



Berkeley Zen Center



August 2002 Newsletter

Welcome new members Dean Bradley.



Art at BZC... Beginning in July, BZC member Gerry Oliva fills a new position at BZC, the art coordinator. Her responsibilities will be many and include: rotating the art on display in the community room and the Zendo; inventorying and obtaining insurance coverage for artwork owned by BZC; framing and maintaining the art; and soliciting donations or loans of Zen related art from BZC members and friends. You can contact Gerry at 510- 652-7217 or e-mail dyleli@itsa.ucsf.edu with any questions or concerns.

In addition, in order to make the art more accessible to the BZC community Gerry will also be writing short descriptions of particular pieces of artwork periodically for the newsletter. Here is her first installment:

The circle scroll now hanging in the community room over the altar is by Hirata Seiko. The photograph nearest to the bathroom shows Suzuki Roshi with Monica Linde at Tassajara. For the next six weeks there will also be two new pieces on display. The first is an orange and black painting of Bodhidharma by Yanagida Sensei, one of the foremost Buddhist scholars in Japan. He gave it to Sojun when he

was at SFZC giving a seminar on Zen. The second is a photo of Suzuki Roshi at Tassajara watering bamboo. We don't know the photographer. We are grateful to BZC member Jim Storey for doing a great job of framing these.

For the next 6 weeks in the zendo the dragon scroll, a favorite among sangha members will be on display. It is the work of Kanshi Sojun, better known as Deiryu (1895-1954). He served

(continued)

August & September Schedule

Founders' Ceremony
Thursday, 8-1, 6:20pm
Friday, 8-2, 6:40am

Mountains & Rivers
Friday, 8-2 through Sunday, 8-4

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 8-24, 9:30am

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 8-10, 5:00am to 9:10pm

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 8-24, noon to 4pm

BZC Campout
Saturday, 8-17 through Sunday, 8-18

Labor Day Sitting
Saturday, 8-31 through Monday, 9-2

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 9-15, 8:30am to 12:30pm



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 orientation, age, and physical ability. May all beings realize their true nature.

as abbot of a number of well-known temples in Japan including Kaisei-Ji and Empuku-Ji, a major Rinzai training center. He is best known for his delightful and fanciful paintings of begging monks and animals. Dragons are popular icons that are frequently represented in sculptures and paintings in Buddhist temples and Pagodas. Dragon serpents are mostly benevolent deities of the waters, living in the sea, rivers, lakes and clouds and are associated with equinoxes. In China and Japan ritual dragon dances are performed to provoke rainfall. They are also considered to be the depositories of the *cintamani*, a magic jewel, often a pearl, which bestows treasures and gives knowledge. In Japan dragons are called Nagas, creatures closely related to the snakelike dragons of Hindu folklore. According to legend they took the great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna to their realm where he rediscovered the lost Prajnaparmita texts- the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, the fundamental texts of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. In another story, the Naga king Elapatra, disguised himself as a human king to listen to a sermon of the Buddha.



BZC Organization chart... In this newsletter you'll find a copy of the BZC Organizational chart. So if you are interested in understanding the administrative structure here at BZC, what positions are available to take care of our sangha and who is filling them, check it out. Many gasshos to Ross Blum and Gregory Mayfield for all the work they put into creating the org chart.



Reminder....When using either of the bathrooms at BZC,. Please make sure to turn of the ventilation fan before leaving.



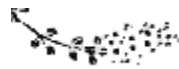
During the last week of July, we received the sad news from Switzerland that Kobun Chino Roshi drowned along with his five year old daughter while attempting to rescuer her. Kobun came as a young man to America around 1968 at the invitation of the Los Altos Zendo. He was sidetracked to Tassajara by Suzuki Roshi who wanted to have an experienced priest in residence. After some years at Tassajara, he finally arrived at the Los Altos Zendo and served as teacher. Kobun was one of the most beloved teachers in America, but it became apparent that he was not willing to be pinned down to any one place. He helped establish practice on the peninsula as well as in New Mexico and proved to be elusive in both places. His teaching was profound and often had a poetic quality. He was generous and compassionate and in his later life devoted himself to his young wife and three children. He also has two grown children by his previous marriage. A memorial service will be held at San Francisco Zen center around the first of September.



Excerpt from a talk by Kobun Chino....

The main subject [of Denko-e] is how to become a transmitter of actual light, life light. Practice takes place to shape your whole ability to reflect the light coming through you, and to generate, re-generate, your system so the light increase its power. Each precept is a remark about hard climbing, maybe climbing down. You don't use the precepts for accomplishing your own personality, or fulfilling your dream of your highest image. You don't use the precepts in that way. The precepts are the reflected light world of one precept, which is Buddha's mind itself, which is the presence of Buddha. Zazen is the first formulation of the accomplishment of Buddha existing....

The more you sense the rareness and value of your own life, the more you realize that how you use it, how you manifest it, is all your responsibility. We face such a big task, so naturally such a person sits down for awhile. It's not an intended action, it is a natural action.



