



Berkeley Zen Center



March 2006 Newsletter

All Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting

On Tuesday, March 7, at 6:30, all BZC members are invited to come together to hear the Treasurer's report and discuss and approve the BZC budget for 2006. Bring a dish to share (bulletin board sign-up for food and clean up).

Kanzeon Sitting

The next Kanzeon sitting will be on Sunday, April 2, 2006, 8:45 am to 4 pm. This sitting is especially designed for those who have some difficulty with the typical sesshin schedule, but it is open to anyone. The periods of zazen are shorter so it is also a good opportunity to experiment with a more challenging posture. Attend for all or part of the day. If you have particular concerns, needs, or ideas, or if this will be your first day-long sitting, please contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, lauries@kushiki.org . Lunch will be bag lunch - bring you own, or purchase one from the Thai temple next door or the Berkeley Bowl. Cost for the day is \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. Sign up on the bulletin board as usual.

BZC Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to BZC members. The Board meets about once a month, on Sunday mornings from 9 am until about 11 am. Upcoming meeting dates are March 5, April 30, and June 4.



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 March & April

Founders Ceremony

Thursday, 3-2, 6:20 P.M.

Friday, 3-3, 6:40 A.M.

One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 3-11

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3-11, 9:30 A.M.

Half-Day Sitting

Saturday, 3-18

Kanzeon Sitting

Sunday, 4-2

Founders Ceremony

Monday, 4-3 6:20 P.M.

Tuesday, 4-4, 6:40 A.M.

One-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4-9

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4-15, 9:30 A.M.

Oryoki Cloths

Sets of oryoki cloths (lap, wipe, utensil and wrap) are for sale for \$20.00 at the book table on Saturdays. The complete oryoki which includes cloths, utensils and three bowls is also available for \$35.00.

Directory Changes

Please make the following changes to your 2006 Directories:

Doug and Penny Greiner
483 A Western Drive
Richmond, Ca 94801

David Weinberg
2078 Curtis Street
Berkeley, Ca 92702

Bob Rosenbaum
2 Anchor Drive #F394
Emeryville, Ca 94608-1556
601-0454

Andrew Goodwin
2431 Oregon Street, Apt 7
Berkeley, Ca 94705

Fumiyo Uchiyama
203 Aoi Chateau
5-5-1 Kojimachi, Chiyoda
Tokyo 102-0083, Japan

Al Tribe
415 453.2773

Baika Andrea Pratt
510 407-7910

FORMS

Sojun Roshi frequently instructs us: don't treat any thing like an object. That means, handle things carefully, mindfully, as if they were our own body. When positioning zabutons during service, please bend down and move them by hand, rather than pushing or pulling with your foot. When moving zafus, place them gently, rather than dropping them from heights.

Saturday breakfast cleanup and samu

We would greatly appreciate that when you eat saturday morning breakfast in the zendo that you stay for cleanup and samu (literally, work service for the community). This is in keeping with the spirit of Zen practice and can be seen as an opportunity rather than a chore. Thank you.

Note:

If you have well being messages or short items of interest for the BZC newsletter "**PEOPLE**" column, please submit them to: ehertzog@lmi.net Deadline is the 20th of the month.

March 2006 BZC Newsletter

Gasshos

To **Dean Bradley, John Mogey, and Greg Denny** for our lovely new retaining wall behind the dokusan hut. And to **Gerry Oliva** for updating and upgrading the Zazen Instructor's Manual. Check them out!

Welcome

This is belated acknowledgment and appreciation for **Yakuso Ryushin Andrea Thach**, who received priest ordination - shukke tokudo - from Sojun Roshi at Berkeley Zen Center on October 8, 2005. Her dharma name, Yakuso Ryushin - Healing Source/Dragon Heart was given her by **Maylie Scott** at lay ordination. Within days of ordination, Andrea departed for several weeks in Japan, including training at Hokyoji, a small training temple dating back to Dogen's disciples. We are glad to have her back here now in her new clothes.

