



Berkeley Zen Center



July 2005 Newsletter

Welcome...

to new Members Barton Stone and Vince Nocito.



Lay Ordination

On Saturday, 11th June seven members of the *sangha* received lay ordination (*Zaike Tokudo*). This ceremony takes place once a year. It is an important ceremony for each participant, as well as for the entire *sangha*.

Sojun Roshi's Students

Steven Burkhart
Shinshi Tengen
Profound Stillness Heavenly Eye

Tamar Enoch
Ichika Jakushin
Single Flower Serene Mind

Greta Pearson
Kando Kai-e
Simple Way Unfolding Wisdom

Kate Day
Shinsen Shoka
Deep Spring Luminous Blossom

Ellen Doudna
Seisui Myoki
Clear Water Bright Vessel

John Busch
Sangetsu Seikyo
Mountain Moon Clear Mirror

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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.

July & August Schedule

Founders Ceremony
Monday, 7-4, 6:20pm
Tuesday, 7-5, 6:40am

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 7-10, 8:00am to noon

One-Day Sitting
Sunday, 7-17 5am to 5:30pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 7-23, 9:30am

Mountains and Rivers
Friday 7-29 through Sunday, 7-31

Founders Ceremony
Wednesday, 8-3, 6:20pm
Thursday, 8-4, 6:40am

One Day Sitting
Saturday 8-13, 5 am - 9:30 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 8-20, 9:30am

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday 8-21 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

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Zenki Mary Mocine's Student

Susan Chacin
Sō Yū Testsu Ji
Brave Friend Completely Penetrating Self

Lay Recognition

Also on 11th June, three very long time lay members who have been *shuso* and have taken leadership responsibilities in the *sangha* received a green *rakusu* from Sojun Roshi as lay teachers. They also received a certificate of acknowledgement and recognition which specifies what they are authorized to teach. The three are:

Doug Greiner
Tsuzan Gensho
Intimate Mountain Profound (subtle) Nature

Richard Haefele
Shinshi Tatsunen
Steadfast Resolve Penetrate (now) mind

Laurie Senauke
Ekai Uji
Cherishing Ocean Being Time

Congratulations to all and many *gasshos* to sewing teachers Jean Selkirk, and Valorie.



New Dharma Study Group:

The new *dharma* study group, led by Doug Greiner, for people whose best time to meet is a weekday morning, is still open to new members. The next meetings will be Wednesdays, 29th June and 13th July at 10:00 am. For more information, email Doug at degreiner@gmail.com.

Sesshin Schedule Change:

The August *sesshin* date has been changed from Saturday 6th August to Saturday 13th August, so that *sangha* members may attend events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.



Transitions...

Thanks to Ann Kennedy for her work as Head *Chiden*. Carol Paul recently replaced Ann.

Thanks to Carol Paul for maintaining the *Dokusan* Hut. Mary Duryee replaces Carol

Thanks to Francesca Genco for maintaining the bathrooms: Kent Welsh replaces Francesca.



Women's Meeting...

There will be a gathering of female members on 20th August from 1 pm to 3 pm. Two items are on the agenda: revising the chant of women ancestors and planning the women's *sesshin* in September. If you have other items to add to the agenda, contact Laurie Senauke: 510.845.2215, lauries@kushiki.org, or leave a note in her mail slot.



KidZendo...

A kids' program is offered on the third Saturday of each month for young ones three and up. We meet upstairs at the Senauke's household for a minute of *zazen* and a briefing on forms then sojourn down to the *zendo* for the first ten minutes of lecture at 10:10. Then Amaselu Meyer will lead activities for the kids to participate in back upstairs until tea. This program replaces the regularly scheduled childcare on these days. Please email Amaselu at amaselu@earthlink.net by the previous Thursday if you plan to attend.

Coming of Age Group Forming:

Calling all pre-teens! Starting some time in late summer, BZC will gather a group of young people ages 11 - 13 to participate in a Buddhist Coming of Age group. The group will be led by BZC Member Marie Hopper and will likely meet once a month for about two years. The group will learn meditation, and study Buddhist precepts as they play out in our daily lives; members will have input into other topics the group will study. We're announcing this ahead of time, because it may take some time to assemble a group of 6 to 10 young people;

pass the word along to anyone you think might be interested. For more info or to let us know you want to participate, contact Marie at deagin@california.com.



For -- Hei Shin Tan Do/Greg Denny

On a foggy moonless night
numerous rocks
sit upright in a garden.

Utterly alone
Yet completely inseparable,
Like ripples in a great ocean,
Or dewdrops reflecting the moon.
How do we make sense of this mystery?

Here at Shogaku-ji
a bird flies like a bird
and a fish swims like a fish.

The old plum tree is not dead and gone.
The wind blows through its branches
with each and every breath.

