



# Berkeley Zen Center



## August 2007 Newsletter

### Enlightenment, Faith, and Practice

Sojun Talk, Sept. 30, 1995

**T**oday I want to talk about faith and devotion in Zen practice. Actually, I want to talk about faith, enlightenment and practice, because all three are necessary, and you might say that these are the three legs of Zen practice. Actually, practice is devotion and faith is enlightenment. When people think about Zen, what comes to mind is enlightenment as the main feature. But actually, faith is the foundation, and faith and enlightenment are inseparable. In all schools of Buddhism faith is an indispensable factor, and Zen is just Buddhism.

Sometimes people think that Zen is something a little to the side of Buddhism, but actually, Zen is what we call Buddha's practice. And when you practice, you are Buddha. So it's your practice, and at the same time it's Buddha's practice. When you are completely engaged in practice, it's Buddha's practice. When you sit zazen, Buddha is sitting zazen.

The fundamental premise of our school is that ordinary beings and Buddha are not two. Often people will make a division. They'll say, "I'm just an ordinary human being, I don't feel like Buddha." So we make a distinction between myself, and Buddha. In Dogen's time, in the early part of the 13th century in Japan, there were three well-known teachers whose teach-

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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.

### BZC Schedule August

#### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 8-2, 6:20 pm

Friday, 8-3, 6:40 am

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 8-5

#### Work Sesshin Day

Sunday, 8-12

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 8-18

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8-25, 9:30 am

### September

#### Two-Day Study Sitting

Saturday & Sunday, 9-1 & 9-2

#### Founders Ceremony

Tuesday, 9-4, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 9-5, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 9-15

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 9-16

#### Women's Sitting

Sunday, 9-23

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 9-29, 9:30 am

### August Work Sesshin

Don't miss our 2nd annual Work Sesshin on Sunday, August 12, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (note the time change since the August newsletter). The day will begin and end with zazen, and in between 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. Come to all or part. Sign up sheet on the bulletin board. For more information, contact Ron Nestor at [rnestor@california.com](mailto:rnestor@california.com).

# Sojun Talk

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ings are still vital in Japan. They were Nichiren, Shinran, and Dogen. Nichiren's practice was to put his faith in the Lotus Sutra, chanting



Namyoho rengekyo, (Behold the jewel in the lotus). He depended on a sutra, on the written word as the focus of practice. He said that all you have to do is chant

the name of the Lotus Sutra in order to find your salvation.

Shinran was completely disillusioned with Buddhist practice, and he felt that there was no way that one could find salvation through the usual Buddhist practices of meditation, following precepts, or monastic procedures and so forth, in this degenerative age 1500 years after Shakyamuni Buddha. He said that the only way was to simply rely on Amida Buddha leading you to the Pure Land in the west through sincerely chanting his name; to have complete faith in Amida's 48 vows, and that there was no need to do any other practices.

Those two schools are very prominent in Japan. Together with Zen, they were an attempt to simplify. During a long period of time, Buddhism went through many changes and became very complex, overgrown with brambles and stifled with scholarship and flights of fanciful idealism. The reaction to this stimulated a movement to simplify and provide a gate for

## **Two-Day Study Sesshin With Sojun Roshi**

Our weekend sesshin on September 1 and 2 will be a "Study-Sesshin," a combination of zazen and study. I have done this for the past several years at the Chapel Hill Zen Center and it has worked very well.

We begin with the usual sesshin schedule, then have a presentation and discussion for an hour and a half mid-morning and again in the mid-afternoon, followed by the regular schedule. We will use Dogen Zenji's, Tenzo Kyokun (Teachings for the Head Cook) as our text. It is a wonderful recipe for enlightened practice and for relating to our surroundings in our daily life.

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people, centered around one basic practice to cut through all the complications and the intellectual and scholarly overlay on Buddhism. For Dogen, it was traditional practice, with Zazen at the center.

There was a well-known historical prediction in Buddhism concerning the three, 500 year periods after Shakyamuni Buddha's time. In each period there was further decline, as the founder became more distant. The third and last 500 years was to be the final degeneracy of Buddhism called Mappo. This thought was popular in 13th century in Japan.

