



Berkeley Zen Center



July 2006 Newsletter



Photo by Dean Bradley

Lay Ordination Ceremony

On Saturday, June 10, BZC held its Lay Ordination (*Zaike Tokudo*) ceremony. Ordinees received Buddha's Precepts (*Jukai*) from their teachers Sojun Mel Weitsman and Hozan Alan Senauke. A zendo full of supportive sangha members witnessed the moving and significant ceremony, welcoming the ordinees into the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha. Pictured above (l,r) Valorie Beer, Asst. Sewing teacher; Barbara Llewellyn, Seishin Jinshu Pure Heart Virtuous Practice; Jean Selkirk, Sewing Teacher; Hozan Alan Senauke, Tanto and Preceptor; Sojun Mel Weitsman, Abbot and Preceptor; Elizabeth Flora, Hoka Taikon, Dharma Flower Tranquil Root; Kate Gilpin, Seisho Ninkyo, Pure Nature Patient Abiding; Bill Milligan, Shingetsu Enman Mind Moon Round Full; Colleen Busch, Myoka Eido, Subtle River Endless Path; Baika Andrea Pratt, Practice Leader; and Gemma Cubero, Seisui Shishin, Calm Water Aspiration Truth.



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

July

Founders Ceremony

Monday, 7-3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 7-5, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7-8, 9:30 am

All-Sangha Gathering

Thursday, 7-13, 6:30 pm

Kidzendo

Saturday, 7-15

One-Day Sesshin

Sunday, 7-16

Half-Day Sesshin

Sunday, 7-23

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Friday-Sunday, 7-28 through 7-30

August

Founders Ceremony

Thursday, 8-3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 8-4, 6:40 am

BZC Board Meeting

Sunday, 8-6, 9:00 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8-12, 9:30 am

Work Sesshin

Sunday, 8-13

Kidzendo

Saturday, 8-19

NOTE: The BZC Newsletter invites sangha members to submit short articles or other items of interest. Send to: ehertzog@lmi.net. Deadline is the 20th of the month.



Photo by Alan Senauke

We Hear From Our Shuso!

Shuso Karen Sundheim, Nyo U Ho Sho, closed out our 2006 practice period last month with an inspiring, thoughtful, and profound shuso ceremony with the support of a zendo full of appreciative sangha members and friends. Shown here, still holding onto her fan following the ceremony, our shuso shares a moment with Sojun.

PEOPLE

A warm goodbye to departing resident **Oscar Westesson** and thanks to Oscar for running the Saturday bookstore these past few months. We'll still be seeing Oscar around BZC. Taking over for him at the bookstore is **Max Ernstein**.

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A deep bow to **Blake Tolbert**, who has been the Work Leader for the past two years. Stepping into this position are **John Rubin and Mary Duryee**.

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A belated thanks to **Susan Chacin** for tending the Community Room, and welcome to **Perry Goodwin** as our new CR attendant.

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Thanks to **Greg Denny** for finishing up the retaining wall project with a lovely fence behind the dokusan hut; check it out!

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New e-mail address for **Kalle Nemvalts**, kalle@berkeley.edu

For Nyu U Ho Sho

The skater keeps her balance
By letting it go and finding it,
Reminding the ice to yield
--just a little--
To flow with her,
Like water.

The tenzo wields a sharp knife
With a steady hand,
Knowing where to cut,
And how to do no harm.

But after the BART ride
Outside the locked library,
When anger and fear
Rise together in the mind
And prepare their dance:
What then is prajna?
Who turns the key?

If "barking mad" is no metaphor,
Is moonlight?

After long rain
Comes a season of blossoming.
If you asked yourself:
Why did I say yes to this?
Ask again.
Say yes again.
Finding yourself in the tiger's cave,
Feel its deep heart and warm breath
As your own.

The toll was paid
Before you knew it.
The gate stands open:
Let us hear the Shuso.

Spring 2006
Kando Kai E



Joshin-san and Sewing With Heart

On June 10, the morning of our lay ordination, we held a service commemorating the life of Kasai Joshin, an important figure in the history of rakusu and okesa sewing in America. Sojun-Roshi told how our practice of hand-sewing robes was introduced at Zen Center in the early 1970's by Yoshida Eshun-Roshi, abbess at Kaizenji. She led sewing sesshins at San Francisco Zen Center in 1970 and 1971 and lectured on the practice of sewing and wearing Buddha's Robe. Her student, Tomoe Katagiri, continues her teachings today.

In 1973, Rengetsu Kasai Joshin began a relationship with Zen Center which continued for 10 more years, training and working with our current senior sewing teacher Zenkei Blanche Hartman. Joshin-san was a student of Sawaki Kodo-roshi, abbot of Antaiji, who had researched and learned the most authentic methods known for hand sewing robes in accordance with the Buddha's teachings.

