



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2002 Newsletter



Buddha's Birthday... On Saturday, April 6th, please come and celebrate the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha! We are making a couple changes to the celebration this year. Sojun Roshi's lecture (at 10:10am) will be intended more for adults than for kids. Child care will be available during that time. But at 10:30 we will invite the kids into the zendo and we'll all watch a short skit written by Sylvie Senauke (with a little help from Karen DeCotis). After that, we'll go outside and perform the Buddha's Birthday ceremony, in which we bathe the baby Buddha with sweet tea while chanting the Heart Sutra. To conclude, we'll have some tea and birthday cake out on the patio.

Please Note: As in years past, we will be decorating the baby Buddha's bower early on the day of the ceremony. To help, please bring donations of flowers Friday afternoon or early Saturday morning. And at 8:00am, please come and help weave the flowers into the bower. Children are welcome for this part too!



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.

April Schedule

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

Buddha's Birthday
Saturday, 4-6

One-Day Sitting
Sunday, 4-14, 5am to 5:30pm

Women's Sitting
Sunday, 4-14

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday, 4-21, 9am to 5pm

Shukke Tokudo
(Priest Ordination Ceremony)
Greg Fain & Eric Greene
Saturday, 4-20, 6pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 4-27, 9:30 am

Mountains and Rivers
Saturday, 4-27 through Sunday, 4-28



Kanzeon Sesshin, Sunday, April 21...

Kanzeon is the bodhisattva of compassion, or clear-sighted helpfulness. She hears the cries of distressed beings and she sees the world as it is.

In the spirit of Kanzeon, BZC is experimenting with a new sesshin form this year. The Kanzeon Sesshin, while including all of the essential elements of a BZC sesshin, will be shorter and purposely emphasize the unique combination of adaptability and rigor in Kanzeon's practice. Special effort will be made to accommodate physical limitations that come with age, illness or injury. Knowing this in advance, we can practice upright sitting in various postures without sacrificing our intention to meet the world straight-on.

You are invited to contact **David Weinberg** for more details about the sesshin and to advise him about your needs. **Call 510-540-8928 or e-mail**

davidw@stresscarentraining.org.

Please sign up for this sesshin **by Friday, April 19**, on the bulletin board.

Schedule

9:00	Zazen
9:40	Stretching
10:00	Zazen
10:40	Kinhin
11:00	Lecture
12:00	Service
12:10	Lunch & Resting
1:20	Work Period
2:00	Zazen
2:40	Stretching
3:00	Tea
3:20	Kinhin
3:30	Open Sitting & Practice Discussion
4:50	Refuges
5:00	End of Day



Priest Ordination... The Buddhas rejoice! Greg Fain and Eric Greene will receive priest ordination or *shukke tokudo* from Sojun Roshi on Saturday, **April 20th at 6pm** here at Berkeley Zen Center. The sangha is warmly invited to witness and celebrate this auspicious ordination. A simple reception will follow.



Precepts Class... As Jukai approaches this spring, BZC will again offer our almost-annual Precepts class for the Jukai sewing group and for community members at large who wish to deepen their understanding and practice of the Bodhisattva Precepts. This year's class will be led by Alan Senauke. We will focus on the development of the precept systems, the Pure Precepts, and the Ten Clear Mind Precepts as our actual practice.

The dates for these four classes are **Thursday evenings, from April 11 through May 2**. Please see the Zendo Bulletin Board for signup, further details (including suggested donation) and a reading list.



Mountains And Rivers Sesshin... Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place at Point Reyes **from April 27-28**. Sojun Roshi will lead it. It's an inspiring and invigorating combination of morning and evening zazen with moderate hiking in silence during the day. Everyone is encouraged to try it. Information and signup sheet will be posted on the zendo bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call **Ken Knabb at 527-0959**.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

To Whom Do We Bow?

