



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2007 Newsletter

Spring Practice Period

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sesshin on Saturday, May 12 and last through the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 24. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations "outside the gate".

Meikyo Onza Bob Rosenbaum (Clear Mirror Peaceful Sitting) will be the Shuso, or head student this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. For a detailed practice period schedule, see the insert inside this newsletter.

Buddha's Birthday

This year our Buddha's birthday celebration will be on Saturday, April 7. Buddha's Birthday is an important date on the Zen calendar, marking the birth of the Buddha and the fresh possibility of awakening in one's own life. The Saturday program will start at 9:30 am, but preparations will begin earlier in the morning. See the zendo bulletin board for the full schedule and to sign up to help prepare the temple grounds and clean up afterwards. Feel free to bring friends and families. Children, who embody our hope for enlightened peace and the planet's future, are especially encouraged to attend. An important part of the ceremony is bathing the baby Buddha in the bower, which the sangha

continued on page 2



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

April

Kanzeon Sitting

Sunday, 4-1

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 4-3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 4-4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4-7, 9:30 am

Buddha's Birthday

Saturday, 4-7

One-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4-15

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Friday-Sunday, 4-27 to 4-29

May

All Sangha Potluck

Thursday, 5-3

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 5-3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 5-4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5-5, 9:30 am

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 5-6

New Member Entering Ceremony

Monday, 5-7

One-Day Sitting/ Open Practice Period

Saturday, 5-12

Kidzendo

Saturday, 5-19

Work Sitting/Work Day

Sunday, 5-20

Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturdays from 9:15 to 11:15. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; call or email Greg Denny, 595-8162, or greg@techsperience.org.



Childcare Schedule

April 7	Buddha's Birthday
April 14	Childcare
April 21	Childcare
April 28	Childcare * * *
May 5	Childcare
May 12	Sesshin – no program
May 19	Kidzendo
May 26	Childcare * * *
June 9	Childcare
June 16	Kidzendo
June 23	Sesshin – no program
June 30	Childcare

Kidzendo

A talk in the zendo for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday of each month (or the fourth Saturday if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). 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 10 minutes of lecture starting at 10:10. Afterwards, children may join the regular Saturday childcare program if they wish.

BZC Women's Council Meets

by Karen Sundheim

The BZC Women's Council met March 4 at a potluck luncheon for two hours of socializing and discussion. The overall feeling was that our connections to each other, our relationships, are very important and we should meet regularly to develop and deepen our sisterhood. A number of specific wishes were voiced, such as support for mothers and family life and some interest in recreational or intellectual activities we might pursue together.

Most felt the need to balance the silence of our zazen practice with social interaction and the sharing of ideas and experiences. Most women said they had busy lives and could commit to quarterly gatherings. Some said they might want to meet at other times additionally, but this should develop naturally and organically, time permitting. Our next Women's Council potluck will be Sunday, July 15 from 2-4 pm. If you would like more information about this meeting or the BZC Women's Council, contact Karen Sundheim at ksundheim@gmail.com.

Buddha's Birthday

continued from page 1

decorates every year. Decorating the flower bower is a fun group event, which will happen Saturday morning from 7:30-8:30 am; everyone is invited to help decorate during that time. Please bring flowers on Friday, April 6 -- carnations, iris, daisies, ranunculus, sweet william, camelias, and lilies are especially good. Leave them on the community room porch before evening zazen, or bring treasures from your garden when you come Saturday morning. For more information, contact BZC Head Chiden, Carol Paul, (510) 596-9048.

Yikes!!

Please note – the calendar for ceremonies and events that is printed on the back of the 2007 directory is actually last year's. There are correct calendar cards on the bulletin board shelf. You may also refer to the calendars that were included in the December 2006 newsletter. The sesshin schedule printed on the back of the directory is correct.

Celebrate BZC's 40th Birthday

BZC is 40 years old this year! On Sunday, September 9, we'll have a major party to celebrate this milestone. If you would like to be on the planning committee for these festivities, we would love to have your input. Please talk to Peter Overton or Gerry Oliva any time soon (peterovrtn@comcast.net, OlivaG@fcm.ucsf.edu).

PEOPLE

In addition to the practice leaders listed in the 2007 directory, **Baika Andrea Pratt** is a BZC senior student and practice leader. She is available for practice discussion by appointment, baika2@gmail.com. Read more below about what she's been up to.

