Gasshos and bows to all these folks for helping take care of the many aspects of our temple and practice.



Schedule Change... Please note that the **One Day Sitting** for January has been moved from **Saturday the 5th to Saturday the 12th.**



Affirmation of Welcome

Walking the path of liberation, we express our intimate connection with all beings. Welcoming diversity, here at Berkeley Zen Center the practice of zazen is available to people of every race, nationality, class, gender, sexual preference, age, and physical ability. May all beings realize their true nature.

New Scroll... Most people have probably noticed the new scroll in the zendo. It hangs on the wall on the east side of the altar and was acquired during the recent visit to China made by many BZC members. For those who are interested, here is a translation of the Chinese characters, provided by Sojun in a recent lecture:

"The Plum Tree withstands the harsh winter cold and still retains its fragrance."



January Schedule

Founders' Ceremony
Thursday, 1-3, 6:20 pm
Friday, 1-4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 1-5, 9:30 am

One-day Sitting
Saturday, 1-12, 5am to 9:20pm

Half-day Sitting
Sunday, 1-20 8:30am to 12:30pm

Suzuki Roshi Memorial Service - 2001

The spiritual source shines clear in the light.
The branching streams flow on in the dark.
Suzuki Roshi, you stood in the center of the circle where light issues forth,
Transmitting Sekito's truth in the stream of the ancestors' lineage.
I remember you scooping up buckets of cold clear water
Getting all the dragons and elephants roaring drunk at your party.
Shame on you.
It's been thirty years now and we still haven't sobered up.
I guess we just can't get enough of that delicious taste.
In all that time your wine hasn't lost its effect.
We seem to be hopelessly entangled like old wisteria vines.
So once again we have no choice but to invite you to take your place in our midst
So we can drink from your bottomless cup of inspiration.

Sojun



Reminder... Rakusu Sewing Class...

Becoming a lay ordinee and sewing a Rakusu is a wonderful way to deepen our commitment to practice. If you are interested, please speak with Sojun immediately. Also speak with sewing teacher, **Linda Galijan (649-8726)**. The first class is mandatory and is scheduled for **January 20, from 10am to 5pm.**



Class....The Eternal Mirror... BZC member Bob Rosenbaum will teach a class on Dogen's fascicle, *Kokyo, The Eternal Mirror*. This teaching by Dogen speaks to

the foundation of interpersonal relationships and self-identity. The class will meet from **7:30 to 9:00 Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31 and February 7th**. Suggested donation is \$5 per class with all proceeds going to BZC. Watch for the sign-up on the bulletin board.



Newsletter submissions are typically due by the third Tuesday of every month. To make a submission, contact Greg Denny at: gdenny@probusiness.com, (925)737-7458, or via the mail slot on the community room porch.

Also check out the Berkeley Zen Center web site at <http://berkeleyzencenter.org> or email BZC at bzc@berkeleyzencenter.org.

Lecture by Suzuki Roshi

April 20, 1969

Why do we practice Zen when we already have Buddha Nature? This was the great question that Dogen Zenji worked on before he went to China and met Tendo Nyojo Zenji. This is not an easy problem, but first of all, what does it mean when we say everyone has Buddha Nature?

The usual understanding is that Buddha Nature is something innate within ourselves, and because of this nature, we do something, but that is not Dogen's understanding. That understanding of Buddha Nature is just an idea you have in your mind. If there is a plant, there must be a seed, which was there before the plant appeared. There must be some nature which promotes its activity. Because of its nature, some flowers are red and some flowers are yellow. Most people understand in that way. Then why would we practice when we already have this Buddha Nature?

We may think that after we practice and eliminate various selfish desires, then Buddha Nature will appear. That kind of understanding is based on your unclear observation of things, according to Dogen Zenji. Dogen's understanding is very clear. Only when something appears, is its nature there. So nature and things themselves are two names of one reality. Sometimes we say Buddha Nature; sometimes we say Bodhi, or attainment. Not only do we call it by these names, but sometimes we call it, "evil desires." Evil desires, we say, but that is another name for Buddha Nature. For Buddha, that is Buddha Nature.

In the same way, our usual understanding is that laypeople and priests are fundamentally different, but actually there is no particular person who is a priest. Each one of you could be a priest, and I could be a layperson. Because I wear a robe, I am a priest and I behave like a priest, that's all. There is no innate nature that distinguishes priest from layperson.

So whatever you call it, that is another name of one reality. Even though you call it a mountain or river, that is another name of one reality. So we should not be fooled by words of "nature" or "result" or "Buddhahood." We should see things with a clear mind. In this way, we understand Buddha Nature.

As I said, "Evil Desires" is another name for Buddha Nature. When we practice zazen, where would evil desire come from? In zazen, there is actually no place for evil desires. Still we may believe that evil desires should be annihilated. Why is that? You want to eliminate evil desires for yourself, but where will you throw them? When we start to think that evil desires are something we can throw away, that is heretical. Evil desire is just a name we use, but there is no such thing, which we can pull out and throw away.

You may feel as if I am fooling you, but it is not so. It is no laughing matter. When we come to this point, it is necessary to understand our practice of *shikantanza*.

There is a famous koan about a man who climbs to the top of a hundred foot pole. If he stays at the top, he is not the enlightened one. When he jumps off the top of the pole, he may be the enlightened one. How we understand this koan is how we understand our practice. The reason we feel that something should be pulled out is because we stay at the top of the pole. Then you have a problem. Actually there is no top of the pole. The pole continues forever, so you cannot stop anywhere. But you think because you have some experience of enlightenment that you can rest there, observing various sights from the top of the pole.