Welcome to new member **Michael Bachmann**.

Transitions

Shelley Brock is the new Head Jikido, replacing **John Mogey**.

Well Being

Diana Lion is facing a very difficult financial situation as a result of illness. She is suffering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. She cannot work and her health insurance does not cover effective treatment for her condition. A team of her friends has developed a website that can allow us, as a "village", a community of Diana's friends, to financially support Diana at this time. Donations will be used to help her try and meet her financial needs through monthly or one time gifts. To request to join the "village" on Diana's website, please send an email to: david@villageeconomics.biz

Once you log in, there is information about Diana's current health situation, her financial needs, and how you can help meet those needs. Whether or not you are able to contribute financially, she welcomes you becoming a member of her village. This website is pioneering "new technology." If this experiment is successful, similar website services will be offered to others in similar circumstances.

Sojun Commentary on Dogen's Genjo Koan

"A fish swims in the ocean and no matter how far it swims, there is no end to the water. A bird flies in the sky and no matter how far it flies there is no end to the sky. However the fish and the birds have never left their elements from the beginning. When their activity is large their field is large. When their activity is small their field is small. Thus each of them totally covers its full range, and each of them fully expresses its realm. If the bird leaves the air it will die at once. If the fish leaves the water it will die at once. Know that water is life and air is life. The bird is life and the fish is life. Life must be the bird, and life must be the fish. It is possible to illustrate this with more analogies. Practice, enlightenment and people are all like this."



Here Dogen is talking about our human situation and our Buddha nature. Each one of us is like a fish in the endless water or a bird in the vast sky, at one with its element. He is talking about how we exist



in Buddha nature, as Buddha nature, which is vast like the ocean or

the sky, and has no special shape or form. Even though we may feel that we don't know what Buddha nature is, or perhaps feel separate from Buddha nature, we have never left it from the beginning. When we need to go far, we go far. When we don't need to go anywhere we stay where we are. But whether we go far or stay put, we are one with the vastness of the sky and the depth of the water.

We can illustrate this in various other ways, like in the Heart Sutra, which says, "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." Then he says, "Thus wherever you stand, you don't fail to cover the ground. We may stand on one spot, yet this spot that we cover is the entire ground—the whole ground. There is only one place to be, but that one place is infinite in variety and includes mountains and rivers, cities, countries and borders. When we drop all of the arbitrary boundaries, there is only this place." Zazen is our ordinary activity that covers the whole ground. Now, he says, "If a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place."

If you feel that you need to have a complete understanding before you enter into practice you may never get around to it. If you feel that you need to know everything about zazen before you do it, you may never do it. If you feel, "I must be a better person before I do this," or if you feel that you can know the limit of understanding through your thinking mind, you will never get around to experiencing your True Self. So it is important, actually, to allow yourself to be a little bit stupid. If you know too much, or if you feel that you must know something, then you put a stumbling block in your way. In order to practice and experience Buddha nature directly, it's best to give up our opinions. Rational mind, thinking mind, or accumulated knowledge, won't help much, and can be a hindrance. Our usual way of figuring out what to do doesn't help with our painful legs. We can't think our way out. But we can give up and let go. Before we get it all figured out we can begin moving in it. This is the advantage of practice. We can practice and experience enlightenment without understanding or realizing it. It's wonderful that we can do this. All we need to do is step in. Although we want to know how to swim and get to the other side there is no way we can figure it out. We just plunge in and start swimming. "When we find our place, right where we are, practice occurs actualizing the fundamental point." Finding our place right where we are, moment to moment, is the point.