Whatever happened to Baika?

It's been nearly two years since I pulled up stakes in Berkeley and moved to sunny Contra Costa County. With Mel's permission, I started a sitting group in Pleasant Hill, which meets Wednesday evenings at 7 pm for zazen instruction, followed by zazen and dharma study. My friend Lynda suggested the name Mt. Diablo Zen Group. "Diablo" sometimes means one who is disapproved of, or the devil, or one who does not worship God.



It was interesting to take on this Devil Mountain name for our little sitting group. It seems fit though and has perhaps taken on a new meaning: Accepting and including the shadow side, or the willingness to look very carefully at ourselves and not hide our faults. It took me a long time to settle into suburban life after so many years in Berkeley, but several months ago, I realized it was possible to enjoy life in suburbia too. I have appreciated several surprise visits from BZC sangha members and so has the Zen group. For more information go to www.mtdiablozen.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Shortly after moving, I was asked to take on the Volunteer Coordinator position at Kaiser Hospice and rejoice in my good fortune. Working with volunteers is stimulating, challenging and satisfying. Recruiting, training and ongoing guidance with these special individuals is just about the perfect job for me. After being a visiting Chaplain for many years, it was a mental shift to nurture the volunteers on this journey of caring for the dying and their families in whatever way fits their need. The most challenging part of the job is notifying the volunteers when their patient dies and helping them to be with that. My

heart still begins to flutter, no matter how many times I make this call.

I continue to nourish myself through my art work, regular exercise, and sesshins/retreats with Grace and Peter Schireson and sangha at Empty Nest Zendo in North Fork. I've always enjoyed being in the wilderness and while not Tassajara, it is enough Tassjara for me, with cozy and comforting accommodations. I treasure Myoan Grace's teaching and enjoy her flourishing group and sincere way. Recently, when discussing some difficulty I was having, she prodded me: "Bring it on!" Time is fleeting, don't waste it. Be grateful for every opportunity you have to practice. Make the most of it!

Lafayette Crosses Project

Last December I stumbled upon the Crosses of Lafayette project on the hillside across from the Lafayette BART station. It probably won't surprise those of you who know me that I find myself in the role of one of the main organizers. The memorial project has all but consumed me. I have only missed a couple of Sunday 10 am – 2 pm work parties since latching on to this project, and spend many more hours a week fielding questions from news and media people, and others wanting to volunteer, make documentaries, or stage a photo shoot with our chief organizer, Jeff Heaton. Counter rallies and vigils have come into play recently, and non-violence training and assigning monitors has become necessary. I find myself wishing I could go back to my quiet life, but can't. Knowing that the war continues, that many lives, mental and physical are being lost and families devastated, compels me to give time to this cause. I hope that more and more people will begin to restructure their busy lives around the peace movement.



I always remember the well-being of my BZC family and teacher when dedicating the merit of my practice. You may not see so much of me, but I continue to appreciate my deep and seamless connection with my home temple sangha.

--Palms together, Baika



All Sangha Budget Meeting Report

On Tuesday, March 6, twenty-five BZC members met in the community room for dinner and a discussion of the 2007 budget. Treasurer John Rubin led the discussion using a detailed handout (copies are available on the outside bulletin board, or ask John for extras). Board President Peter Overton, VP Gerry Oliva, several other board members, Sojun, and Alan Senauke were actively involved with questions and comments during the meeting. There was a good Q&A session, after which, the one and half hour meeting concluded with the budget being approved by all present.

Financial highlights during 2006 were:

1. The balance sheet continues strong

with no debt.

2. Income exceeded expense by \$3,000.
3. Income was close to budget with greater than expected donations offsetting shortfalls in rents and classes.
4. Expense was slightly below budget as higher than expected capital projects and office expense were offset by lower than estimated equipment, bookstore, and other costs.
5. The Fund for the Future is now over \$120,000.

