



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2004 Newsletter

Schedule Changes...

- Practice period Opening Ceremony is **11am on 8 May**.
- Practice Period Skit Night and Dinner has been moved from Tuesday, 1 June to **Friday 4 June**.
- Shuso Hossen on **20 June** is at **4:30pm**.



Practice Period... Our annual practice period will begin **Saturday, 8 May and last through Sunday, 20 June**. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding those obligations "outside the gate."

Baika Ensho/Plum Blossom Complete Illumination Andrea Pratt 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 available by the courtyard bulletin board and return to the Shuso **before May 6**. You should have received a Practice Period schedule in your April newsletter.



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

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

Founders' Ceremony
Monday, 5-3, 6:20 pm
Tuesday, 5-4, 6:40 am

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

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 5-9, 8 am to noon

Practice Period Opening Ceremony
Saturday, 5-8, 11 am

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

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6-5, 9:30 am

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday, 6-6, 9 am to 5 pm

Lay Ordination/Jukai
Saturday, 6-12

Five-Day Sesshin/
End Practice Period
Wednesday, 6-16 through Sunday, 6-20

Shuso Hossen
Sunday, 6-22, 4:30 pm

Practice Period Class...

This year's Practice Period Class is on Dogen's *Gakudo Yojin-shu* (Points to Watch in Buddhist Training)

Sojun Roshi will be teaching the class. Class dates are following Thursdays:

May 13, 20, 27, and June 3, 10. Time is 7:30pm.

Dogen completed the *Gakudo Yojin-shu* for his disciples at Kosho-ji in 1234, seven years after he had returned from China. Whereas in the *Fukanzazen-gi* the primary emphasis is on a practical explanation of how to do *zazen*, in this later work Dogen gives a more thorough explanation of the spirit in which not only *zazen* but all of one's actions are to be done.

Beginning with an exhortation to awaken the *Bodhi-mind*, Dogen goes on to discuss the importance of training under a true master, as well as such topics as the relationship of training to enlightenment and the significance of the practice of *zazen*. Although the content of the *Shobo-genzo* is philosophically more profound, the *Gakudo Yojin-shu* is highly esteemed as a training guide in the Soto Zen sect by those who are actually engaged in daily practice of the Way. Among Dogen's numerous works, this one in particular deserves repeated reading, ideally in conjunction with the deepening of one's own practice; for although relatively short, it presents nothing less than the blueprint of enlightenment.



Hold This Date!

Birthday festivities for our abbot Sojun Roshi's 75th will be held on **4 July, afternoon and evening**. More details to follow, but there will be a hike and, of course, food.



Directory Change...

Ko Blix has a new address: 2218 Prince Street
Apt A Berkeley CA 94705

New Member Entrance Ceremony...

On **Monday Morning, 3 May**, we will offer a ceremony to welcome new members. It will be held at **6:20 am**, at the time of the Monday morning talk. All are welcome to join this ceremony of incense offering, bows, a jundo where older members bow to new members, and words from Sojun Roshi.



Kanzeon Sitting...

On 6 June we will offer another Kanzeon Sitting. This 9 to 5 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. Bring your own bag lunch. 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.

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.

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| May 1 | Childcare |
| May 8 | No program |
| May 15 | Childcare |
| May 22 | Childcare |
| May 29 | Childcare |
| June 5 | Childcare |
| June 12 | Childcare |
| June 19 | No program |
| June 26 | TBA |

BZC Documentary Update...

We recently held an anonymous survey to see how folks were feeling about Ed Herzog's BZC documentary project (see February Newsletter article for more details about project).

Survey takers could indicate whether they were comfortable with the project, uncomfortable with it, or willing to give the project a try—with a few misgivings.

Here are the results:

- 22 said they were comfortable
- 2 said they were uncomfortable
- 5 were willing to give it a try.

There were also a few comments, which we will try to publish next month.

In other documentary news, Ed did some filming at Buddha's Birthday Celebration. He has received non-profit-501(c) status for the project under the auspices of the Film Arts Foundation. If you would like to help Ed with the project, financially or otherwise, please contact him. Also, the Board continues to encourage *sangha* feedback in regards to the project—any feedback. Please contact Greg Denny, Anne Jennings or anyone on the Board.



Newsletters on our Web Site...

Current and past issues of the BZC newsletter are now available on the web site, on the "schedule/news" page.



Welcome...

to new member Nobuo Iwanaga..



Remembrance of David Simon on Two Year Anniversary of his Passing...

Everyone is invited to an infomal gathering to share stories about late sangha member David Simon who passed away two years ago on 15 May. David's long time partner, Betty Jung, has made a memorial/tribute/altar piece to remember David by and she will display this piece at BZC after the Saturday program on 15 May (~11:45am).

Sangha members are invited to see the piece and share thoughts about David at that time.

Regular Saturday service that day will also be dedicated to David's memory.



Saturday Ride Share...

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 makes it difficult for you to get to 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.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

A Response to a Question from the Previous Lecture

Student:

One of the most important questions of my life in the past couple years has been: If my nose is vertical and my eyes are horizontal, then why Buddhism?

Sojun:

That's a good question, that's exactly the question that Dogen carried with him to China. He said that if we all have Buddha-nature, if everything is Buddha-nature, why do we have to do something like practice? Why sit *zazen*, or do anything special, if Buddha-nature is our natural endowment? What Dogen woke up to was that although Buddha-nature is our essential nature, if we don't do something to bring it forth, it doesn't manifest as realization. Even though electricity is everywhere, if we don't induce it, we can't make use of it. It's all around us. But we have to channel it somehow so we can use it. Once we realize our nature, everything will open to us. Since Buddha-nature is the fundamental nature of all things, we realize that all things are essentially aspects of my true self. For us humans Buddha-nature manifests as Human Nature.

Even though we're born with the ability to be truly human, it doesn't necessarily follow that we will turn out to be completely realized human beings. We may manifest the characteristics of an animal, while having the outward appearance of a human. It's also true that some animals are more compassionate and loving than many humans. That's why many people prefer the company of animals. We may become a fighting demon, a hungry ghost or a hell dweller. What world do we live in? We may think that we live in the human world, but do we really know what a human being is?

What does it mean to be born, live our lives, and die, as human beings? If we look around us we may wonder. Although we think of ourselves as complete human beings, we are also evolving into being or becoming human. The theory of evolution is, I think, correct. We started out as something, and we're evolving into something, very slowly. And at the same time we are complete human beings. Each one is in a unique stage of development. We're human beings evolving into human beings; myself becoming myself. But very few of us have reached that completeness.

Although we all have Human Nature, each one of us has the Buddha-nature as well. But we don't necessarily realize that we're Buddha. We haven't become the Buddha that we are; a fully evolved human being. As Buddha-nature and Human Nature are not two things, we are both Buddhas and ordinary human beings.

So when we raise the thought of enlightenment and enter into and turn the practice, the Buddha comes forth, Human Nature and Buddha-nature merge, and an evolving *bodhisattva* is born, one who arrives with every step and never stops arriving. This is why we are drawn to practice, in faith that we are Buddha.

Dogen understood that realization stimulates practice and practice sustains realization. Eyes are horizontal and nose is vertical. A moment of practice is a moment of awakening.



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