



Berkeley Zen Center



March 2004 Newsletter

The Faithful Fools Street Ministry presents –
THE WITNESS

Friday evening 26 March 7:30pm in the Zendo

“THE WITNESS” is a one woman performance with Rebecca Noon, written and directed by Martha Boesing in collaboration with Anna Brown Griswold, and produced by The Faithful Fools Street Ministry in San Francisco.

The play is based on the ten Ox-herding pictures of the ancient Zen Buddhist teachings and on the testimonies of street retreatants with the Faithful Fools. It follows the journey of a young woman onto the streets, who comes to understand that she must look at the assumptions of her own mind before she can enter wholeheartedly into the community of all living beings.

*Like the moon emerging from a cloud,
the Fool sees there is no separation
between one sentient being and another.
She goes onward no matter who may wish
to call her back.*

Faithful Fools Street Ministry

We are called to a ministry of presence that acknowledges each human's incredible worth. Aware of our judgments we seek to meet people where they are through the arts, education, advocacy and accompaniment. We participate in

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March & April Schedule

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

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 3-6, 9:30am

One-Day Sitting
Sunday, 3-14, 5:00 am to 5:30pm

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday, 3-21, 9 am to 4 pm

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 4-3, 5:00 am to 9:30pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 4-3, 9:30am

Founders Ceremony
Monday, 4-5, 6:20pm
Tuesday, 4-6, 6:40am

Buddha's Birthday and
BZC Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, 4-10

Mountains and Rivers
Saturday 4-24 through Sunday, 4-25

The Witness, from page 1

shattering myths about those living in poverty, *seeing the light*, courage, intelligence, strength and creativity of the people we encounter. We discover on the streets our common humanity through which celebration, community and healing occur.

Donation requested at the door in benefit for the work of the Faithful Fools.



Buddha's Birthday....This year, Buddha's Birthday will be celebrated at Berkeley Zen Center on **Saturday, 10 April**. Please feel free to bring your friends and families. Children, who embody our hope for enlightened peace and our hope for the planet's future, are especially encouraged to attend.

An important part of the ceremony is the baby Buddha's bower or arbor, which the sangha decorates every year. **The decorating of the flower bower will take place on Saturday morning between 7:30 and 8:30am!** Please bring flowers on Friday the 9th -- carnations, iris, daisies, ranunculus, sweet william, camelias, lilies are especially good – and leave them on the Community Room porch before evening zazen. Or bring treasures from your garden when you come Saturday morning.

For more information, contact BZC head chiden Ann Kennedy: 510.649.9432.

Kanzeon Sitting

This 9 am to 5 pm sitting is dedicated to those who have difficulty with the more rigorous typical sesshin schedule, but it is open to anyone. In fact, because the periods of zazen are shorter – 25 - 30 minutes – it is a good opportunity to experiment with a more challenging posture. Sign up on the bulletin board as usual. The sitting schedule will be designed based on the concerns of those who sign up, so let us know what you find most helpful. We will try to accommodate.



Caregivers' Conspiracy

Many of us find ourselves in a situation where parents or others are depending on us for some part of their physical and emotional care. Some are grieving the loss of loved ones whom we cared for. This is rather hidden work in our society, and can contribute to an unnecessary sense of isolation. Join us to conspire – as in *breathe together* – with potluck food and deep talk. The people you are concerned about do not have to be your parents! **Friday, March 22, 6:30 pm**, 1933 ½ Russell Street, the home of Marian and Baika.

For more information contact Laurie: 510.845.2215, lauries@kushiki.org.