Part Two

Often one of the problems we have, is that we get caught up in our feelings. We always have to honor our feelings, but feelings are very fleeting. They're not reliable. They can be just like foam. We can have a strong feeling, and then in the next moment it's a weak feeling. We can have a good feeling, and in the next moment it's a bad feeling. We can have a feeling about somebody that's very sweet, and we can have a feeling about that same person in the next moment and it's very angry. These are just small examples. To be guided by feelings is very unreliable. What is reliable is our intention. When we rely on our intention, feelings will come and go. We have good feelings, bad feelings and undesirable feelings, but they don't carry us off of our path because our path is guided by our intentions. That's what makes practice difficult because we want to go with our feelings. People say, "When I'm happy I like to go to the zendo." Or, "When I'm feeling awful I like to go to the zendo because it makes me feel better." Practice is, no matter how I'm feeling, when it's time to go to the zendo and sit zazen, I go to the zendo and sit. Whether I'm feeling good or bad, laughing or crying—having a good time or having a bad time—when it's time to sit zazen, let go of everything and at midnight you turn into a pumpkin. You just do what your intention is. And then we begin to see into the nature of feelings. We begin to be able to examine the true nature of feelings. We see how feelings come and go and are influenced by our ego. What makes us most unhappy, is trying to get happy. When we try to get happy, we become really unhappy, because even if we get happy for a little while, we get unhappy again. Then we try to get happy again. This continual effort to get happy makes us very unhappy.

When people ask me, "How can I renew my practice, how can I sustain my practice, how can I feel encouraged in my practice?" I say, just renew your intention. Just follow your intention. Don't get pulled off by "I'm sleepy, or I'm lazy, or I found something really interesting to take up my time." These are difficult things to deal with in practice. We're going in the direction of practice and one day we wake up and realize that we are going in some other direction. We were going this way and suddenly, we're going that way. "How did I get here?" We got here through either our intentions, or through our feelings, or through our delusions, because we create our life. We create our own life, in cooperation with the world around us, moment after moment. When we are off course though, it's possible to correct ourselves, it's possible to come back on course.

But what is the course? What am I supposed to be doing? The best way to know what we are supposed to be doing is to head for the zero point. When you reach the zero point, then you can see all the way around, you have a good standpoint from which to view your life. But as long as we are standing on five, six, or seven, then everywhere we look, we only have a partial view. So it's really hard to get a broad perspective or to start from a new place. In practice we're always starting from zero. It has no special shape or form. Our lives have no fixed shape or form, but when we step out and do something, we take on a shape and a form, and we give shape and form to our life. So practice, and our intention to practice, is to continually keep coming back to the zero point. This is the "no special" viewpoint, the viewpoint of impartiality. If we follow our intention, we can avoid falling into partiality. Partiality is influenced by, "I want, I don't want; I like, I don't like." As soon as I fall into, "I want, I don't want; I like, I don't like," I fall into partiality and can't see completely. This is a cause for suffering.

Master Mumon comments, "If you can see this "other," or "that one," and distinguish him or her clearly, then it is like encountering your grandfather at the crossroads. You will not need to ask somebody whether or not you are right." "Encountering your grandfather at the crossroads," does not necessarily mean meeting your granddaddy, but meeting your true essence, your true face. In his verse, Mumon then instructs, "Don't draw another's bow, don't ride another's horse, don't discuss another's faults, don't explore another's affairs." In other words, rely on yourself. How do you rely on yourself? "Don't draw another's bow" means "do draw your own bow, do ride your own horse, do look at your own faults, and be careful about your own affairs." Mumon means that you should be very careful about your own affairs. So what is "drawing your

own bow mean?" Drawing your bow is setting up your intention. What is your true course, and what will you follow? Decide, then once you decide, stay with it.