The following essay by Sojun appeared in 1987 in the journal *Udumbara*, a publication of Minnesota Zen Center. It was revised for the newsletter.

Thanks for your request to make a response to the articles in *Udumbara* concerning practice forms or formal practice. In your letter, you specifically asked for my response to Shoten-sensei's remark about zen practice beginning and ending with imitation. So I will say something about my own experience with my teacher, Suzuki-roshi.

When I first came to the zendo the practice forms were foreign to me, but at the same time I respected them and wished to do them properly. It wasn't long before I realized that the teaching was right there within the forms. More properly, the forms took on meaning according to my willingness to enter into them wholeheartedly. It seemed to me that the meaning of the Heart Sutra was directly connected to the wholeheartedness with which I was chanting it. But even though I enjoyed the forms, I realized that there is another side; daily life in the world, which is not formal in the zendo sense, but nevertheless has its own forms which are very strict. Suzuki-roshi taught us that we should be able to freely enter the forms of either side with the same spirit. We often hear that there is no special form of zen. But in order to recognize something it has to have a form. In the zendo there is a recognizable form of zen practice. You can hear it, see it, touch it, smell it, taste it and think about it. But those forms are only the forms of zen when we enter them with the proper spirit and bring them to life. Only then can we call it "Zen Practice." But since there is no special form of "Zen Practice," we can use all the forms we encounter; enter into them and bring them to life as forms of practice. On one side the practice is formalized and recognizable and invites us to enter. And on the other, we are challenged to use the forms we encounter as forms of practice. Suzuki-roshi said that our practice of *Genjokoan* is bound up with the awareness of our life in the world as it is extended from zazen.

So in a sense we are always involved in "formal practice;" in coursing through the emptiness of all forms.

I really enjoyed imitating Suzuki-roshi. I always tried to do things the way he did them, in much the same way that I followed the forms in the zendo. I found myself talking like him, and my movements took on some of his characteristics. This was true of many of his disciples and I see it in the disciples of other teachers as well. It just seemed like a natural way to do things. Studying with him was like an apprenticeship. Suzuki-roshi himself said once that imitating the teacher is a very common practice. He said that sometimes you can't tell the student from the teacher. The student walks in the

teacher's footsteps. The object, of course, is that after the student fully absorbs the teacher, the student becomes fully him or her self and develops in his or her own way.

The great jazz trumpet player Dizzy Gillespie absorbed and played Roy Eldridge note for note, then went on to develop his own unique style. This is to internalize the teaching and the teacher and on that foundation to find your own way, your own voice. Sometimes it is said that the student should surpass the teacher. I have yet to see that happen, but I will say at least that the student should become his own person. The danger is that the student will stick to imitating the teacher without finding her self. So sometimes the teacher must push the student out on his own. Whenever I came to Suzuki-roshi with a question or problem he would inevitably turn it into a koan for me: "Oh, I'm sorry, you came with a question and I've given you another problem." Then he would laugh. The connection was established and I was turned out on my own. I think it was the laugh that allowed me to see my problem in a much bigger context.

I loved Suzuki-roshi, so I didn't mind imitating him. But someone else might find a good teacher and not be drawn in the same way. It can be difficult for a woman to imitate a male teacher and vice versa. Not impossible, though and also not necessary.

I think that through our association with Suzuki-roshi, we his students learned through his manner not only his way, but the unspoken character of the many past ancestors, and that there is something in that which cannot be learned in any other way. To study with Suzuki-roshi was to study him and also his way of doing things which had been passed from generation to generation.

He said, "I'm not such a good zen master, but I have my own pace. If you want to walk faster than I do, please go ahead of me." I have never felt that I could come up to his stature. But the most valuable experience for me was that he allowed me to enter his world and at the same time encouraged me to find my own way.

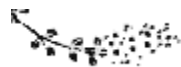
So even though Suzuki-roshi is gone, I still continue to learn his teaching from that depth of intimacy which provided me with confidence to go on by myself.

Although there is always a lot of pressure to develop our own "American Way," Suzuki-roshi always warned us not to be too hasty. He felt that an "American Way" would naturally develop if we continued to absorb the practice as it has been given to us. He felt that there was a lot of ego in our desire to have it our own way. And he felt some lack of respect and acknowledgement on our part towards the compassionate ancestors who contributed so much toward the development of the practice.

Suzuki-roshi's own practice was always very simple and seemingly informal in the midst of formality. The formal practice we got from him was just the bare bones. I met a *Tendai* abbot who said that he felt Suzuki-roshi had given us the most simplified forms so that everyone could do it. He said that in Japan the Soto School has the most elaborate and ornate kind of chanting of all the schools, and that Suzuki-roshi gave us only the Heart Sutra to chant in a monotone. All the other chants and forms were given to us by Tatsugami-roshi when he introduced the monastic practice to Tassajara in 1970.