This year is the 23rd anniversary of Kasai Joshin's death on May 25, 1983. In Japan, the years ending in three signify when special ceremonies are held. On that date this year, services were held at Zen Center and its affiliates in Austin and Houston, as well as at Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, Illinois. Other activities honoring her memory include a collection of memories of Joshin-san being gathered by Yuko Okumura, who is also in Joshin-san's sewing lineage. Her husband, Shohaku Okumura, devoted his annual Genzo-e teaching retreat to Kesa Kudoku, Dogen's lengthier fascicle about Shobogenzo about the robe.*

Joshin-san's dedication to sewing Buddha's robe inspired everyone who met her. Our sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk, relates this short vignette: "When I was first learning about helping people to sew rakusu, Blanche Hartman told a story that continues to provide me with guidance. Joshin-san couldn't speak much English, but no matter what the stitching looked like, she

beamed and said, "Beautiful des! Beautiful des!!" Roughly translated, "des" is Japanese for "this" and so she was telling the sewing students, "This is beautiful!" Blanche then relates that truly, the most important thing to Joshin-san was that people were sewing Buddha's Robe, and this made her very happy. Joshin-san worked long hours, even at Tassajara by lantern light, to complete robes, and Blanche worked along side her to learn the practice. Everyone who worked with Joshin-san remembers her phrase, "Sew with heart!"

**The tapes and transcriptions of the 14 lectures from this retreat will be available for check-out from the Audio Archive later this summer.*

"Buddha's Robe Is Sewn"

To learn more about our tradition of sewing robes, check out a booklet called "Buddha's Robe Is Sewn." This collection of quotes, commentaries, and photos, assembled by Jean Selkirk, is available at our Saturday book table, the three Zen Center bookstores, or by mail. Sojun-roshi and Blanche Hartman contributed the foreword. Both informative and inspirational, Sojun encourages you to explore this.

On Receiving a Dharma Name

You hear it,
but it does not enter through your ears.
It plunges in like a threaded needle.
I see you, it says.
And also, who's there?

**by Colleen Morton Busch, Myoka Eido,
Subtle River Endless Path.**



Leadership and The V-Formation

By Laurie Senauke

During sesshin, Sojun told us about how his dog, Chulo, enjoyed herding some goats in Tilden Park. It got me on a train of thought about leadership. And I thought, right. I don't want to herd anyone, and I don't want to be herded. In herding, the goats are always the



goats and the dogs are always the dogs. The goats don't know anything, and some are even stupider than others, so they need to be herded. The

dogs always know more about what's supposed to be happening than the goats.

What I love is to fly with my dharma friends in a V-formation. The main thing that's happening is that we are flying together in the right direction. We have a sense of where we're headed, yet we choose a strong flyer with a good sense of direction to be the point bird. In this form we can all support each other. One of us takes the lead, in our case, usually Sojun Roshi. But we are not following Sojun to get to where he is. We're following him because we're all going "north." In our V-formation he's the front bird, but he's also flying in a bigger formation, following other front birds. It's a rare lecture of Sojun's when he doesn't mention Suzuki Roshi. That's one way he lets us know what he's following – "North this way! Let's go!" He's not just some random bird that we're following wherever he happens to feel like going. And so we're also watching him, to make sure he's flying "north."

And pretty regularly, Sojun takes a break and lets someone else fly in front for a bit. As wildlife expert John Grassy, describes, "The leader drops back — usually all the way back, where wind drag is lowest — and a rested bird comes to the front. While there is no single, unchanging "leader" for a V of birds on the move, it is the oldest, experienced individuals who are calling the navigational shots, using the sun and the stars at night to orient themselves and stay on course."

I like to fly on the edge, feeling the wind in my face, sheltering others. And I also like to fly in the middle, feeling the supporting updraft of those around me. Most of all I love to fly, feeling the conviction that we are headed in the direction for the benefit of all beings.

It's not unusual for someone to begin practice here and after a few months feel like they could be the teacher. That seems to be a very natural



response — a moment when we realize, "Hey! I know which way is north! Follow me!" Sometimes a person leaves soon after that feeling, unacknowledged. Understandable, but frankly, not even close. We need to see how you fly. We're not going to let anybody in that front spot until we've watched them fly for a good while. How they fly when they are towards the back, how they fly when they are towards the front, how they fly in a personal crisis, how they fly in a community crisis. How they fly when it's tedious and repetitive and there's absolutely nothing to be gained. Those who are not able or willing to fly in the formation never take a turn as the front bird, or leave to start a new flock.

Whether the point bird wants to be the point bird or does not want to be the point bird is largely irrelevant. The real questions are, do they know which way is north? Can they stay strong on this trackless track? Do they know when to rest? It's not like the point bird gets there ahead of the rest of the group. Some of us fly in more than one formation, and some people don't want to fly in any formation. A solitary bird winging across the blue is also beautiful. No one can tell us what formation to fly in. We get to pick that for ourselves, finding a flock that's going in the direction we need to go.