Sometimes people say, "I can't make a decision, I don't know which way to go." But we have to make decisions, we have to go some way. Sometimes even making the wrong decision can be better than making no decision. Even if you make a wrong decision, you have a way to go. And then you have the opportunity to study your life from the perspective of that wrong decision and correct it. You have an opportunity to reach reality through your wrong decision. But we may think, "Reality is not what I'm looking for, what I'm looking for is happiness." If you're looking for happiness, then you probably can't make up your mind. If you're looking for reality, it's okay to make a wrong decision. It's no problem, because you will fall into reality. Reality will hit you over the head. Better, of course, to make a good decision. But sometimes the wrong decision is the right decision. When you really have a good understanding of what is practice, then wherever you are, whatever you are doing, is the place of practice. If you have this understanding, whether you make a right decision or wrong decision, you have a way to go. "Don't ride another's horse." Yes. Ride your own horse. How do you ride your own horse? What's your effort? The horse is like the vehicle, an animal that makes it work. Hop on your own horse. Don't wait for someone and don't rely on someone else. Carry your own load. Make your own rhythm in life, but always in harmonious relation to your surroundings.

In order to practice, we have to have some limitation, because the more we do and the more we have, the more watered down and superficial or shallow our life can become. When we have less to rely on, we're forced to go deeper into our life. When we come to practice we have to put some limitation on our life. It's like a bowl of water. If you put water into a flat dish it doesn't have much depth but if you have a nice deep bowl, it will hold a lot of water. It has form and some shape to it. Practice has to have some form and shape. It can hold some deep water, and when there are turbulent waves, there is a ballast of calm deep water. This is one of the things that people struggle with in our society because there's so much opportunity. The curse of our society is that there is the overabundance of opportunity, and it keeps us strung out. The things that only a king would have had in the past, every one of us can have today. It's amazing. The kings were some of the most distraught people because they had so much and had to protect it. It's hard to put limitations on our self, but it's necessary. If we want to practice we have to put some limitation on our life. And this can be a big relief because then we don't have to run after everything we see. We don't have to own everything that's advertised. One TV set might be enough.

In the verse, Master Mumon says, "Don't discuss another's faults." That's right. Just look to yourself, examine your own life. Don't blame others for what's happening to you. "You made me angry." No. "You did something and I got angry." "You walked by and made me fall in love with you." No. "You walked by, and I fell in love." In other words, take responsibility for your own feelings, take responsibility for your own thoughts and your own actions. Don't blame. If you can refrain from blaming, then you can examine yourself in a very clear way, no matter what, even if someone else is in the wrong. This is a very important point. Even if someone else appears to be at fault, don't fall into fault-finding. See if you can do that. See what that brings up for you. Don't explore another's affairs, just take care of your own life. Don't gossip, don't pick into someone else's life. Just make sure that you're doing the right thing. Make sure you're following your own intentions. As the saying goes, if you want the tiger's cub, you have to go into the tiger's cave. If you really want something, you have to put yourself on the line. But better to just do it, without looking for something. This is one secret of practice. The koan "mu" is one of the fundamental koans, maybe the first koan many Zen students receive. If you understand "mu," you'll have kensho. But if you recite "mu" all day long with the idea of having kensho, it won't work. If you think that by sitting zazen you'll become enlightened, you will be waiting a long time. Just sit.

Dogen Zengi has a saying from the *Genjokoan*: "To study the Buddha Way, is to study the self. To study the self, is to forget the self." If you want to study yourself, you have to forget your self. This is *Genjokoan*. How do I study the self by forgetting the self? Another way of saying this is: to attain the Buddhadharmas is to attain the self, and to attain the self, is to forget the self. According to Buddhadharmas, there is no self. This self is not exactly a self. It's a dynamic flowing of elements. A dynamic flowing of Buddha nature. There is nothing you can grasp. So to forget the self is to realize. It is to forget our idea of self, to forget our idea of who we are. It's to turn toward our true self. The only way to do that is to not

hanker after anything. Then we can see clearly who we are. And when we bow, we bow in gratitude. When we have some insight we bow in gratitude. That is all. We bow to our true self.

