



Berkeley Zen Center



December 2004 Newsletter

As we enter the New Year.

As we leave the old year behind us, with its opportunities and disappointments, and move on into the new year, let's take an honest look at our mistakes and our blind spots, and make a sincere effort to turn around and mindfully go in the right direction. This is true repentance.

As for social engagement, in order to be truly patriotic, we must also be truly matrotic otherwise we become psychotic. In these difficult and dangerous times, when the masculine side is dominating and terrorizing the world, it is incumbent upon us to make every effort to promote peaceful and balanced solutions, and find ways to control our destructive tendencies. Peace of course begins at home with each one of us, and our effort is to keep it alive through both easy and trying times. We can do this by being careful to balance both the *patri* and *matri* within ourselves and be both father and mother to the world.

I will be at Tassajara from all of January to April 3rd, leading the practice period. I will be back for a short time at the end of January and the end of February. I want to encourage all of you to continue, and look to the practice leaders for guidance. Your steadiness will inspire others. Your personal presence makes the practice work for all of us

I greatly respect your sincere practice, and all you have done for me in this past year.

--Sojun

December & January Schedule

Rohatsu Sesshin

Monday, 11-29 through Sunday, 12-5

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial
Ceremony

Friday, 12-3, 8:15pm

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, 8pm - 12:15am

New Year's Day Holiday
Zendo closed

Founders' Ceremony
Monday, 1-3, 6:40pm
Tuesday, 1-4, 6:40pm

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 1-8, 5am to 9:10pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 1-22, 9:30am

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 1-22, noon to 5:30 pm

IMPORTANT...2005 Directories!...

The **2005 Membership Directory** is being prepared. Kindly put any changes to your 2004 listing in the Office Manager's (Laurie Senauke's) mailbox on the kitchen porch. On New Year's Eve, Laurie will place the draft of the new directory in the Community Room. Please check the draft to be sure your information is correct. You are welcome to mark up the draft to assure that your changes are included.



New Year's Eve...

Please don't hesitate to come to the New Year's Eve Sitting and Party. You can attend any portion or the entire event. Please come between periods though. Here is the schedule:

8:00 Zazen
8:35 Kinhin
8:45 Zazen
9:20 Kinhin
9:30 Zazen
10:05 Tea
(10:13 108 Bells Begin)
10:30 Kinhin
10:40 Zazen
11:20 Kinhin
11:35 Zazen
12:10 Slow chant of Heart Sutra/End, then a celebration
in the community room.

Japanese-Style Clothing Sale

On **Saturday, 11th December**, during the post-lecture tea, SFZC member and clothing designer Gabriel Russo will offer traditional style meditation clothing of his own design to the BZC community. For sale will be *hippari* jackets made from a variety of fabrics, using traditional Japanese designs refined for function, durability, and style, as well as monk's bags. Gabriel conducts twice-yearly sales at SFZC, and a portion of the proceeds from this sale will go to BZC. If you've never worn your *rakusu* over a traditional Japanese collar, you have no idea what you're missing! Or purchase presents for your favorite meditator friend. Check out Gabriel's designs ahead of time: www.gabrielrusso.com



BASE Program at Berkeley Peace Fellowship

In January Buddhist Peace Fellowship is offering a four-month BASE (Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement) program in the East Bay, mentored by Alan Senauke. The weekly program involves social service and social action; meditation, training, and retreat; and a strong sense of community support among the participants. For information please call the BASE office at 415.643.8289, www.bpf.org/base.html.

Applications for this program will be accepted until **December 15**.

Meditation Practice During Sesshin

From a Talk by Sojun Roshi, 1985

I want to say just a little bit about how I would like us to practice today. When you walk, be conscious of how your feet touch the floor. When you're serving a meal, be careful when walking to not pound your heels on the floor. What does the floor feel like? Am I creating a disturbance when I walk? When I carry the pot, is it up here or down there? What does it feel like to carry this pot? When I serve someone, am I really bowing to that person, or am I just going through the motions because I'm supposed to? If you and the other person are bowing at a different rhythm, it doesn't make much sense; you're missing each other. The point is to meet each other at the bottom of the bow just for a moment. When you open the *zendo* door, try to open it so that you make as little disturbance as possible. How do you slide the bolt with your undivided attention, so that it slides easily this way and that way, opening and closing without a sound?

