



Berkeley Zen Center



January 2006 Newsletter

2006 Directories

The 2006 Membership Directory is being updated. Kindly put any changes and corrections in the Office Manager's mail slot on the Community Room porch. You can also make your corrections directly on the draft in the Community Room kitchen. Changes are due by January 11.

Kanzeon Sitting

The Kanzeon sitting, Sunday, February 5, 2006, 8:45 am-4 pm, is especially designed for those who have some difficulty with the typical sesshin schedule, but it is open to anyone. Periods of zazen are shorter so it's a good opportunity to experiment with a more challenging posture. If you have particular concerns, needs, or ideas, or if this will be your first sesshin, please contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, lauries@kushiki.org; Please bring your own bag lunch; cost, \$15. Sign-up, bulletin board.

Women's Council Meeting

The women's council is a group of women who came to an initial meeting in August along with other interested women members and friends. The next meeting will be Saturday, February 11, 1:30-3 pm in the Community Room. Agenda items include: revised chant of women ancestors, new improved ethics guidelines, which are being considered by the BZC Board. Any questions or other agenda items, please contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, lauries@kushiki.org, Andrea Thach, 420-0902, andrea.thach@gmail.com, or Marie Hopper, 595-8162, deagin@california.com.



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.

BZC Schedule January & February

Founders' Ceremony

Tuesday, 1-3, 6:20 pm
Wednesday, 1-4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1-14, 9:30 am

One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 1-14

Half-Day Sitting

Saturday, 1-28

Kanzeon Sitting

Sunday, 2-5

Founders Ceremony

Thursday, 2-2, 6:20 pm
Friday, 2-3, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2-18, 9:30 am

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2-12

Three-Day Sitting

Saturday-Monday,
2-18 through 2-20

Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2-18

For Stanley Tookie Williams and Ourselves

The hour is late. All the arguments have been made. They have fallen on deaf ears. So let us take a few moments to breathe together in silence and mindfulness.

This air we are breathing now is the same air that Tookie is breathing in his last minutes of life; that Governor Schwarzenegger is breathing; that guards and reporters and witnesses in the death chamber are breathing.

This very air was once breathed by Albert Owens, Tsai-Shai Yang, Yen-I Yang, and Yee Chen Lin — whose pointless deaths Tookie is held accountable for. Tonight their family and friends also breathe with us. All living beings are doing so at this very moment. There is one single fabric of breath and starlight. And there are holes in this fabric for every being who dies by violence. We hold all these beings in our hearts and we grieve for each of them.

We have been out here together at San Quentin for too many such nights. The state of California has many more of these in mind. I want to wake up from this bad dream of execution nights.

The Buddha, like all the great spiritual teachers — Jesus, Mohammed, the Hebrew prophets, Gandhi — tells us that violence only begets violence. The logic of cause and effect, karma and its fruit, is inescapable even when you dress it up in the emperor's new clothes of retributive justice. Like many around the world, I can't see Tookie's execution as any kind of real justice. I see it as the enactment of a cruel and primitive urge for vengeance, elevated to an ersatz social principle. If this is the spiritual state of 21st Century America, then our true grief should be for ourselves. Let us stop and share another moment of silence together.

And when we have grieved enough, let us organize and join the rest of the civilized world in ending the self-defeating barbarism of capital punishment. Let us enact a policy of kindness and compassion.

Let us work for a justice system based on restoration and redemption, not on retribution. Too many have suffered and too many have died. Their deaths, and Tookie's death bring us not a moment of peace.

Hozan Alan Senauke / 12.12.05

(This address was given by Hozan Alan Senauke at a vigil in front of the gates of San Quentin prior to the execution of Stanley Tookie Williams)

Berkeley Zen Center Audio Archive

During the June Five-Day Sesshin in 2003, zendo recordings made the transition from tape to CD inscription. An effort is underway to digitize older recordings. Richard Haefele has been working on the oldest recordings and Greg Denny is adding his efforts with more recent recordings. These are now on the bookshelves near the recordings available for checking out. A selection of newer recordings on CD will be on the shelves soon. What follows is a brief report about our Audio Archive and upcoming additions.

Sojun's Lectures/Classes

The archive contains over 1000 of Sojun's lectures and classes, dating back to 1980. These were primarily recorded here at Berkeley Zen Center, though some are from Tassajara, Green Gulch and City Center. They constitute a remarkable legacy of teaching that deserves our ongoing care until they are both digitized and transcribed to a verbatim standard.