My observation is, that even though our practice has been for lay people as well as monastics, the forms are always monastic or semi-monastic. What is basically lacking are forms which validate and make recognizable our lay life. I am a priest, but the people with whom I practice are mostly lay people. I can identify with both sides, and indeed live a life which includes both sides. I am as much at home at a Tassajara practice period as I am practicing with my family in the city. But many students live their lives involved with the world, and there is a real need to develop forms which help us to recognize and appreciate the "lotus in muddy water."

The ideal is to have uprightness and mindfulness within our informality, and find some ease and settled-ness within our formal practice. This is something we learn through zazen. And through zazen we become one with our teachers and the dharma and little by little find our own way.





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.

August 3	Childcare
August 10	No program
August 17	Childcare
August 17-18	BZC Campout!
August 24	Childcare
August 31	No program



CLEAR WATER ZENDO WHAT IS IT?

I am writing to introduce you to Clear Water Zendo, the Vallejo Zen Center. I am the priest there. I live above the zendo in an apartment. Most of you know me as a priest and practice leader at BZC, ordained by Mel in 1994. Berkeley is my home temple and I trained for nine years within the S.F. Zen Center system. I left SFZC in 1999 to open the zendo here in Vallejo. At that time I also began to be more of a regular again at BZC. The zendo officially opened in January of 2000 when Sojun officiated at a blessing ceremony and many of you attended. You can see the zendo and garden on our website: www.vallejozencenter.org.

Clear Water is tiny compared to Berkeley. We have about fifteen regular participants and maybe another ten who come sporadically. There is morning zazen when I am not at BZC and I often sit alone then. Suzuki Roshi looks over my shoulder so I feel I am sitting with him and doing what he did long ago in San Francisco. There is also zazen in the early evening on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We have a Saturday morning program, which is a simplified version of what we do at BZC. There is a one-day sitting or a short sesshin most months. We're considering doing a five-day sesshin in March next year. The request for longer sittings has come out of the group.

On Monday night there is a discussion group that grew out of the sitting group that I started in 1998, a little over a year before I left SFZC. The group began by studying Zen Mind Beginners' Mind and now we are studying the precepts. Because this is the "home group," we do the full moon ceremony on the Monday night closest to the full moon. Often folks come from BZC to help out by being kokyo. I have trained some sangha members to be doan for the ceremony and regular kokyo but I don't feel we're quite ready yet for a kokyo for the ceremony. So I am grateful to those who make the trip to be kokyo. Before the ceremony we check in with one another about how we're doing in relation to the precepts and/or our intention to practice. We also celebrate Segaki on the closest Monday night. We make a Mexican "Day of the Dead" altar and put photos of those who have died on it, along with marigolds and lots of other wonderful stuff. Jin Young encourages us to come in costume and we're working on it.

On most Wednesday evenings, there is a class. We've been studying the Sandokai lectures in Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness for quite awhile. We expect to finish in July. I try to teach basic Buddhism often. I have done the Four Noble Truths and in September I will teach the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sutra. Probably we will study the Genjo Koan after that.

Saturday mornings there is early zazen at 7:30 followed by service and informal breakfast. There is zazen and zazen instruction at 9:30, followed by lecture and discussion, tea and cookies. I try to invite special speakers once a

month or so. Mel comes at least once a year. We've also had Alan, Michael Wenger, Melody Ermachild, Sue Moon, Wendy Johnson, Shohaku Okamura, Vicki Austin and Paul Haller. Maylie suggested I offer work practice from time to time so each month we have one Saturday morning at which lecture is short and related to work practice. Then we work taking care of the zendo and the garden.

The one-day and longer sittings are less formal than at BZC but the quiet is the same. Of course, they are not so crowded and I enjoy the spaciousness. We eat simplified oryoki during longer sittings. The form we use was developed by Maylie at Arcata. We try to keep the food very simple so folks don't miss much zazen. Sometimes people stay overnight and sleep in the zendo.

Many of you came and helped with the garden, either in laying the patio pavers or in helping buy the plants. It is lovely now and will be even more beautiful when the plants begin to spread out and occupy the space. You can see pictures of the garden work and the garden itself on our website. A sangha member donated a fountain. It is

particularly welcome in the warm Vallejo evenings. A friend donated a densho bell, made from an oxygen tank. It sounds lovely and is quite beautiful as it is rusted. It looks as if it had always been there, hanging from one of the pepper trees. We had an official garden blessing ceremony on June 1 and Sojun officiated.

I hope folks from Berkeley Zen Center will feel welcome to visit Clear Water. It is not so far away, only 20 miles on the freeway. It takes less time to get to Vallejo than it does to get to Green Gulch, or even S.F. Zen Center, if you count the time looking for a parking space. Most of the sangha members here have been practicing for many years but they are not so familiar with formal Zen practice. So, it is great when more experienced students come and sit with us, particularly for one-day or longer sittings. I feel very supported by the BZC Sangha and I'd love to share this small temple with you. Please come enjoy your breath in Vallejo.

Mary Mocine

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