To be that attentive creates a mindful atmosphere. When we use our eating bowls, we pick them up and put them down in such a way that we don't make a sound. We should keep the same concentration during work period, being careful not to start up a conversation with somebody. Sometimes when we're discussing a project, we get caught up in a conversation without thinking about it or without being aware of it, in the same way that thoughts come up in *zazen*. Before we realize it, we've become involved in some fantasy. So when we become aware that our conversation is getting out of bounds, we can just bow and return to silence.

When working in the kitchen, it's good to figure out a systematic way to arrange your space in order to work efficiently. Take care of the food and equipment so you don't have things piling up around you while you're working in a small crowded space. Keep the whole thing moving so that you don't find yourself cornered. In order to do that, you have to clean up as you go, taking care of the ingredients and the tools, aware that you are also working in harmony with others. Let go of anxiety, knowing that if you pay attention, everything will come out on time.

Having that kind of concentrated absorption, we can forget ourselves in our activity. Let yourself immediately accept the total situation, adjusting to changes without judgment or regret; "This is good or bad." "This is right or wrong." "Why did that have to happen?" Just to do is how you drop yourself and merge with the activity in a selfless way. Even if you're doing something that you don't like, you can still have freedom within it. Keep returning to your deep, calm mind from moment to moment and abide in the *samadhi* of equanimity.

Jizos For Peace

August 6 and 9, 2005 will be the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing in Japan. In memory of the thousands of people who died during and after the catastrophe 270,000 hand-drawn images of *Jizo*, will be taken by members of the Great Vow *Sangha* to Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Jizo Bodhisattva vowed that s/he would not enter *Nirvana* until all sentient beings had achieved freedom. One of the many *Jizo* stories tells about a female *Jizo* who wanted to honor her parents in death as well as life and joined them in hell to relieve their suffering. In Japan, stone *Jizos* are beloved icons found in large temples and roadside shrines. They are vehicles for remembrance, often of children who have died through abortion, miscarriage, accident or illness. *Jizo* is also considered the guardian of travelers and the protector of women and children.

On **two Saturdays, 22nd January and 26th February, from 1 to 4 pm**, we will provide art materials (stamps, markers, fabric paint) and fabric panels so that *sangha* members can make images of *Jizo Bodhisattva*. The fabric from our *sangha* and from communities all over the world will be gathered in Japan and joined together in memorial quilts.

The *Jizos* for Peace project's goal is to explore those aspects of *Jizo* that represent savior and protector; the one who intervenes and helps those caught in places of suffering. In addition, we hope to uncover the qualities of *Jizo* within ourselves so that we might contribute them to the world.

Contact Andrea Thach 510.420.0902 or Sue Oehser 510.339.0243 for information or to RSVP.



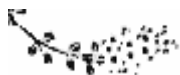
BZC Skating Party

Join the first annual BZC skating party, on **Saturday, 18th December, at 1:00 pm.** It will be at either Berkeley Iceland, or the outdoor rink at the Embarcadero in San Francisco; if it's in San Francisco, we'll meet at BZC and BART over together. BZC members and their family and friends are welcome to join in the fun. Please sign up on the bulletin board or contact Laurie Senauke: 510.845.2215, lauries@kushiki.org or Susan Marvin: 510.428.9123, lai_hong@yahoo.com.



New Board Members:

Congratulations to new board members: Alexandra Frappier, Marie Hopper, and Gerry Oliva. Recording Secretary: Walter Kieser. Paid positions: Abbot Sojun, Tanto Alan Senauke, Office Manager Laurie Senauke. Continuing on the board are Peter Overton, Laurie Senauke, Andrea Thach, Linda Eby, Anne Jennings, and John Rubin. Thanks to those who put their names forward to stand for election to the board. Thanks also to board members who completed their two-year terms: Leslie Bartholic, Ann Kennedy, and Greg Denny.



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.

December 4	Sesshin - no childcare
December 11	Childcare
December 18	Childcare
December 25	No childcare
January 1	No childcare
January 8	Sesshin - no childcare
January 15	Childcare
January 22	Childcare
January 29	Childcare



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