Things are continuously growing or changing into something else. Nothing exists in its own form or color. When we think, "Here is the top," that is already a misunderstanding. Then you will have the problem of whether or not to jump. But you cannot jump from here. It is not possible. And even though you try to stop at the top of the pole, you cannot stay there because it is growing continuously. You may think it is possible to stop, but it is not.

That is the problem. That is why you should practice and forget all about the top of the pole. To forget about the top of the pole is to where you are right now. Not to be this way or that way, or to be in the past or future, but to be right here. Do you understand?

You should forget this moment and grow into the next. That is the only way. For instance, when breakfast is ready, my wife hits some wooden clappers. If I don't answer, she may continue to hit them until I feel rather angry. Why we have this kind of problem is quite simple. It is because I don't answer. If I say, "Hai!" ("Yes!"), there is no problem. Because I don't say, "Yes!" she continues to call me because she doesn't know whether or not I heard her.

Sometimes she may think, "He knows but he doesn't answer." When I don't answer, I am on the top of the pole. I don't jump off. I believe I have something important to do at the top of the pole and think, "You shouldn't call me. You should wait." Or I may think, "This is very important! Don't you know that? I am here, on top of the pole! Don't you know that?" Then she will keep hitting the clappers. This is how we create problems.

So the secret is just to say, "Yes!" and jump off from here. Then there is no problem. It means to be yourself, always yourself, without sticking to an old self. You forget all about yourself and are refreshed. You are a new self, and before that new self becomes an old self, you say, "Yes!" You walk to the kitchen for breakfast. So the point of each moment is to forget the point and extend your practice.

As Dogen Zenji says, "To study Buddhism is to study yourself. To study yourself is to forget yourself on each moment. Then everything will come and help you." Everything will assure your enlightenment. When I say, "Yes!" my wife will assure my enlightenment. "Oh, you are a good boy!" But if I stick to this, "I am a good boy," I will create another problem.

So on each moment you should concentrate and really be yourself. At that moment, where is Buddha nature? Buddha nature is when I say, "Yes!" That "Yes!" is Buddha Nature itself. The Buddha nature which you think you have within yourself is not Buddha Nature. Buddha Nature is when you say, "Yes!" or when you become you yourself, or when you forget all about yourself.

This Buddha Nature is not something which will appear in the future, but something which is already here. If you cannot actually see what Buddha Nature is, it doesn't mean anything. It is a painted rice cake, not an actual one. If you want to see an actual rice cake, you should see it when it is here. So the purpose of your practice is just to be yourself. When you become yourself in that way, you have real enlightenment. What you think you attained previously is not actually enlightenment.

Sometimes you will laugh at yourself when you fall into wrong practice. "Oh, what am I doing?" When you understand how practice goes back and forth, you will enjoy your practice. Real compassion or love, real encouragement or true courage will arise here, and you will also be a very kind person.

We say, "One practice covers everything." So practice will include various virtues like waves on the sea. When you practice in that way, you may be stone, a tree, or an ocean. You cover everything.

Continuous practice is necessary, so we should not rest. To have generous mind and big mind and soft mind is how to continue. And we should always be flexible, not sticking to anything. Practicing in this way there is no need to be afraid of anything, and we do not ignore anything. This is strictness of the way. When we are not afraid of anything, that is imperturbability.

To be completely concentrated on what you do, that is simplicity. And the beauty or practice is that it can be extended in various ways. It should not be so difficult, but it is difficult. Yet you cannot say our way is very difficult. It is not difficult at all. Everyone can do it, but to continue it is rather difficult. Don't you think so? You agree with this point?

Thank you very much.

E-mail address changes... Alan Senauke's new e-mail address is alans@kushiki.org; Laurie Senauke's is lauries@kushiki.org.



Calling All Tapes!... If you checked out a tape before December 1, please return it by January 15. The tape librarian needs to do inventory.



A Zen Poem

Contrapuntal.
We are up early.
We are shadows; like trees only moving.
Outside it is dark but not still.
The wooden clappers sound at dawn
The same note as the birds.
Is sound meaning?
If so, birds and clappers together
Answer each other like love.
If not, clappers and birds together
Laugh at the implications of the dawn.

Kellie Hobbs



Saturday Childcare

Kidzendo is back! This is a monthly program of stories, song, art, discussion and the infamous one minute of zazen. Check the dates for Kidzendo and childcare for the Saturday program on the schedule below. Note that the childcare schedule is tentative. Childcare (including Kidzendo) is not offered if no one's planning to come, so please call the Thursday before to let us know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie Senauke, 845-2215.

Any adults (particularly those without young children!) with an interest in helping create the kidzendo, please call. We need you.

Jan 5	Kidzendo
Jan 12	No Program
Jan 19	Childcare
Jan 26	Childcare

Memorial Eko – September, 2001.... written by Norman Fischer, revised by Sojun.

May we awaken Buddha's compassion and luminous mirror wisdom. Chanting the En Mei Jukku Kannon Gyo and the Metta Sutta, we offer this merit to the peaceful passage of all those whose lives have been taken in these terrible acts of violence, and to the well being of the wounded. We also pray for the healing and turning of the planners and perpetrators of these crimes whose damaged hearts and clouded minds have created endless suffering in the present and into the future. And to the wisdom, patience, and loving-kindness of all the world's leaders, so that they may exercise restraint and care in their actions.

May the power of these Sutras and the words of dedication help heal the world of suffering and confusion. May we with all our acts of body, speech, and mind, from this day on, dedicate ourselves to peacefulness so that the power of human goodness and kindness will overcome human folly and the delusion of violence. And may we and all beings find solace and strength in Buddha's Way.

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