



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2003 Newsletter

Welcome to new Members John Mason and Dennis Saxon, and to new Friend Mary Duyvendale.



Practice Period!... Our annual practice period will begin Saturday, **May 10 and last through Sunday, June 22.** Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding those obligations "outside the gate."

Ekai Uji/Cherishing Ocean-Being Time Laurie Senauke will be Shuso/Head Student this year, sharing Sojun Roshi's seat as an example for all of us. If you are participating, please make sure to fill out the application form included in this newsletter and return to the Shuso **before May 6.** You should have received a Practice Period schedule in your April newsletter. You can also find applications and schedules at the community bulletin board.



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.

May & June Schedule

One-Day Sitting/
Open Practice Period
Saturday, 5-10, 5am to 9:10pm

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday, 5-25

Founders Ceremony
Monday, 5-5, 6:20pm
Tuesday, 5-6, 6:40am

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 5-17, 9:30am

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

Lay Ordination/Jukai
Saturday, 6-7

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 6-8, 8am to noon

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6-14, 9:30am

Five-Day Sesshin/
End Practice Period
Wednesday, 6-18 through Sunday, 6-22

Shuso Hossen
Sunday, 6-22

My Window to the World

For the past year
I've spent most of my time
Sitting in this chair by the window
I love this old chair
With its fibered frayed embrace
It's just the right height

I have a birds-eye view of the sidewalk
Almost up to the corner on this side
I watch people come and go to zazen
I get to see who comes with who
And who leaves with who
The blossoming of new romance
The end of an affair

And the kids
I feel like I see them grow by the quarter inch
And mature each day
It feels like I've gotten to know them
Far better, from my perch here, than I ever did
When I'd pass them on the street
And say "Hi"

I've grown so fond of this tree
I sit here and watch it change from day to day
Minute to minute
In the Spring I get to see warrior buds
Breaking through the bark
And each tiny new leaf
As it springs loose from the bud

There's a family of sparrows that nest here
See that hoppy guy on the top branch
So filled with joy
The whole family comes by to visit
We get migrating birds here too
I never knew that

This chair is getting so old
The cords are splitting
See here on the side
I saw a similar one last week
At Cost Plus
It seems silly to buy a new one now
What do you think?

For Dolly Gatozzi, March 9th, 2003
From Gerry Oliva



Notice.... Starting in May, BZC resident Mark Boydston is available for handyman jobs. If you're interested please contact him at 647-3457.



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.

May 3	Childcare
May 10	No program
May 17	Childcare
May 24	Childcare
May 31	Childcare

BZC PRACTICE PERIOD APPLICATION

Spring 2003 — May 10 to June 22

Please work from the schedule posted on the bulletin board or in the newsletter. Fill in or circle the choices listed below that describe your commitment, noting the required events. Participate as fully as you can. Return this form to Laurie Senauke's mail slot by Monday, May 6.

IMPORTANT!!! IN ADDITION TO THIS APPLICATION, YOU MUST SIGN UP ON THE ZENDO BULLETIN BOARD FOR CLASS AND FOR ALL SESSHINS.

REQUIREMENTS

- Participants should attend at least three sittings per week at BZC (morning or evening).
- Please attend the opening ceremony on Saturday evening, May 10 at 7:30, unless you have circumstances that make this impossible.
- Please attend all the Saturdays you have marked out. The cooks depend on numbers from this form. You are encouraged to attend them all.
- Participants are expected to have practice discussion with a senior student at least once during the practice period.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

ZAZEN

I will attend AM zazen on these days of the week _____

I will attend PM zazen on these days of the week _____

SATURDAY MORNINGS

I will attend all/part on _____

ONE DAY SITTING

I will/will not attend the sitting on Saturday, May 10
(Please note: You must sign up on the zendo bulletin board for sesshin.)

SESSHIN (June 18-June 22)

I will /will not participate in the 5 day sesshin.
(Please note: You must sign up on the zendo bulletin board. There is a three-day minimum.)

THURSDAY NIGHT CLASS

I will/will not attend the class (May 15 through June 12)
(Please sign up on the zendo bulletin board for class.)

MID-PRACTICE PERIOD DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT

I will/will not attend (Saturday, June 7 6:00pm)

SHUSO DHARMA DIALOGUE CEREMONY

I will/will not attend (Sunday, June 22 at 7pm).

TEA WITH THE HEAD STUDENT

I would like to schedule a tea. I prefer to have it (a) in a small group, or (b) as a private walk.

