



Berkeley Zen Center



November 2004 Newsletter

Welcome...

Welcome to new Member Shelly Brock and to new Friend, Annie Enlow-Price.



Our Rohatsu Sesshin

Will be from **Monday, 29 November through Sunday, 5 December**. The days begin at 5 am, and end at 9:20 pm, except for Sunday, when we will end in the afternoon. Participants should **plan to attend a minimum of entirety of four consecutive days**.

Sign-up is posted on the courtyard bulletin board. You must **complete a registration form** to complete your registration for *sesshin*. You will find this form below the sign-up roster. These are an essential part of planning *sesshin* seating and positions. Leave your forms in the *Sesshin* Director's box on the community room porch as soon as possible.

Registration will close on Wednesday, 24 November. Fees are \$25 per day for members and \$30 per day for non-members. It is helpful if you pay in advance.

This *sesshin* we will be implementing a format for menus and serving to accommodate various health needs among our members, while keeping zendo serving simple. Individual or special foods will not be served in the zendo, but other arrangements can be made for supplementing dietary needs. See the notice in this newsletter for details.

If you'll be staying overnight, please contact the *Shika*, Eric Greene at 510.649.1653, egreene3@yahoo.com. If you have questions about *sesshin*, contact the *Sesshin* Director Andrea Thach at 510.420.0902, amanda3917@earthlink.net before 9 pm.

November & December Schedule

Founders' Ceremony
Wednesday, 11-3, 6:20 pm
Thursday, 11-4, 6:40 am

Kanzeon Day Sitting
Sunday, 11-7, 8:30 am to 4 pm

Part-Day Sitting
Close Aspects of Practice
Saturday, 11-20

Thanksgiving (*zendo closed*)
Thursday, 11-25

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 11-27, 9:30 am

Rohatsu Sesshin
Monday, 11-29 through Sunday, 12-5

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial
Ceremony
Friday, 12-3, 8:15 pm

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony
Saturday, 12-4

Winter Break
Monday, 12-20 through Friday, 12-31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party
Friday, 12-31, 8 pm - 12:15 am

New Year's Day (*zendo closed*)
Thursday, 1-1-2005

Threefold Lotus Sutra

Everyone is invited to the Fourth Threefold Lotus Sutra Chanting in the Zendo on **Sunday, 14 November from 8AM until approx. 4:30PM**. The chanting is very brisk and will be continuous, though there will be three scheduled breaks. Come at anytime and join in. Light refreshments provided, or bring your bag lunch. Information will be posted on the courtyard bulletin board. Contact Baika: 510.548.4878, anprtt2@aol.com



From our Sewing Instructor...

Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Jukai next year, sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

Before the winter break (mid-December), please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman (who will be unavailable after December, as he is leading Spring Practice Period at Tassajara).

After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

Mending Buddha's Robe

Only one class remains (21 Nov) for completing rakusu/okesa repairs until next August.



Oryoki Instruction...

for those who have their own bowls is available at Berkeley Zen Center on the fourth Saturday of the month at 11:30. Contact Jake Van Akkeren 925-933-3486 (before 9pm), jvanakkeren@comcast.net.



Friday Afternoon Teatime...

Please join us for an end-of-the-work-week teatime **prior to Friday afternoon zazen**. This is a drop-in opportunity to connect with other *sangha* members. Contact Ron Nestor: 510.834.8630.



Chiden Alert...

Please consider serving the *sangha* as a *chiden* for our altars. The new sign-up for January is posted on the courtyard bulletin board. If you have not yet been trained, do contact our Head *Chiden*, Ann Kennedy: 510.649.9432, kaimon@earthlink.net.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

Day One Rohatsu. *Tenzo Kyokun*. Refining Your Life. Foundations of Kitchen Practice.
29 November 1993.

(Continued from the October 2004 Newsletter)

Dogen dignified even the most common things. For example, when speaking about objects commonly used in the monastery, he would frequently put the prefix “o-” referring to them in a respectful way. The “o-” means something like “honorable.” For Dogen, it was important to treat everything – the pots and pans, and every bit of food, for instance – very carefully, with great respect. When someone really acts in this way, there is no gap between the subject and the object. There is no gap between the one who is preparing the meal and that which is being prepared. This is the enlightened activity of the *tenzo*, the enlightened activity of one who works in the kitchen.