Tuesday Dharma Group

A dharma group that meets on Tuesdays is looking for additional members. The group meets every third Tuesday at members' houses. Contact Jim Storey if you are interested: 510.434.9455, jamesbstorey@aol.com

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

Continued from last month

One thing we must be careful about in our practice is to not do something mechanically. Because our practice is somewhat repetitious, it's easy to not be fully present within our formal activity. Practice has a rhythm to it, and real practice – genuine practice – is to find the life in each moment; to bring to life each moment of practice, even though we do what seems like the same thing over and over again. There's no way that we can repeat something. Life does not repeat itself. Every time we sit, it's a completely new experience. Every time we work on something, it's a new experience. If we have a held-over idea about sitting, bowing, working, or relating, and stick to that, thinking, "I've done this before," in a way that separates ourselves from our present activity, then it's easy to miss the point.

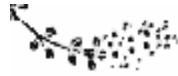
It is usual to engage in a practice in order to acquire something, or to benefit in some way. "What's in it for me?" "What am I getting out of this?" That kind of question is one-sided. It's not a fundamental question. It's a question that comes from the surface of our *small mind*. The direction of our practice springs from a different basis. The purpose of practice is to "commune with the pillar," – how to be at one with our self as an individual and our *big self* which has no boundary, to realize our *true self* as the whole universe, not just as an idea, but to actually merge. Suzuki Roshi talked about "Resuming our true nature." Dogen talked about it as taking the backward step to illuminate the self.

The fact is that the longer we practice, the less we acquire, which is the opposite of our usual goals. Usually the goal of our striving is "The harder we work, the more we get." That's the usual understanding of our effort. But in leading a life of *Dharma*, the harder we work, the more effort we exert, the more we are able to let go of until we can stand up, completely free. So the goal or the purpose of practice is to touch the fundamental reality; to see our life as it really is, free from partiality and ignorance, and to live according to that understanding. According to our understanding of *Buddha dharma*, we all share the life of one great being which manifests in endless forms and ways.

It is nice to be able to come to a place where we can sit *zazen* and relax, and it may help us in our stressful life. But when we begin to practice, it is necessary to stretch our self completely. And at some point we have to exert enough effort to go beyond what we feel is our limit. Then we can experience our self completely. The only way we can do that is to merge with our activity. *Sesshin* gives us that opportunity. At that time our entire body/mind is fully and harmoniously functioning to its utmost.

Zen practice is not always extreme. Sometimes we are very casual, but we have to be willing to put our self in that position, and to engage at the extreme limit of our ability. This is where we find our true intimacy. What we acquire is just our self, nothing more or less. When Dogen Zenji returned from China they asked him, "Well, what did you find, what did you come back with?" He said, "I brought nothing, except the understanding that my nose is vertical and my eyes are horizontal."

To be continued...



Welcome...

Welcome to new Friends Mildred Lowther and Lynne Hofmann, and to Friend Mary Duryee who has become a Member.



Movie Night...

Join us **Friday 9 April 6:45 pm** for a video from the archives of Herzog Productions and several videos about San Francisco Zen Center.



Berkeley Zen Center Saturday Ride Share...

Having trouble getting to Zen Center on Saturdays? Want to save gas by carpooling? Need a ride or want to offer a ride for whatever reason? Please consider signing up to connect with a driver or rider in your area who wants to arrive at the same time for the Saturday program.

We especially encourage you to call if your situation that makes it difficult for you to get BZC. We would like everyone to have access to practice at BZC if at all possible.

To participate see the sign-up sheet at BZC.

Call either Greg Denny: 510.595.8162 or Clay Taylor: 510.843.1991.



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.



Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered on Saturdays from 9:15 am to 11:15 am. The cost is \$5 per family. Note that the childcare schedule is tentative. Childcare is not offered if no one is planning to come, so please call Laurie the Thursday before to let her know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie Senauke: 510.845.2215.

March 6	Childcare
March 13	Childcare
March 20	Childcare
March 27	Childcare
April 3	No program
April 10	Buddha's Birthday
April 17	Childcare
April 24	Childcare
May 1	Childcare
May 8	No program
May 15	Childcare
May 22	Childcare
May 29	Childcare

Berkeley Zen Center
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