Instead of trying to get something from practice, or from the Dharma, it's better to serve the Dharma. Buddha and Maitreya are servants of the Dharma. "It." What is the example of Buddha? To serve the Dharma, to serve truth, that's all there is. When you serve, you're fed. There is the old story of the long chopsticks. What is the difference between heaven and hell? In hell, there are people seated at a long table, and they have a wonderful meal piled up on the table, but they have these long chopsticks. The chopsticks are so long that when they pick up the food they can't get it to their mouths. Heaven is exactly the same place, same people, same food, and same chopsticks. But when they pick up the food with the chopsticks they put it into the mouths of the people on the other side of the table. I'll end with Dogen's story. He says, "To study the Buddha Way is to study the self and to study the self is to forget the self. Just to forget the self is to be confirmed by the 10,000 things. When actualized by myriad things, your body-mind as well as the body-mind of others drops away. No trace of realization remains, and this no trace continues endlessly."

(Second of two parts)

January 18, 1992

BZC Library Update... From time to time a sangha member looks for a book and finds it neither on the shelf nor checked out with its circulation card in the box. This is discouraging. Please follow the established procedure for checking out books: 1) sign and date the card; 2) place the card in the front section of the card box; 3) return the book within one month. And remember, only members and friends should check out books. Think of meticulous practice with the library books as an expression of the precept to not take what is not given. Thank you!

On a different note... In appreciation of the beautiful children and happy parents at BZC, we are beginning a Children's Section of books on Buddhist and Asian cultural themes. There are just a few children's books now; the librarian welcomes suggestions of more titles. Until some shelf rearrangement can happen, the children's books are to the right of the books by and about

women in Buddhism on the east wall of the community room.



Jikido....Jikido is a wonderful way to care for our temple and feel a part of the sangha. Twice a week, a jikido cleans the zendo by, among other things, brushing the zafus and zabutons, dusting, and cleaning the zendo floor. Jikidos sign up for one week of service and may share the work with a partner. Sign-up is on the bulletin board in the courtyard and training is available. If you have questions, contact **Peter Carpentieri at 428-1028.**



Gasshos....Speaking of caring for our temple, work leader Andrea Pratt wishes to thank to Sam Martinez, Gina, Mark Ray, Bill Graves, Rob Schwartz, Ko Blix, and Ken Powellson for contributing their time and energy on

the 1933 Russell alleyway project. After a recent Saturday program, these folks moved nearly two yards of gravel in preparation for the construction of a brick walkway. Special thanks also to Lucero Dorado, Erik Ferry, and Ken Knabb for the initial groundbreaking and earth-moving. Thanks also to Jeff Pfueger and friends for hauling away quite a bit of sweet smelling, worm-laden BZC earth. They'll be using it for some raised beds in their home garden.



Solicitation....New Zendo Manager Malcolm Fairbrother is seeking donations of old pictures or photos with Zen, Buddhist, or related content (nature scenes, Japanese gardens, etc.). Unwanted magazines, journals, pamphlets, or the like would be fine. He hopes to use them in making up new signs on the patio bulletin board regarding upcoming zendo events. If you can help, please put your contribution in his mailbox on the community room porch, talk to him after zazen, or get in touch with him at 841-0158. Many thanks!

Berkeley Zen Center
 1931 Russell Street
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Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered on Saturdays from 9:15 to 11:15. The cost is \$5 per family. Note that the childcare schedule is tentative. Childcare is not offered if no one's planning to come, so please call Laurie the Thursday before to let us know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie Senauke, 845-2215.

April 6	Buddha's Birthday
April 13	Childcare
April 20	Childcare
April 27	Childcare
May 4	Childcare
May 11	No program
May 18	Childcare
May 25	Childcare
June 1	Childcare
June 8	Childcare
June 15	Childcare
June 22	No program
June 29	Childcare