SAVE THE DATES

Precious Gems:

A Summer Sutra Study Class

Beginning **Thursday, July 6**, we will offer a class of sutra study. Each night the class will recite and discuss an entire short sutra from the Pali Cannon, the original teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. We will cover a variety of juicy topics, including right speech, loss of loved ones, and a serial killer. Come to one meeting of the class or all, to accommodate your summer vacation plans. Class will be led by Laurie Senauke. Call her with questions, 845-2215, or email (lauries@kushiki.org. Class fee is \$5.00 per class. **NOTE:** Class will begin at 7:00 PM (uncharacteristically), and the class dates are broken up.

Class Schedule

July 6 – Kalama Sutta (AN III.65)
July 13 – no class due to sangha potluck
July 20 – Piyajatika Sutta (MN 87)
July 27 – no class due to vacation
August 3 – Abhaya Sutta (MN 58)
August 10 – Angulimala Sutta (MN 86)

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Our next Mountains and Rivers sesshin will take place at Point Reyes **Friday-Sunday, July 28-30**. 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 be posted on the bulletin board.

If you have any questions, please contact Ken Knabb -- 527-0959.

August Work Sesshin

Don't miss our 2nd annual Work Sesshin on **Sunday, August 13, 9 am to 5 pm**. There will be gardening, deep zendo and kitchen cleaning, special projects – in other words, something for everyone! Not only that, a delicious lunch will be served. Lots of fun, lots of merit, what's not to like? Sign up on the bulletin board as usual.

Women's Workshop

On **Saturday August 19th**, noon to 4 pm, Blanche Hartman and Vicki Austin will join us for lunch and an afternoon of conversation about practice. This is an opportunity for BZC women to connect with two remarkable teachers within our tradition. Both Blanche and Vicki are long-term practitioners who received dharma transmission from Sojun Roshi. Blanche will be giving the Saturday morning dharma talk as well. Look for further information on the bulletin board and a sign up to help with lunch.

Opening Our Lives to Compassion Visiting with Bhante Suhita Dharma

On Saturday **July 8 from 2:30 to 4:30**, BZC and Buddhist Peace Fellowship offer a round-table discussion with Bhante Suhita Dharma, exploring practices and paths for opening our lives to compassion in the midst of our difficult lives and a troubled world. This will take place at BZC. Donations will be accepted.

Ven. Suhita Dharma, known familiarly as Bhante, carries forth the teaching of the Buddha in both the Sri Lankan Theravada lineage, Vajrayana, and the Mahayana Vietnamese Zen tradition of the Unified Buddhist Church in Vietnam and America. He is a pastoral social worker who emphasizes service to the homeless, prisoners, and others in need. Bhante has been a monk (Bhikshu) over 40 years and has acted as a bridge between many cultures in the world. He follows in what he calls the Triyana tradition, the way of compassion toward all beings.

BZC Board Meeting

The next Berkeley Zen Center board of directors meeting will be held **August 6, 9:00 am**, in the community room. All sangha members are invited to attend.

Desire and Love In Mahayana Zen Buddhism *(continued)*

by Raul Moncayo

(In the first part of this talk that appeared in the June newsletter the founders of the Northern and Southern schools were transposed. Shen Hsiu represents the Northern school and Hui Neng the Southern school of Chinese Zen.)

Siddhartha realized the objects of desire cannot satisfy desire and that satisfactions are impermanent, including life itself. Sometimes human beings are healthy and sometimes sick, sometimes rich and sometimes poor. Sometimes, being healthy and rich can bring more problems than being sick and poor. In either case, as human beings we feel a lack and a loss in our being. All human beings, no matter how normal or rich they may be, experience a lack of being because of an inevitable loss and separation from the mother of early childhood, first at birth, and then due to the mother's desire being turned towards the father, other children, or her own life. The loss or lack at the root of desire becomes even more poignant when the mother has died or disappeared from the child's life. Gautama, like many Buddhist teachers, lost his mother seven days after his birth as though he were destined to find a solution to the existential conditions of loss, lack and desire.

No matter how pleasant, the objects of desire cannot give us our being. Gautama was not satisfied with the objects of desire nor was he satisfied with his father's recognition of him as the father's future heir. Often the loss of the mother's love, and the mother as an object of desire, leads to the idealization of the imaginary father and a craving for his recognition. Even Zen teachers are often perceived through both of these lenses. Gautama renounced or perhaps worked through both of these desires.

To many the fact that desire is the cause of suffering will not be immediately obvious. Desire is exciting and brings pleasure as well as pain. Jews often say life is joy. There are several Hasidic stories that tell of Jews facing their Nazi executioners with joy and song. Even in death

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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 Senauke the Thursday before to let her know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie at 845-2215.



