



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2005 Newsletter

Welcome New Member: Sam Bernier



Buddha's Birthday...

is scheduled for **Saturday, 9th April**. Check the community bulletin board for details.



Practice Period...

Our annual practice period will begin **Sunday, 8th May** and last **through Sunday, 26th June**. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding those obligations "outside the gate."

Heishin Tando /Ordinary Mind Right Way
Greg Denny will be *Shuso*/Head Student this year, sharing Sojun Roshi's seat as an example for all of us. For more on practice period, see the insert inside the newsletter.



Mountains and Rivers Sesshin...

will take place at Point Reyes from **Saturday, 23rd April to Sunday 24th April**.

See details inside.



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.

April & May Schedule

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 4-3 8am to noon

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

Buddha's Birthday
Saturday, 4-9

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 4-16 5am to 9:30pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 4-23, 9:30am

Mountains and Rivers
Saturday 4-23 through Sunday, 4-24

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 5-1 8am to noon

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

One-Day Sitting
Opening of Practice Period
Sunday, 5-8 5am to 5:30pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 5-21, 9:30am

Memorial Day
(zendo holiday)
Monday, 5-30

Being Peace in Israel and Palestine

BZC's Socially Engaged Dharma group is offering another evening in the series of talks entitled **Path of the Bodhisattva**. This event will be on **Friday, 29th April, 7 pm to 9 pm** in the Community Room, and will address the conflict in Israel and Palestine. The evening will include a discussion with Avner Efundowicz, an Israeli refusenik with Courage to Refuse www.couragetorefuse.org, and a viewing of the movie "My Life is My Message" about Thich Nhat Hanh, which includes footage of a retreat at Plum Village for Jews and Palestinians.

In this series of talks, we present individuals who discuss their experiences as they participate in socially engaged actions. They describe what led them to take their path, how it connects to their own spiritual practice, and how they deal with the sometimes difficult emotions, situations, and people they encounter.

Watch for more details BZC bulletin board, and sign up or just show up. For more info, contact Laurie Senauke, Ed Herzog, or Annette Herskovitz: lauries@kushiki.org, ehertzog@seiu-uhw.org, or louisah@comcast.net.

Practice Period Class...

As this issue of the newsletter becomes available Sojun is still at Tassajara, so we do not have details regarding this year's practice period class. The class is traditionally offered on **Thursday evenings** during the practice period. Details will be on the bulletin board and in the May newsletter.



Taking a Practice Position....

Speaking of jobs, the Berkeley Zen Center exists only because of the work of *sangha* members in various practice positions such as cooking, cleaning, building, and repairing.

Having a practice position at BZC, no matter how small or large, helps support one's own practice and the practice of the entire sangha.

If you would like a practice position, please contact our coordinator, **Greg Denny**. As positions open up over time, he will see about finding a job for you.



06/18/2004 Saturday Lecture
Baika Andrea Pratt

Sometimes we have a big problem and we try to get rid of it, but our problems are good to have. They are our teachers. I was talking about my big problem one time on a Monday morning and some of you came up to me afterwards to say, "I'm so sorry for your big problem." That was very kind of them, but actually I don't mind my problem. Sometimes it feels uncomfortable, but I try to make it my friend.

When we pretend to ourselves we have no problem, this is a problem on top of our problem. If you try to escape your problem in this way, you will never understand it. If you become curious about it then you will begin to understand. You might forget you have this problem for awhile and then someday, you remember it and realize you no longer cling to it like you used to. Most likely though our particular problem will always be with us.

When we try to take our problem out to the garbage bin and throw it away, it doesn't go away. It shows up somewhere else and creates more problems and sometimes for other people. Like trying to get rid of our nuclear waste, by drilling a hole through a beautiful mountain and storing it there. We might even consider sending it to outer space on a rocket ship. This is not taking care of the problem. This is why it is necessary to completely dissolve our problem, examining it, again and again and maybe ask a friend for help with it, pulling it up with the root.

Sometimes Zen will not help you. Maybe talk therapy is needed, maybe a sweat lodge or vision quest, what ever it takes. This is blowing up a balloon of hope in our minds, which will work for awhile. We can skip from one cure to another, but eventually **POW!** we run out of ideas and we have to face our self. This is when practicing with our problem begins.

You may think you see someone else who has a problem and you may want to tell them about it. That's okay we don't have to tell people about their problem because it is theirs. Their problem will teach them. We can't decide for another when to wake up to their problem and chances are what you see in another person is more likely about you than about them. So it's best to leave other people's problems to them and let their problem help them. This may take a very long time, so we are patient with ourselves and our friends and help them. Not *with* their problem but because they have a problem, just like we do.

Some people come to practice in order to be a good person and to live a good life. This is what I was wanting when I came to practice. In working with our problem, we can fall into thinking this is good, that is bad. When we fall into thinking good and bad we can become rigid and anticipatory because we are attaching to some result. Actually, it's never that somebody is just good or somebody is just bad. These opposites are always together. And it's the fluidity of good and bad that makes us human. Sometimes we are having such difficulty, such a painful time. We think and feel we're not connected, not practicing, but actually we're always connected, practicing, part of, reflected in the great wisdom mirror, whether we feel, or think we are or not. There's joy and there's suffering, there's easy times and difficult times and this lasts forever.

Thank you very much.



Mountains and Rivers Sesshin...

will take place at Point Reyes, **Saturday, 23rd April through Sunday, 24th April.**

Sojun Roshi will be leading it. It's an inspiring and invigorating combination of morning and evening *zazen* with moderate hiking in silence during the day. Everyone is encouraged to try it.

Information and signup sheet will soon be posted on the BZC bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at 510.527.0959 or email him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

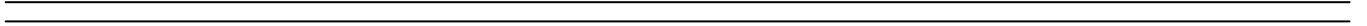
The BZC website includes an approximate schedule plus a link to some wonderful photos from past Mountains and Rivers sesshin http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org/M&R_sesshin.shtml .



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.

April 2	Childcare
April 9	Buddha's Birthday
April 16	Sesshin - no childcare
April 23	Childcare
April 30	Childcare
May 7	Childcare
May 14	Childcare
May 21	Childcare
May 28	Childcare



**Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703**