By comparison, over the ten years (1961 to 1971) of recording Suzuki-roshi at City Center and Tassajara, 375 unique recordings or transcriptions exist and 231 have verbatim transcripts. Fortunately, Sojun has talked about the same amount each year and seems nowhere near finished. As I said to him recently, causing him to laugh heartily, "That's a whole lot of silence!"

Nothing Special Recordings

In the near future, the "Nothing Special" collection of 40 Suzuki-Roshi recordings will be available only to check-out (no purchases!) from the library. Richard Haefele diligently transferred these from tape to CD for the San Francisco Zen Center libraries, and our library is receiving a set. Each cd also has a pdf file of the verbatim transcription so it can be read on a computer while listening to it. These verbatim transcripts were carefully made at SFZC by Bill Redican and a team of transcribers and have many footnotes and explanations of the Japanese and Buddhist terms. A book of the transcriptions will also be in the library.

Sojun Roshi's commentary on Dogen's Genjokoan, Part 5

This may be the most difficult to understand part of the genjokoan fascicle. Here Dogen talks about firewood and ash. He says "Firewood turns into ash and does not turn into firewood again. But do not suppose that the ash is after and the firewood before. We must realize that firewood is in the state of being firewood and has its before and after.

Yet having this before and after, it is independent of them. Ash is in the state of being ash and has its before and after. Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash, so after one's death, one does not return to life again. Thus, that life does not become death is a confirmed teaching of the buddha dharma. For this reason, life is called the non-born. That death does not become life is a confirmed teaching of the buddha dharma. Therefore death is called the non-extinguished. Life is a period of itself. Death is a period of itself. For example, they are like winter and spring. We do not think that winter becomes spring, nor do we say that spring becomes summer."



Dogen uses this simile of firewood and ash to talk about birth and death. Suzuki Roshi says that you can explain it, but your explanation can't be perfect. In this world of constant transformations, we have the idea of continuity; of one thing following something else. We think of a progression from birth to childhood, youth, maturity, middle age, old age, and death. That is our experience. We are born, and we die, and then what? So, what is birth and what is death? That is the great matter, the great question.

Dogen is not denying the progression of birth to death, but is emphasizing the immutable position of each moment's existence. It is usual to think in terms of discontinuous or segmented periods of time, like 9 o'clock or half past 10, or before and after. Something is happening now, something happened in the past, and something will happen in the future. That, of course, is a valid, usual way of thinking, but it's only one perspective on "Being/time."

He continues. "We must realize that firewood is in the state of being firewood, and has its before and after. Yet having its before and after, it is independent of them. Ash is in the state of being ash, and has its before and after." Firewood is firewood and ash is ash. This moment which is just this moment, has its before and after. The next moment (which is just this moment) has its before and after.

Each one is independent. We tend to think of life as flowing, but each "moment" has countless micro-moments, or frames. When you watch a movie, each frame is different. Each one is independent and has its history and its future. But that particular frame will always be just that frame. It didn't change into the next frame. So in discontinuous time, we have 1 o'clock and 2 o'clock. But continuous time is always "Just now."

Dogen says that we tend to think that time is moving along. But where is it going? It's now 10 to 11, and soon it will be 11:30. The bell will ring and we have to do something else. But there is always only this moment. There is only just now. Although there is no coming and going we can also see that there is unceasing change in time, while time does not move. "The water stands still, while the bridge flows."

Sojun Roshi's commentary on Dogen's Genjokoan, Part 5, continued from page 3

Within the totality of life is birth and death. Within birth, be completely born. Within death, be completely dead. Birth and death appear on each moment on each inhalation and exhalation. Are we dead or alive? From one point of view, you can say I'm alive and not dead. But from another point of view, you cannot say whether this is life or death. The monk knocked on the coffin and asked 'Teacher, is this corpse dead or alive?' His teacher said, 'I won't say, I won't say.'

"Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash, after one's death, one does not return to [this] life again. Thus that life does not become death is a confirmed teaching of the buddha dharma. For this reason, life is called the non-born. That death does not become life is a confirmed teaching of the buddha dharma. Therefore, death is called the non-extinguished."

That which is not born cannot die. Because we feel and experience our somebody-ness, we have this problem. Although on one level there is birth and death, there is no, non-dependent one who is born and dies. There are only the continuous transformations of our fundamental nature in the phenomenal world.