SCHEDULE

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| July 1 | Childcare |
| July 8 | Childcare |
| July 15 | Kidzendo |
| July 22 | Childcare |
| August 5 | Childcare |
| August 12 | Childcare |
| August 19 | Kidzendo |
| August 26 | Childcare |

KIDZENDO

A talk in the zendo for young ones three and up is offered the third Saturday of each month. We meet upstairs at the Senauke's household (1933 Russell) at 9:45 for a briefing on forms, then sojourn 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.

New Altar Lights

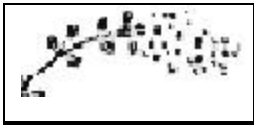
In our efforts to improve the accessibility of the zendo for those with chemical sensitivities, the kerosene lanterns on the main altar have recently been replaced with "permanent" altar candles. The candlestick holders were designed and made by our own Richard Urban. Enjoy the beautiful, quiet appearance they add to the altar. Many thanks to Richard for his talented efforts.



Desire and Love In Mahayana Zen Buddhism

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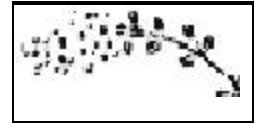
the Nazis could not take away their faith and joy for life. Life is joy. This is non-dual or unconditioned joy. We don't have to become attached to suffering, if we accept and understand our suffering then in the middle of suffering, we can also have joy. Samsara is Nirvana. But attached to joy and denying the lessons in suffering, our joy will not be very peaceful, deep, or enduring. There will be suffering even in joy. Life is suffering.



Ultimately, the satisfaction of desire is never about the particular object of desire that we seem to want at the moment. Searching for the object of desire, we ask for what we want, but also not to be given what we want since then we may lose the desire for the object. Desire is perpetuated not only when it is fulfilled but also when it is denied. Because we want what we can't have or don't have, if we are told we cannot have it, desire only intensifies.

Once we have what we want, the object loses its appeal and our feelings for the object may change. Getting what we want is not always satisfying. Suzuki Roshi used to say, "be careful with what you want because you may get it or you may not like it." Desire is extinguished not only by its denial but also by its satisfaction, because it was not about that. We don't want what we have. For example, while at work we may long for a day of rest or for a vacation. When actually achieved, if we are honest with ourselves, at some point we may acknowledge that it does not feel as good as we thought. The same may be true with getting married or with being able to sleep in or have a day off from zazen. At first it feels really good to sleep in but then the habitual mind sets in, and we may not feel so good. Conversely, when we get up early to do zazen, at first it does not feel so good but then as we sit, we may feel energized and satis-

fied. We tend to forget that not feeling so good at first before zazen is the other side of not feeling so good after we feel good on a day off or that feeling good after zazen and going to work is similar to how we feel at the beginning of a vacation or a day of rest.



The Mahayana teaching represents a second turning of the wheel of dharma. The Prajna Paramita scriptures maintain that the four noble truths, delivered as Buddha's first sermon at Benares, were an introductory form of teaching. The Mahayana brings forth the deeper meaning of the original doctrine, which is interpreted in the light of emptiness. In the light of non-duality, desire and Nirvana are neither one nor two. However, this teaching is not easily understood. It is easier to understand desire and Nirvana as two different things, and that we transform desire into Nirvana, but this kind of understanding can easily lead to a kind of perversion of Nirvana or enlightenment. We may develop the view that Nirvana is some form of a spiritual object of desire.

But if Nirvana and desire are not two, but are not one either, what does this mean? For Nirvana to remain one it has to include desire. On the other hand, they are not identical, because otherwise Nirvana would simply be found within desire, and these two would not be distinguished from one another. Many people, both male and female, look for Nirvana in desire, for example in "heroin(e)," as both a woman, whether male or female, and a drug.

So not one and not two, this is the teaching of non-duality. But this is not so easy to understand. First we have to not understand, because non-duality cannot be understood with dual ethics or formal reason. From the perspective of our usual dual understanding we are perplexed

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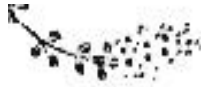
Desire and Love In Mahayana Zen Buddhism

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by the teaching of non-duality, and our sense of reality is challenged. The teaching may seem absurd, abstract or devoid of meaning.

Since denial of desire itself can be an act of desire, or of ego defenses, the denial of desire may itself need to be denied. When Gautama left the palace he transformed a hedonistic desire into an ascetic desire. For Gautama, religion became the new object of desire, thus he merely

went from seeking life to seeking death. He soon realized that this kind of ascetic attachment or detachment was not conducive to a realization of the nonduality of Nirvana and Samsara. He had only exchanged the drunkenness of the wine of desire for the drunkenness of the wine of religion. The middle way is neither hedonism nor asceticism. *(To be continued)*



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