"Actualizing the fundamental point" is one way to translate Genjo Koan. "Genjo" means actualizing in the present, appearing new, right here, right now. According to one definition, the "ko" of "koan" means level; the ground on which everything stands, while "an" means some particular place

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Sojun Commentary on Dogen's Genjo Koan, continued from page 3

or position which Dogen calls its dharma position." At any one moment, everything in the universe is in its unique unrepeatable dharma position. It's like swimming on top of the ocean while walking with your feet on the bottom. There are two aspects of the word "dharma." "Dharma" with a capital "D" means the law or reality. That is also Buddha's teaching. "Dharma" with a small "d" means



"things." Technically, dharmas are the physical and psychic elements of our body and mind. But in a broader sense it refers to all phenomenal things. Anything and everything is a dharma. Every phenomenal thing is a dharma. So Dharma with a capital "D" is the



reality of the dharmas with a small "d." The "fundamental thing" about the "Myriad things."

Everything is in its dharma position and, from moment to moment, that dharma position newly arises together with the whole universe. Within reality, within undifferentiated reality, all of these myriad dharmas are coexisting, and interrelated, We call it our life. To be aware of our dharma position on any moment within ultimate reality manifesting right now, is our zen practice. It's called Genjo Koan, the koan of everyday life. We appear in our phenomenal position within the vastness of Buddha nature moment to moment.

Dogen says, "When you find your place (your dharma position), right where you are, that's where practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point. When you find your way at this moment, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point; for the place, the way, is neither large nor small, neither yours nor others'. The place and the way have not been carried over from the past, nor are they merely arising now. Accordingly, in the practice-enlightenment of the buddha way, meeting one thing, is mastering it-doing one practice is practicing completely." "When you find your way at this moment, practice occurs." So time is very important. In order to practice Genjo Koan, we must be aware of our activity in each moment. When we sit zazen, we experience our life moment by moment in our dharma position. Each moment is continuous and, at the same time, discontinuous. We sit for 40 discontinuous minutes; but at the same time, we are actually experiencing one continuous moment. One continuous moment divided into 40 segments. Our dharma position is right here, right now, which includes past and future and is independent of past and future. Continuous time and discontinuous time are the same time, but, when we sit, we are only aware of continuous unconditioned time, which is called, "right now".

As we sit, we come up with the problem of discomfort. One of the problems that we have is to feel that discomfort or pain is an enemy; something to be conquered or done away with. But pleasure and pain don't exist independent of each other. Because we divide them we feel that one is desirable and the other is not. This world is the world of pleasure and pain. It is not the world of pleasure only, although we would like it to be. So we orient our life to try and make everything as pleasurable as possible. But it doesn't work because life is both pleasure and pain, as well as gain and loss. We would also like to conquer old age, sickness and death, or eliminate it. But in the same way that it is pleasure and pain, it is also the world of arising and passing away. We manifest on each moment and we pass on each moment. We have to embrace this. Is it good or bad, right or wrong? Within birth there is death, and within death there is birth. This moment will never arise again, even though there is nothing but this moment.

In order to be comfortable in this world, one needs to accept reality. When we don't accept reality, we easily fall victim to discomfort, although reality can be uncomfortable too. But it is not the same. To be able to experience the pain and the pleasure of life at the same time is more realistic. Within

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pleasure is pain, and within the pain there is pleasure. What it comes down to is forgetting all about pleasure and pain and just accepting what we have. As soon as we begin to discriminate and veer to one side or the other, as soon as we want to have one without the other, we create a problem. When we sit zazen, we don't try to create some wonderful, special, desirable state of mind, and we don't try to eliminate some distasteful thing. Painful legs, are just painful legs. When there is a pleasant feeling, it's just a pleasant feeling. We may think that when there is no feeling at all that this must be the enlightenment they were talking about. But this is just another state of mind. States of mind are continually changing, and there is no special state of mind that is the "right" state of mind. Non-discrimination, or no special state of mind, is not a particular state of mind. It is merely giving up clinging and aversion.