Dogen, however, said that it doesn't make any difference, just practice wholeheartedly. It doesn't mean that you can't practice, or that you should give up practicing. So he introduced his understanding of Zen practice into Japan, based on Shakyamuni's admonition to find one's own salvation through diligent practice. So Zen is often called self-power, and Shinran's Dharma is called other-power, relying on the power of Amida Buddha, rather than on one's own efforts. These are simplistic, dualistic terms, and they don't really hit the mark.

So it looks like Shinran's Jodo Shinshu Sect relies totally on the practice of faith, and it looks like Zen is the self-realization Buddha-mind school. But these two practices do have something in common at the center. Just chanting the name of Buddha is a way of letting go and completely trusting. That's a wonderful aspect of faith—you let go of whatever you're clinging to as self, and completely rely on Buddha. This is also true for Zen practice. In Zen practice, at some point, you must completely let go and rely on Buddha. But the way we practice is different.

The Pure Land is not some far off place in the heavenly realm. The Sixth Ancestor, Daikan Eno said that the Pure land is your own Mind, and that "The West" is not one of the ten directions.. So heaven and hell, as well as all the lands in between, are right here in our own mind. The Pure Land is revealed when we let go and wake up to it.

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## Sojun Talk

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Enlightenment, our deepest intuition, leads us to practice. This is Buddha seeking Buddha. Devotion to practice fosters confidence and faith, which encourages us to let go of our self-clinging and open to, and trust our most fundamental nature. There is a saying, "Water returns to the source."



It's like making a loaf of bread. When you make a loaf of bread you have all the ingredients. You put them into the bowl, put in the flour, the water, the yeast, and a little salt or whatever, but it's not bread. It only starts to become bread when you begin mixing and stirring it up. This is practice. It is what we actually do that makes it work.

Even if we have great faith, it's not enough. It doesn't come alive without the ingredient of devotion. We have a saying: "Devotedly do." So we stir the ingredients and then knead them. When the dough rises, punching it down and letting it rise again, distributes the ingredients equally. Then we make these little nourishing loaves, bake them at the right temperature, and when they are done, give them away. One day during zazen, my teacher Suzuki Roshi said "You are like loaves of bread in the oven, slowly getting done."

This is the endless practice of nourishing all beings. The energy we expend, freely induces more energy in an endless cycle. As we nourish other beings, so are we nourished. The more we do it, the nicer the loaves come out. Then after we eat them we get hungry again, and have to make another batch.

So even though you may feel, "I got enlightened," you have to start all over again at the beginning, putting ingredients into the bowl and then stirring them up. And over and over again, endlessly, because every time, after we eat, we're hungry. So we keep doing the same process over and over again, and that's our life. It's a life of faith, enlightenment, and practice. So pure faith is not faith for Zen, not faith in something outside of ourself. Buddha is not something outside of ourself. When we talk

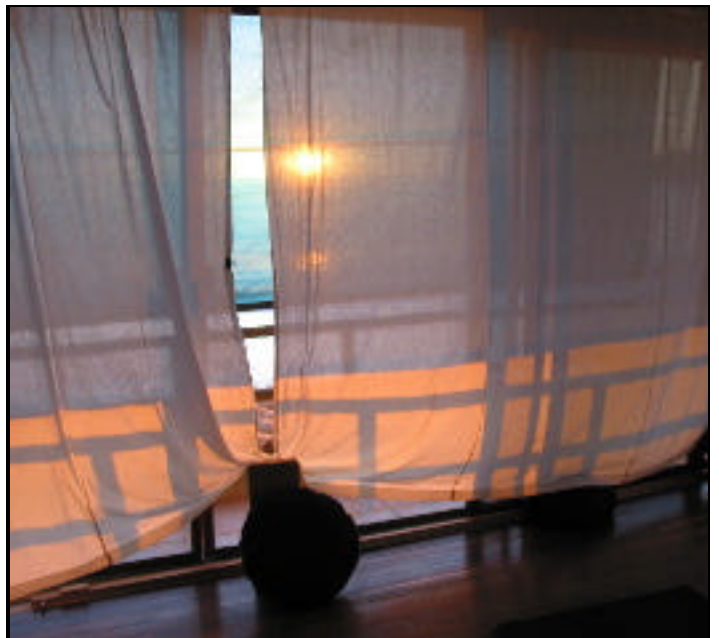
about Buddha, what it means is, "Buddha nature," not some specific Buddha. Although we have great respect for all those Buddhas in the Buddhist pantheon, what we mean by "Buddha" is "Buddha nature," which pervades everything. Buddha nature is the all-pervasive nature that's common to everything. Each one of us is an expression of that nature, so sentient beings and Buddha are not different. You are Buddha.