The most important budget items for 2007 are as follows:

1. Income is expected to match the \$156,000 2006 total.
2. Expense is projected at \$166,000, over \$13,000 higher than last year, mainly because large capital projects (the biggest of which are the new roof and gutters for the Zendo) totaling \$33,000 (the largest amount by far in the past seven years) are scheduled for 2007.
3. Sojun presented a letter to the Sangha he'd composed regarding fundraising for the Zendo roof, reflecting on his past experience in raising funds for the original purchase of the BZC property on Russell Street. At that time he had requested that everyone just give what they could based on an average donation per person of \$100. At the meeting he made this same kind of request (\$200 per person), and several people responded immediately. The board is very grateful for his energy and initiative, and is also mindful of a series of other large capital projects we will need to undertake in the next few years.

The Development Committee of the board is currently planning a capital campaign (coinciding with BZC's 40th anniversary) to raise funds for these projects. Details will be publicized soon. Rubin noted that the board tracks the budget against actual results on a quarterly basis. The next regular board meeting (which is open to all BZC members) is on Sunday, April 22, at 9 am in the community room. The agenda will include a budget review for Q1-2007 (quarter ended March 31). If you have questions or comments contact Rubin at john_rubin@comcast.net or (510) 339-7068.

voices

Zazen Instruction

Sit still with yourself and let it all go.
Breathe in deep then let it go.
Let go dramas of grief and regret.
Let go love, let go lust.

Let go tunes you sing to yourself.
Let go boring blues, let go imaginary wisdom.
Let go hunger, let go sleep,
Let go pain, let go hope.

Plans and projects,
Ideas and arguments,
Set them all aside for now.
They'll be back before you even want them.

Meanwhile, sit down like a rock on the riverbed.
Sit like a fox at a gopher hole.
Sit like a shorebird rafting
On the lagoon between tides.

And when you have finally failed,
As you surely will,
Just sit
Still.

--Barton Stone

SAVE THE DATES

An Easier Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

Our next Mountains & Rivers Sesshin will take place Friday through Sunday, April 27-29, at Point Reyes. Sojun Roshi will lead it.

Exceptionally, this April's M&R will be held at a different campsite which will require less back-packing than usual (2.5 miles as opposed to the usual 5.5). If you've been hesitating due to physical problems, this is your rare chance to take part under less strenuous conditions.

Due to popular demand, all of our M&R sesshins are now three days long. 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. All meals are provided and camping experience is not required.

Information and signup sheet are posted on the BZC bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb (527-0959) or email him at atknabb@bopsecrets.org.

All-Sangha Gathering

There will be an All-Sangha Gathering Thursday, May 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the community room. Following a potluck dinner, we gather in a circle and go once around, each person in turn briefly (one or two minutes) saying whatever he or she wants to say about BZC practice or anything else. The format then shifts to a general discussion where people can respond to any of the issues that have been raised.

Everyone is encouraged to attend. The food is tasty, the socializing fun, and the discussions lively and provocative. If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Ken Knabb -- knabb@bopsecrets.org / 527-0959.

Shukke Tokudo

On Sunday, April 8, Sojun Roshi will ordain Alexandra Frappier-Seishi Ikusei (Clear Resolve, Nourishing Life) as a priest at Berkeley Zen Center. Community members are warmly invited to attend and help celebrate this joyous occasion.

April 2007 BZC Newsletter

BZC Campout Revived

On the weekend of July 7 and 8, we will have our first BZC campout for members, families, and friends in many years. The campout will be held at Gillespie Youth Camp in Tilden Park, a mere 20 minute drive from BZC, and a beautiful spot close to hiking trails. We usually start in the afternoon on Saturday, have a potluck dinner and then a campfire, wake up to birds singing, and a breakfast is provided. It's all over at noon. Folks can come just for the evening or just for the morning. Look for more details as we approach the dates. For more info, talk to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie Hopper (deagin@california.com).

May Work Day

Please plan to attend the "Work Day Sitting" on May 20, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Our practice place always needs care and attention, and many tasks are not suitable for sesshin work periods and Saturday mornings. The bliss of the Sangha Jewel comes forth when we share our labor; many hands make light work, and lunch is provided. Come to all or part. See you there!

Bhutan Trip Photos

On Saturday, April 21, at 1 pm in the community room, Sojun, Doug, and Max will present a slide show and talk about their September 2006 trip to India, Sikkim, and Bhutan. No need to sign up. The show will last about one hour.

voices

Looking back over these seventy years
and more

The human world of good-and-bad
completely dissolves before my gaze

A late-night snowfall blurs

the footsteps of the passersby

I light a stick of incense

and sit and meditate beside my old window.

--Ryokan

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