The wonderful thing about zazen is not that euphoric feeling, but that you allow yourself to sit in reality. When we can sit in reality without grasping or rejecting, hating or loving, then of course we have fundamental, unconditioned joy. But we have to let ourselves experience whatever comes, and be open to everything. Zazen is vast openness, completely opening and offering ourselves and accepting whatever we are experiencing. Our tendency, of course, when something undesirable comes, is to tense up, or push away, so we have to let go of that instinct to close down.

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Hospice Volunteer Training

On Saturday, March 25, from 9 am to 5 pm there will be a Hospice Volunteer training. Volunteering for Hospice can be a richly rewarding and life changing experience. This training will provide the necessary tools to begin a path as a Hospice Volunteer. These tools include Hospice philosophy, reflective and active listening skills, methods of non-pharmacologic pain reduction, recognizing anticipatory grief and assisting with walking and transfers (non-weight bearing.) Hospice Volunteers provide a variety of services to our patients including errands, companionship and respite to primary care givers. This training is free of charge. Lunch provided. For more information, location, and to register call Baika Andrea Pratt at (510) 752-6086.

The Secret

Hold it inside,
the unsayable.
Offer some bread with butter,
tea and a wedge of lemon.
Keep it warm company.
Gaze at its lovely innocence
like a grandmother
her first grandchild,
so wordlessly there.
All that is without explanation,
caught in worry's net,
invite it now
into the lush parlor of your heart,
where you too are only a visitor.

Colleen Morton-Busch

“To make all life
more poetical, more sane
more living, loving,
To experience
the true of all things
this moment...
this moment...
this moment.”

--William Segal

SAVE THE DATE

Buddhism and the Enneagram

On Sunday, March 19, Santikaro Larson, a Theravada and Enneagram practitioner from Chicago, will host an all-day workshop on Buddhism and the Enneagram. The workshop looks at how the nine defensive styles of the Enneagram inhibit our ability to drop body and mind in meditation. The workshop is scheduled for 10 am-3 pm, with a break for bag lunch (times will be confirmed). The cost is sliding scale \$30 to \$50. For more information, contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, lauries@kushiki.org.

Slides From China

On Thursday, April 6, 7 pm to 9 pm, in the BZC community room, Andy Ferguson, China travel guide and Zen writer, will give a slide show of Chinese temples intimately connected with Bodhidharma, Huineng, and Shitou (Sekito). The title of the program is "Bodhidharma, Huineng, Shitou, and the Nature of Mind." Photos will include Hualin Temple, where Bodhidharma came ashore in China; Guangxiao Temple, where both Bodhidharma and Huineng resided; Nanua Temple, the dharma seat of Huineng; and Nantai Temple, Shitou's dharma seat and the place where he composed the Sandokai.

In addition, there will be slides of Bodhidharma's cave, Bodhidharma's grave, and other related sites. Andy Ferguson is the author of "Zen's Chinese Heritage: The Masters and their Teachings." He is also the creator of the "Map of the Zen Ancestors," a color map showing 170 of the most famous Zen teachers of ancient China, color coded and arranged by generation. His most recent work is a 2-hour DVD entitled "All About China," a detailed introduction to China's culture and history using video shot in China.

Sutra Study Group Vimalakirti

The story of Layman Vimalakirti, his illness and his encounters with the great bodhisattvas, is one of the most enduring, engaging, and witty expressions of the Mahayana teachings of emptiness. Beginning in March, Alan Sanake is inviting a small group of interested BZC students to study this rich and readable sutra. The idea is to read, comment, and discuss this together freely and informally every two or three weeks, possibly after Saturday program. The timing is flexible, according to what seems to work best for interested people. It also makes sense to commit to six months and re-evaluate at that point. If you are interested or have questions call Alan at 845-2215 or email: alans@kushiki.org.