One day Aichu asked his teacher, "What is Buddha?" The teacher said, "You are, Aichu." But if you rely on Buddha, what about, you know, "I'm just me! I'm just this little person. How can I be Buddha?" One has to realize who this little person is. So, originally, we're Buddha.

But it's hard to realize that we're Buddha. So we have practice, and through practice we have realization. Practice is realization, and realization is practice. Through practice we don't get to Buddha, we don't get enlightenment, enlightenment creates practice. Enlightenment creates realization, stirs up the pot. And faith is at the basis. Faith doesn't mean to believe in something, but rather to have confidence in our life. What will happen to me? Where will I go? Is there life after death? All these questions were actually irrelevant to Buddha.

*(to be continued)*



*(photo by Sue Moon)*

# Buddha, Garden, and Sangha

By Tamar Enoch

It was Saturday, the last full day of the five day June sesshin, and work period was wrapping up. As I pushed the full green bin back to its place behind the bike shed, I looked around the garden and realized to my surprise that there was nothing else to do. Weeds had been pulled, trees pruned, lawn fertilized, no grass poked out between the bricks, every walkway had been neatly trimmed and swept. Of course there's always work, but looking around I could see that the garden looked clean and well-tended, just in time for the Sunday Shuso ceremony.

How did it happen? When I started, the job seemed overwhelming. Everywhere I looked, there was a problem calling out for attention. Weeds, overgrown shrubbery, dead trees, and bamboo that threatened to take over the memorial garden. It seemed so much more than one person could do. Also, I didn't really feel competent as a gardener. I've never taken any classes, and, having spent most of my life elsewhere, I don't know the gardening lore of California, which is quite unique compared to the rest of the country. What's more, I'm scared of ladders and I'm not very strong. But growing things don't permit the indulgence of doubt. There was nothing to do but get to work.

I did what I could in the garden during most Saturday and sesshin work periods. When I had time, I did a few hours of work in the afternoon after getting home from work. And gradually, the sangha came forward and began to join in. At first, people on their way to meetings and dharma groups would just stop for a few minutes to pull up a weed or two. Then, Nancy McClellan asked if I would "mind" if she began coming in during her free time to rake and clear debris. Merrill Collett took down the dead maple, showed me how to sharpen tools and suggested that we build a bamboo barrier. Labor day sesshin participants Ken Powelson and John Mogeysweated over that task, along with Project Manager Greg Denny, who ably oversaw the project. Jea Endicott mowed the



Tamar tends to the BZC garden.

lawns every other week. Nobuo Iwanaga, a mainstay at Saturday work period, took over the care of the memorial garden, but soon began trimming, clipping and weeding everywhere else, vowing not to rest until the garden looks like the grounds of a Zen temple.