"That death does not become life is a confirmed teaching of the buddha dharma. Therefore, death is called the non-extinguished. Life is a period of itself. Death is a period of itself. For example, they are like winter and spring. We do not think that winter becomes spring, nor do we say that spring becomes summer."

When summer comes, just enjoy summer. When spring is here, enjoy the flowers. In winter, put on your coat and light a fire. Therefore, understanding impermanence leads to liberation. What we'd like to have is liberation from impermanence. But to be free from impermanence is to totally go with impermanence. It really is freedom 'within' impermanence. Liberation from trying to preserve something, which cannot be preserved, is called freedom. Being attached to something, which is not permanent, is called suffering.

Continuous life is *ko*, like the vast ocean of dynamic stillness. Discontinuous life is *an*, the ever changing dynamic movement of the waves. This is the basis of our *koan*, Genjokoan, the koan of our dynamic everyday life, and our continuous practice.

Thanks To Amaselu

Many deep gasshos to Amaselu Meyer for her many years as provider of childcare on Saturday mornings, and for organizing the Kidzendo program this last year. Amaselu now has other work which conflicts, so we are looking for leads on another Saturday childcare provider. The new person would not have to take on the Kidzendo role unless they were interested in doing that.

We look for a non-sangha member to provide childcare, since this person cannot attend the Saturday 9:30 zazen or lecture. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let Laurie Senauke know (lauries@kushiki.org , 845-2215).



Saturday Childcare

January 7	Childcare
January 14	Sesshin - no program
January 21	Kidzendo
January 28	Childcare
February 4	Childcare
February 11	Childcare
February 18	Sesshin - no program
February 25	Childcare
March 4	Childcare
March 11	Sesshin - no program
March 18	Kidzendo



I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows.

Henry David Thoreau

When we dance, the journey itself is the point, as when we play music the playing itself is the point. Meditation is the discovery that the point of life is always arrived at in the immediate moment.

Alan Watts

Sometimes nothin's a pretty cool hand.

Cool Hank Luke

About Zendo Forms

Suzuki Roshi said, "When you do something, you should do it with your whole body and mind." In all the schools of Zen, that is the way we sit zazen, and the way we approach the various practice forms that carry our family style. In fact, it is how we live our lives. We have these forms so we can find our freedom and flexibility within them, so we can fully express ourselves, and not be rigid or rule-bound. With that in mind, we— Ross Blum, Eric Greene, and Alan Senauke — offer this series of occasional notes on zendo forms. We hope this is helpful. Please feel free to talk with any of us or with Sojun Roshi if you have questions.

Handling Sutra Books

When handling sutra books there is no need to raise them up as they pass you going out or coming back. The person retrieving and replacing them bows to the stack each time for all of us.

This facilitates their timely distribution for all to find the page of the chant. Since sutra books contain Buddha's teaching they shouldn't touch the ground but rest on your zabuton when not being used. Finally, when holding the book, do so up and out from your body with your thumb and pinky on the inside and your three middle fingers on the outside.. Thanks.

Path of the Bodhissatva Event

The BZC Socially Engaged Dharma Group and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship invite all sangha members to attend the next Path of the Bodhissatva event, Thursday, January 19, 7-9 pm, in the BZC Community Room.

Melody Ermachild-Chavez will speak on Bearing Witness to the Death Penalty. Ermachild has worked as a criminal defense investigator for 26 years, defending people on death row or charged with capital crimes. She is a member of Berkeley Zen Center, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and the Committee to Free Jarvis Jay Masters. She is also the author of **Meena, Heroine of Afghanistan the Martyr Who Founded RAWA.**

SAVE THE DATE

Boundaries and Beyond Workshop

On Sunday, January 22, Dr. Peter Rutter will lead a workshop on boundaries, focusing on the teacher/student relationship. We will explore issues of professional trust, authority, and responsibility. Everyone is invited to attend this interactive workshop. Mark your calendars for January 22, 1 pm to 4 pm in the BZC Community Room. If you have any questions, contact Claire Rubin.

This is the first in a series of workshops and trainings organized by BZC's Ethics and Reconciliation (EAR) Committee. More to be organized and announced in the near future.

Teaching Day with Shohaku Okumura

Shohaku Okumura will be joining BZC Saturday, February 4, for a day-long workshop on the poetry of 18th century Zen poet Ryokan. Okumura-san suggests we read **Great Fool: Zen Master Ryokan**, if we are able. Specific poems to be discussed and more information will be available on the patio bulletin board soon.

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