Mt. Tamalpais Sesshin

Bird Path Sangha (Davis, CA) is leading a three-day camping and hiking sesshin around Mt. Tamalpais from Thursday, March 23 through Sunday, March 26. The Davis group is an offshoot of Ring of Bone Zendo, whose Mountains and Rivers sesshins were the original inspiration for Berkeley Zen Center's own M&Rs. The Mt. Tam sesshin will follow a similar schedule (zazen in the evening and early morning, hiking in silence during the day), but there will be no need to carry backpacks since participants will be returning to the same campsite each day.

The Bird Path folks have said that BZC folks are welcome to join them. The fee will depend on how many people go, but should be around \$50 per person, payable in advance. Space is limited. Signup deadline is March 15, and \$20 of the fee is nonrefundable after that time. If you are interested, please contact Ken Knabb (510) 527-0959 or knabb@bopsecrets.org.

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

--Dalai Lama

Childcare Help Wanted

BZC offers childcare for a portion of the Saturday program - from 9:15 to 11:15. We are looking for leads on a new Saturday childcare provider. Typically, childcare is free play, but once a month we offer "Kidzendo", a more structured program, which includes the children attending part of the lecture and other activities.



The new provider could choose whether or not they wanted to facilitate the Kidzendo. The childcare person receives \$20 per week. 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

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.

March 4	Childcare
March 11	Sesshin - No program
March 18	Kidzendo
March 25	Childcare
April 1	Childcare
April 8	BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY
April 15	Kidzendo
April 22	Childcare
April 29	Childcare
May 6	Childcare
May 13	Childcare
May 20	Kidzendo
May 27	Childcare

KIDZENDO

A talk in the zendo for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday of each month. We meet upstairs at the Senauke's household (1933 Russell) for a briefing on forms at about 9:45, then sojourn down to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:10. Afterwards, children may join the regular Saturday childcare program if they wish.

Letters

Dear Editor,

I was puzzled by the cartoon in the last newsletter and have not met anyone who can explain it? Could you ask the author what it means?

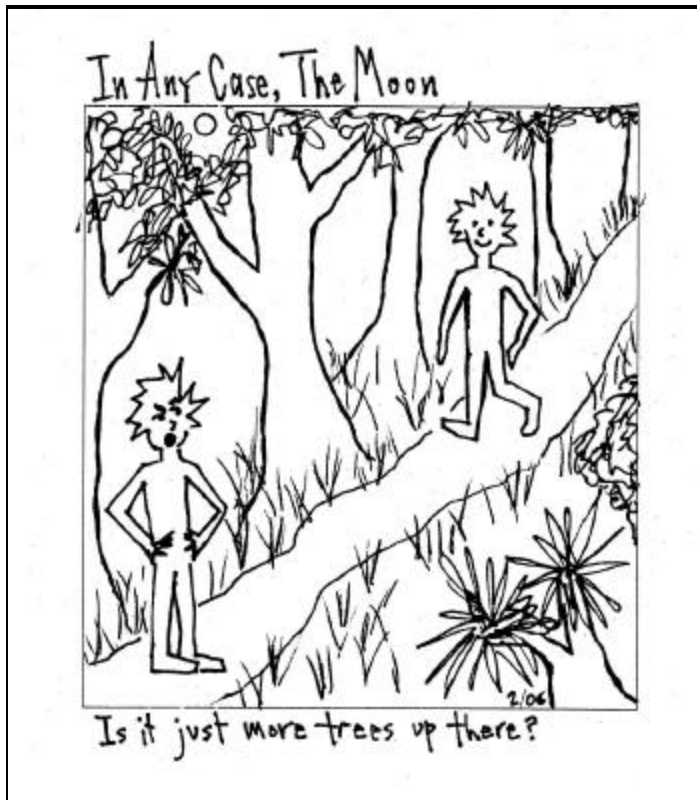
Perplexed on Plum Mountain

Dear Perplexed,

Work it like a koan! Yeah.

CG

(The BZC Newsletter welcomes letters, cartoons, poems, and other submissions from BZC members. Send to: ehertzog@lmi.net)



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