Fellow dewdrops!
Let us hear the shuso.

--Sei Sui Myo Ki/Ellen Doudna

Shuso Hossen, June 2005

Sojun Mel Weitsman
Dharma Transmission
7 May 2005

(Continued From Last Month)

And then, there's the practice of letting go of the need to have the last word; to let everyone know that you're right, or that you know more than they do, or that you know the real answer. Sometimes we say you should just let moss grow over your mouth.

And then there's the practice of not making excuses. There are reasons and there are excuses. "The reason we went to Iraq..." No. "The excuse we used in order to go to Iraq..." That's the difference between a reason and excuse.

Which ties into the practice of not being defensive. When we aren't defensive we can let things go through so that we don't get backed into a corner where we have to lash out. Defensiveness is ego building. When we defend our excuses we dig ourselves deeper into a hole, and it's harder to come back.

And there is the practice of stepping off the pole. There is the *koan*: how do you step off a hundred-foot pole? You're pretty high, so how do you take the step off the pole, let go? Before you get too high, you should step off the pole, then it's not a problem. So, the higher you go, the harder you fall. I've seen that happen. We have to step off the pole, maybe at the bottom, before you get up there. There is an old saying, to "conceal your light in the dust."

Next is the practice of not having to be first. Or allowing yourself to be last, or in the middle, not standing out too much. Of course, if you tend to hide out, it may be good for you to be first. In Japan, when the monks drink beer, or sake (no comment), they open the bottle and pour it for the other person, and then the other person pours it for them. If you keep that in mind, you'll never have a problem, socially. This goes not just for beer or sake, but for everything.

Then, there's the practice of letting go of resentments. This is the hardest one. Someone does something, we don't like it, and it hurts. How do we rise above resentment so that we are not dominated by it and thrown off center? Do I want to be resentful all the time? If we dwell in resentment, we cloud our mind.

Practicing humility. Humility has various definitions, but I think of it as knowing exactly where our place is on each moment in relation to our surroundings so that we don't get beyond ourselves (self-inflated), or beneath ourselves (self-deflated). It is to know who we are, and know where we stand, and know how to respond to each situation from that place without being self-centered. Humility is to always reside in the calmness of our mind, returning to calm mind over and over, the mind that cannot be upset.

So then there's the practice of being aware of when strong emotions arise, not to use them to fuel or dominate your position. In other words, we have a strong emotion and then that strong emotion is used as fuel to dominate and take control. So when strong emotions arise, to be able to contain them; and to respond to a situation with nothing at the bottom of the heart.

Then there's the practice of not letting your mind get ahead of your body. Zen teachers are a little like parents. Not that the students are children or that the teacher is a parent, but students and children watch what their parents and teachers do. It doesn't matter what the parents say so much as how they act. No matter what you say as a Zen teacher, what people notice is how you act, how you hold yourself, how you behave. How you pick something up, or put something down. How you are aware of your movements, aware of your surroundings. Teachers can be very good at giving talks about Buddhism, or ethics, or whatever, but what we see or what we follow is the person's behavior. That's what we trust. So, when our head gets ahead of our body, that's not Zen practice. Zen practice is, the mind and the body are integrated. You open the door, you step outside, and you close the door. That's one complete act. But in our haste we open the door and before we close it we are already somewhere else. We do one act and complete one act. Our mind is not way ahead while our body is doing something. This is the basis, the essence, of our practice.

Suzuki Roshi said, "In America you have this saying, to kill two birds with one stone. But our practice is, to kill one bird with one stone." He said that surrounding the temple, there's a walkway, and they have screens which in the winter they use to enclose the temple. The screens are stored in the summer in a large box, at the end of the row. So in this incident, the monks were taking off the screens and putting them into the box, and the teacher came along and said, "Anh-anh, one screen at a time, into the box. Then you come back and get the next screen, put it into the box." It's not efficient in our usual way of thinking. We try to carry as much as we can to save time. But here, we don't try to save time, we use time. We appreciate time. We respect time. He said to me, "Don't be ahead of time, or behind time."

So, the next practice is, "Don't treat people in a subservient manner." In other words, whatever your position, don't treat people like your servants or like underlings. They won't respect you.

Another practice is, "It is very difficult for someone over fifty to receive correction." [Laughter.] But that's no excuse. Try hard!

And then, take correction without excuses or backbiting. Sometimes we think of correction as criticism. Correction is not criticism. We have to be careful to know the difference between correction and criticism. But no matter how much you try to teach someone, a person feels easily criticized.

Suzuki Roshi rarely gave us a reason for doing anything. This style of practice is common in Japan. You don't get a reason for doing something. Just do. "Do this." "Okay." "Do this." "Okay." "Do this." "Okay." That's all. Just do. But we always want reasons. "Why should I do that?" For Suzuki Roshi, we wash the windows whether they are clean or dirty. Practice is about "how to" rather than "why".