Lary Hals volunteered to take care of our trees and has spent long hours on work days and on his own time giving our beautiful trees the sensitive attention and professional care they require. Sachiyo Aoyama helped choose and plant our new Ume plum tree in front, a symbol of the vitality and endurance we wish for the Old Plum Mountain lineage and zendo. Ko Blix, Peter Carpentieri, Doug Greiner, Jesy Goldhammer, Ron Kane, Bill Milligan and Lauren Wholey each generously volunteered unique expertise and skills for a variety of gardening, tree care and landscaping projects. Former head gardeners Moffett Hall, Susan Marvin and Miriam Queen willingly offered their time, knowledge and experience. And countless other people got down on their knees or climbed up on ladders whenever

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## Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha

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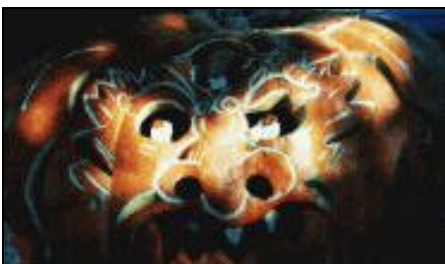
it was needed, each one doing a little bit more to bring the garden to life. Mary Duryee and John Rubin brought their leadership and organization skills to many work periods when these projects were done. Sojun Roshi offered inspiration and encouragement, carefully selected and purchased patio furniture and was always ready to give The Final Word. The residents pitched in too.

Ellen Doudna created a beautiful vegetable garden in a previously neglected corner behind the zendo. Catherine Cascade lovingly refurbished the front entryway. Jim Tomlinson cheerfully took over the composting position vacated by Marian Yu, enduring the reek of rotting food every month as he emptied the brimming buckets. All the residents helped with watering, keeping the garden green and vibrant.

I'm grateful to all of you for your wonderful work and for all that you have taught me. I have learned many things about gardening, but I think I have also learned that starting is enough. If you see a problem, just get to work, and do what you can. You don't have to have the strength or skill to do it all or even most of it. You don't have to know all the answers. Just get started and continue on your way. Let others join you. Let circumstances support you and teach you. That's what refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha means to me. Have faith, in other words, just have faith. And don't forget to water!

### Newsletter Online

The newsletter is always available online on the BZC website. If you'd like to stop receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, you can sign up to receive an email when the latest newsletter has been posted by contacting BZC Office Manager, John Mogey.



# voices

## The Buddha's Last Instruction

By Mary Oliver

"Make of yourself a light,"  
said the Buddha,  
before he died.

I think of this every morning  
As the east begins

To tear off its many clouds  
Of darkness, to send up the first  
Signal-a white fan  
Streaked with pink and violet,  
Even green.

An old man, he lay down  
Between two sala trees,  
And he might have said anything,  
Knowing it was his final hour.

The light burns upward,  
It thickens and settles over the fields.  
Around him, the villagers gathered  
And stretched forward to listen.

Even before the sun itself  
hangs, disattached, in the blue air,  
I am touched everywhere  
by its ocean of yellow waves.  
No doubt he thought of everything  
That had happened in his difficult life.

And then I feel the sun itself  
As it blazes over the hills,  
Like a million flowers on fire.

Clearly I'm not needed,  
yet I feel myself turning  
into something of inexplicable value.

Slowly, beneath the branches,  
He raised his head.

He looked into the faces of that frightened  
crowd.

*(submitted by Ann Livingstone)*



## 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](mailto:greg@techsperience.org).



### Childcare Schedule

August 4	No childcare--vacation
August 11	No childcare--vacation
August 18	No childcare--vacation
August 25	Childcare
September 1	Sesshin – No childcare
September 8	Childcare
September 15	<b>Kidzendo</b>
September 22	Childcare
September 29	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.

## 40th Anniversary Invitation On its Way to You!

BZC's 40th Anniversary Planning Committee has scheduled guest speakers, is arranging dinner menu details, and determining auction items. These are a few of the many details underway for this very special gala, fundraising event scheduled for Saturday, October 6, 5:00-9:00 pm at the Greek Orthodox Church in the Oakland hills.

Guest speakers include: Ed Brown, well known Zen chef; Blanche Hartman, beloved former abbess of SFZC and Lew Richmond, founder of Vimala Zen Center in Mill Valley. Also, well known local pianist, Mariah Parker and acoustic guitarist, Matthew Montford will perform during the event.

Look for your invitation that will be sent to your home address in early August. This is definitely an event you won't want to miss! Individual tickets are \$100.