I have the following times available _____

I have considered this commitment carefully and feel it is realistic for me, taking into consideration the other things I need to do in my life.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

On the Metta Sutra

(Part One)

Prajna, or wisdom is the foundation, and *Metta* (loving-kindness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upeksha* (equanimity) are the venues of its expression. I don't care how enlightened we think we are, how much we know, or how many koans we pass, if we don't have this well-rounded embodiment, it's not enlightened practice. If we don't know how to take care of others and control our emotions and feelings with equanimity and settled-ness, free from reactivity, then everything we know doesn't amount to much.

This is the way the Metta Sutta (or Sutra) starts out in this translation: "This is what should be accomplished by the one who is wise." "The one who is wise" means the one in whom *prajna* is manifest. The next line is, "Who seeks what is good and has obtained peace." Peace here can mean nirvana or "cooled off," grounded in equanimity and ceasing to be attached to greed, ill will, and delusion.

"Let one be strenuous," is the next phrase. We can say various things about this. Dogen uses the phrase, "Exerting continuous effort, upright and sincere." In *zazen*, we don't lean to the left or to the right, we don't lean forward or backward. We just sit up straight. To sit up straight is to be upright in all of our activity. This is how we carry ourselves into the world. Whether or not we are able to cross our legs, uprightness is the essence of *zazen*. Even if we can't sit upright with our body, we can sit upright with our mind and with our attitude.

Then the sutra says, "Sincere, without pride, easily contented and joyous," which is what Dogen says in his fascicle on the eight aspects of an enlightened person. Another translation says, "Noble speech, gentle and humble." Those are also good qualities. This sutra is translated in many ways. Another translation says, "To have few duties and Right Livelihood." I think what this means is not to take on too much. Being able to say no when we know that something will be too much, and taking care of each thing we do thoroughly, knowing how much is enough. That's very hard to do. Suzuki Roshi did it very well. Some of us have trouble even with just a few duties while others can take on many things and handle them easily. Suzuki Roshi was a really great exemplar of how to do one thing at a time. Things would pile up on him, but without seeming to get busier he would thoroughly attend to just the next thing at hand. When he was doing what he was doing, that was the whole world and then we would just go on to the next thing.

One time Suzuki Roshi said in a lecture that the root of the character for patience is a kneeling man with a sword just touching his head. Patience has this kind of quality. No matter how many things are closing in, we maintain our composure. When "this" is done, we take care of "that." And always without giving in to anticipation. I often say to the doan, "Don't hold the beater in position while waiting for the next bell, just keep it in your lap. When it's time to ring the bell, then ring the bell. I know this is easier to say than do, but this is what we should be working toward. Not anticipating. Suzuki Roshi once said to me, "Don't be ahead of time or behind time." Similarly Dogen exhorts us, "Just be one with time."

Student: Is there a time to anticipate? We just went through a period where we were engaged in anticipation, wondering what would happen. [*The student is referring to an incident at Tassajara where the creek was overflowing and threatening to flood.*]

Sojun: That's why I said this is a great test with all that is going on. One moment we walk out headed for our usual activity, and then suddenly we find ourselves digging trenches to divert the

water that is coming down the road toward us. How do we respond? How do we let go of one thing and take up another without losing our composure? We can worry about it, but how do we stay settled? I like this kind of emergency. Something unexpected suddenly happens. This is where our practice is tested.

Student: Someone brought us a great gift a few weeks ago. He wore a t-shirt that said, "Worry is not preparation." It's easy to tell myself these things. But it's different when something is happening right then and there.

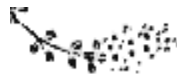
Sojun: When push comes to shove, you just do the best you can. It's like Katagiri Roshi said: In the Army, you train, you drill, you fire at the range and get all prepared. But when you go into battle, you just shoot, or freeze, or whatever. But you continue training. And when you are more seasoned, you become more settled when you act. You could say that this is our training.

Student: You can train for emergencies by sitting very still.

Sojun: Yes. If you have anticipation in zazen, it doesn't work. If you have a goal in zazen, it doesn't work. Just settle in the present activity with composure. When this freedom becomes so much a part of you it becomes your mode. Zazen is the teacher. None of us is perfect. It takes time, you can't just make it happen. Master Quei-Shan said, "It's like walking in the fog. Unawares your clothes get wet."

(The first of several Parts.)

Tassajara, Spring 1995



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