Working in this way, then, is not just a job – it is a great opportunity. It is an opportunity for expressing enlightenment. You may feel, “Well, I’m not enlightened yet, so how can I do that?” But if you participate in the work the way Dogen is suggesting, enlightenment expresses itself.

It’s very important in this practice to realize that you’re not working from “delusion” to “enlightenment.” Enlightened activity is something you can express right now. When you express enlightened activity, enlightenment is everywhere – and when you don’t, it’s not. To practice Dogen’s way, you step right into practice-enlightenment.

This, incidentally, is why it’s possible to sit *zazen* without knowing anything. When you sit *zazen*, you step into enlightened practice. You can practice enlightened practice right now. Just be one with your activity, completely. Don’t separate subject from object. Even though vegetables are vegetables, the knife is the knife, and you are you, cutting vegetables can be cutting it all into one. Stirring the soup can be stirring the soup into one. Stirring the soup can be stirring the soup in complete stillness.

Dogen continues:

When this [planning the menu and obtaining the ingredients] has been done, the preparations for the next morning’s meal may begin. You must not leave the washing of rice or the preparation of vegetables to others, but must carry out this work with your own hands. (page 4).

Usually the *tenzo* doesn’t always do this today. Things have changed since Dogen’s time. The *tenzo* mostly oversees, does the ordering, and so forth. But Dogen is nonetheless saying, “This is your responsibility.” Even if someone else does it, the *tenzo* is responsible. You shouldn’t merely assign something to somebody and ignore it. Dogen continues. Put your whole attention into every aspect of the work, seeing just what the situation calls for. Do not be absent-minded in your activities, and do not be so absorbed in one aspect that you fail to see its other specifics.

This raises the issue of concentration. Sometimes we think of *zazen* as concentration. If you ask, “What is *zazen*?” someone will say “concentration.” It is true that concentration is present – concentration is present in any state of mind. But if you become too focused on some little part and can’t see the rest,

then that's not complete concentration. You must be focused on your activity, and at the same time be aware of the larger picture.

Sometimes when people are working in the kitchen they work very slowly, self-absorbed in their own activity. They think that if they work very slowly, that's concentrated activity. But you must be concentrated and quick as well – mindful of what time the meal has to be done, aware of what other people are doing and of how you are harmonizing with everyone else's activity – so at some point it all comes together and makes a meal. That is the necessary kind of concentration.

Here's an example. Sometimes a server comes through the *zendo* walking very slowly with the meal, thinking that it's concentrated activity. A server should actually walk briskly. If you walk too slow, everyone gets anxious, and if you walk too fast, people get agitated. When you're too slow, everyone thinks, "When are they ever going to...?" and when you're too fast, they think, "I better hurry up so I can finish before they get here." It's very upsetting!

When you walk in the *zendo* with your food offering, you are contributing to the atmosphere. Whatever you do has an influence on the atmosphere, and it has to harmonize with the on-going activity. When you enter the *zendo* during *zazen*, for instance, you walk very slowly, so as not to disturb people's *zazen*. Walk very slowly, so as not to disturb the space. When you're serving, on the other hand, something else is happening. You walk more briskly, so that people feel that things are moving smoothly, and they don't get anxious.

You can't just act on your own idea, either. You have to be sensitive to what's going on and blend with it. That is enlightened activity. When you don't ignore what's going on, and you don't push your own idea, then whatever is creatively coming forth from you will come forth naturally, and selflessly without disturbing the situation. It will add to the situation. It looks like, "There's a *sesshin* these people have set up and I'm entering into it." That's one view, but actually you also create *sesshin* when you step into it. Our presence affects the entire activity.

Everyone counts. Everyone is responsible. Each one of us creates what is going on. It's not like others have set it up for us and we walk into an already prepared world. There is some preparation, of course, but our world is dynamic. It is always affected by each one of us.

This is what Dogen means when he says,

Do not overlook one drop in the ocean of virtue by entrusting it to others. Cultivate a spirit which strives to increase the source of goodness upon the mountain of goodness.

He's talking about the power of the good things you do. When you do things correctly it's powerful. It moves things in a good way towards composure and stability.

He goes on to say,

In the *Chanyuan Qinggui* we find, "If the Tenzo offers a meal without the harmony of the six flavors and the three qualities, it cannot be said that the person serves the community."