## PEOPLE

A deep, deep gassho of thanks to **Lynne Hofmann** for her many hours of meticulous and dedicated work revising our kokyo and doan chant cards, and leaving them in a format we can revise readily in the future, to **John Busch** for his diligence in preparing our newly corrected and updated chant books, and to **Alan** for his patient editing on both projects.

### Benji's Poem

By John Moge

Writing a zen poem:  
The words roll off my pen,  
Reeking.  
Like smelly cheese in the hot sun.  
Tell me, what kinds of words will  
you bring forth?  
Now ,listen to the Shuso!



## New Dharma Group to Start

Practice Leader, Greg Denny, will be starting a new dharma group this fall. "I'd like the group to study and discuss Buddhist texts but with the accent on applying the readings in as direct a way as possible to our lives as we live them," says Denny. "Similarly, I want to pay close attention to how we relate to each other within the group. The group itself will manifest the dharma of interdependence, so I hope we can realize and explore the dimensions of this truth together."

Old and new students are welcome to join this group. Possible times: Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning or afternoon, Tuesday evening. Frequency: every two or three weeks? Those interested, contact Greg at 595-8162, or [greg@techsperience.org](mailto:greg@techsperience.org).

Two other ongoing BZC dharma groups are open to new members: Monday night at BZC, contact Anne Jennings, [Mimikatz@comcast.net](mailto:Mimikatz@comcast.net) or Nancy McClellan, [friedabates@hotmail.com](mailto:friedabates@hotmail.com); and Tuesday nights at member homes, contact Jim Storey, [jstorey@lmi.net](mailto:jstorey@lmi.net).

*"Knowing each other, intimate friends grow even more intimate" --Dogen*

**Dear Sangha,**

It is difficult for me to find words which come close to being able to express how grateful I feel to each of you for making our last practice period possible, and granting me the opportunity to serve as shuso. Thank you so much for your gifts: really, the gift of your presence and your practice was itself enough, enriching intimacy, deepening the rivers, raising up the mountains.

Holding each others' hands

-- we have entered the Buddha hall.

Knitting our eyebrows together

-- Vimalakirti's house is built!

How wonderful!

Bowing to each other,

the music of unborn love

Comes forth as the bright pearl.

Thank you.

**Bob Rosenbaum**

## Vice Abbot Installation

In a well-attended ceremony on Monday, June 16 at 6:20 am, Alan Senauke was installed as Vice Abbot, a transition heralded by Sojun Roshi in the June newsletter. It was a classic Zen ceremony with bows, offerings, a jundo, and statements by both Sojun Roshi and Hozan Alan, followed by a general discussion. Senior Dharma Teacher Blanche Hartman, and Sojun's Dharma Heir Michael Wenger, as well as our dear old friends Greg Fain and Linda Gallijan, made the early morning journey from San Francisco, lending a festive air as well as a certain gravitas to the proceedings.

Sojun made it clear that he is not retiring; he plans to continue as Abbot for a good while yet. As Vice Abbot, Alan will continue the activities he already performs as Tanto, and in addition, will serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and will participate more frequently as Saturday speaker and in leading sesshins.

## When the Only Way Out, Is In

Chris Kresser, student of Dharma Elder Darlene Cohen, is offering an afternoon workshop on a mindfulness-based approach to living with stress, pain & illness, Saturday, August 18, 1:00 to 5:00. Here's how Chris describes his work:

How do we face the frustration, helplessness and despair that often accompany chronic stress, pain and illness? How do we meet pain that seems unbearable, with loving kindness and compassion? And perhaps most importantly, how do we go beyond mere survival of our condition to create rich, rewarding lives that inspire and sustain us?

In this afternoon workshop, we'll practice guided meditations, body-based mindfulness techniques and gentle movement exercises that help us inhabit our bodies with more presence, ease and joy. We will also explore the importance of pleasure as an antidote to pain, three specific strategies for working with pain, and awareness practices that help reveal and soften areas of holding and resistance. Suggested donation: \$30 (no one turned away for lack of funds) For registration and more information, please visit <http://chriskresser.com> or call 510.380.6428.

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