And then there's the practice of letting go of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is clinging to the idea that my way is right, my idea is best, my understanding is correct. It may be right, but if you cling to it, you just create an ego-centered problem. The dogmatic need to be right comes from a lack of security and is experienced as arrogance.

Then there's, "Don't strut around like the cock of the walk showing off your goods."

Next is the practice of renunciation, which means dropping self-centeredness. We sometimes think renunciation means I should take all my belongings and throw them in the lake. But if you throw them in the lake, the lake might complain, "Hey man, why are you doing that to me?" [Laughter and chuckles.] Renunciation means letting go of self-centeredness. It doesn't matter how many possessions you have, or how much money you have. Renunciation is not to be used by ego. It includes all of the above. Moment after moment, we practice renunciation, letting go of self-centeredness and ego, so that we can be truly free. This is how we save both ourselves and others.

One reason why at this time I gave the Dharma Transmission to these two wonderful women, is because they both have their own practice places which are developing. And they have put in a lot of effort and energy and they are totally committed to what they are doing. They now have the authorization to take care of their students and their centers in a complete way, and continue to develop. I feel they both deserve it. We have two sides. We have the ordinary person side, which is all these problems that we create, and then we have Buddha side. As long as Buddha is leading and the other side is following, I trust everything will work out.

Practice of Cultivating the Empty Field

From the *Sutta-nipata*, as told by Shohaku Okumura in "Lecture on the Okesa," originally published November 27, 1993 in *the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center News*

The Buddha woke up in a farming village, put on the *okesa* [robe] and went out to the village for *takuhatsu* [begging for food]. A rich farmer asks why the Buddha doesn't work if he, a rich man, still works. The Buddha answers "Faith is a seed. Practice is rain. Wisdom is my yoke and plow. Repentance is my plow bar. Aspiration is a rope to tie a yoke to an ox. And mindfulness is plow-blade and digging bar. I behave myself prudently. I am discreet in speech. I eat moderately. Truth is my sickle to mow grass. Gentleness is untying the yoke from an ox when finished working. Diligence is my ox which takes me to peacefulness. I go forth without backsliding. Once I reach the peacefulness, I have no anxiety. My farming is done in this way. It brings about the result of a sweet dew. If you engage in this farming, you will be released from all kinds of suffering."

The farmer became Buddha's disciple. Buddha's farming is a practice to become free from ego-attachment and live in peacefulness. This is the meaning of working in rice paddy. When we wear the *okesa* [or *rakusu*], we are also farming. This is the origin of the name of *okesa*: *fukuden-e* or robe of virtuous field. This body and mind are the field we work on. It is not just a field of fortune from which we can expect to receive blessings without practice. We have to cultivate our life.



Mountains and Rivers...

Berkeley Zen Center's next Mountains and Rivers *Sesshin* will take place at Point Reyes Friday through Sunday, 29 to 31 July. Sojun Roshi will be leading it.

The format will be similar to the two-day *sesshins* we've been doing over the last few years – hiking in silence during the day, *zazen* under the stars in the evening and early morning. The extra day will help us to settle in with the environment as well as enable us to rest up during the middle of the day. Everyone is encouraged to do the full three days, but provision will also be made for people who can take part only in the Saturday-Sunday portion or who have some physical difficulties with backpacking. Camping experience is not required. All meals are provided.

The *sesshin* will begin with a meeting Thursday evening, 28th July, in the Community Room for orientation, job assignments, and packing. Friday morning we will carpool to Point Reyes. We will hike through the woods and meadows to Coast Camp (5.5 miles), moving at a moderate pace, with frequent rest stops and lunch along the way. Those who can't get off Friday morning can hike in Friday evening or Saturday morning, joining us for the remainder of the *sesshin*. We should get back to Berkeley around 5:00 p.m. Sunday.

You can find more information at the Berkeley Zen Center website -- http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org/M&R_sesshin.shtml -- and some wonderful photos from some of our previous Mountains and Rivers *sesshins* at <http://www.rdrop.com/users/mbliss/Zen/> .

The signup sheet is posted on the courtyard bulletin board. Signup deadline is Monday, 25th July, but it is a good idea to sign up well in advance to be sure that you are included. The fee is \$40.00.

Recommended reading: Dogen's "Mountains and Rivers Sutra" (Sojun will be discussing this text in two lectures). Contact Ken Knabb: 510.527.0959, knabb@bopsecrets.org .



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.

July 2	Childcare
July 9	Childcare
July 16	Kidzendo!
July 23	Childcare
July 30	Vacation - no childcare
August 6	<i>Sesshin</i> - no childcare
August 13	Childcare
August 20	Kidzendo!
August 27	Vacation - no childcare

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