The six flavors are bitter, sour, sweet, salty, mild, and hot. Certain personality types are associated with these flavors. Some people are sweet, some are sour, some are bitter. I'm mostly salty, for instance. I'd rather eat bread than cake.

The "three virtues" Dogen mentions are light and flexible, clean and neat, and conscientious and thorough. These are qualities we should cultivate. Light and flexible means you're not stiff and resistant—you have the ability to move and bend with things. That's important, since it's the brittle things that get broken. Clean and neat means that you clean up as you go, so when you end a certain preparation, there's a clean space for the next preparation. You don't leave a sink full of dishes, for example. Each thing is taken care of completely. That is thoroughness.

This is just like eating with *oryoki*. *Oryoki* is good training for working in the kitchen. When eating with *oryoki*, you take care of each article, which is washed and put away. If you do *oryoki* correctly, every movement flows easily into the next with no unnecessary motion and you can enjoy it. But some people say, "I don't enjoy *oryoki* at all." That's because many people don't know the process of one movement flowing into the next. When you do it that way, it doesn't feel either mechanical or confusing. Instead it can be a wonderful feeling, moving smoothly and experiencing the rhythm of that activity.

Clearly, the teachings Dogen presents in the "Instructions for the Zen Cook" are not just about the kitchen. We need to think about all of our activity this way, as *shikan taza*. Zen Master Huairang once said, it's not that there is no enlightenment in practice, it's that it can't be defiled.

(to be continued)



For Dolly Gatozzi, 10/27/02
By Kellie Hobbs

I saw your body this afternoon, dry and light, laid out in an upstairs bedroom into which the autumn light drifted. Leaves from the elm trees fell against the window.

After I left your house I watched the sun fall, with pink and black clouds strewn against the sky, like tomorrow is, after all, always going to happen to everyone, equally.

The un-dead walk here, too, full of sorrow, because this world is not the right one and we continue to hang ourselves, day after day, moment after moment.

with our own mistakes. Love and work are the impulses that drive our energy, said Sigmund Freud, and after all, he was not always wrong, but he was not

a proponent of happiness, like the leaves which float down, effortless, or like I am, watching them.



Practice Period Possibility

We would like to survey the interest in the *sangha* for trying out a new practice period format.

The practice period would last up to one month or four weeks, although people could sign up for a week at a time. In addition to the regular schedule already in place, and that is used for the existing practice periods, it would have a Monday thru Friday schedule between 8:30 am and 4PM. It would consist of three periods of zazen in the morning, a lecture or study period, service and lunch, rest, then a work period that would include cooking practice, and end with two periods of zazen in the afternoon. People would also be encouraged to attend, the regular early morning and afternoon schedule, as well as the Saturday program and *sesshins*. This schedule would allow families with children to drop and pick up children from schools and to have some evening time with their families. If we plan this enough in advance, members could also plan to take time from work to be able to participate.

If you would like to participate in this kind of practice period, or think it is a good idea, please let Raul Moncayo know. Contact Raul: 510.526.9341 or place a note in his box at BZC.

What's Cooking For Multi-day *Sesshins*?

We currently have several *sangha* members who have a variety of food allergies and sensitivities. During our last large mutli-day *sesshin*, attending to their different health needs became complicated for the kitchen and serving crews. The practice committee has been hard at work refining our kitchen practice to try to serve everyone healthy food simply.

Here is what we will be trying out our next multi-day *sesshin*:

- Only be one gluten-containing bowl and one dairy-containing bowl maximum will be prepared each day. *However, there might be gluten in the gruel during the third meal.* There will not be *hidden dairy* in other bowls.
- People who need additional food may eat it during the breaks, and store it in a designated resident apartment. The food should be simple, and at most require a microwave heat-up, but no other preparation. We ask that meat not be eaten.
- People who will be eating food they bring are asked not to bring it into the zendo, and the servers will not be serving individuals special food.

If you have questions or comments, please pass them on to the *Sesshin* Director, Andrea Thach, or Corrdinator, Greg Denny.



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 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, 510.845.2215.

November 6	Childcare
November 13	Childcare
November 20	Sesshin - no childcare
November 27	Childcare
December 4	Sesshin - no childcare
December 11	Childcare
December 18	TBA
December 25	Holiday
January 1	Holiday

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1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703