



Berkeley Zen Center



December 2007 Newsletter

Year End Message to the Sangha

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to all the members for your response to our fundraising efforts this year. By participating in this way, each one of us contributes whatever we can to our collective effort to support our practice and our community.

It was a joy to see the new zendo roof appear in such a short period of time after our request for contributions, followed by the 40th anniversary fundraising event which turned out (after some nail biting) to be a great success. It put some strain on the sangha, especially since we had not done such a financial push since 1979, when we purchased our present property. I hope that in the future we can continue to provide for the needs of the center, while being sensitive to the demands on the members, as we have been in the past.

I look forward to practicing with all of you in the new year, and together lighting up our corner of the world with all beings.

Sojun



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

December

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday-Saturday, 12-2 through 12-8

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial

Monday, 12-3

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12-8

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12-15, 9:30 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 12-15

Winter Break

12-17 through 12-31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Monday, 12-31

January

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 1-3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 1-4, 6:40 am

All Sangha Potluck

Thursday, 1-10

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 1-13

Kidzendo

Saturday, 1-19

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1-26, 9:30 am

One-Day Sitting (Okumura Roshi)

Saturday, 1-26

Fundraising and Capital Campaign Report November 20, 2007

Dear Sangha Friends,

I wish to invite everyone to celebrate our great success in raising \$55,000 together in support of the continued care of our property on Russell Street. The above figure represents the net total income from both Sojun's letter appealing for your help with fixing the zendo roof, and the 40th Anniversary Party and Fundraiser. Following is a summary of the total fundraising income and expenditures for this year.

Fundraising Income	
Roof Letter from Sojun	\$23,570
"40th" Event	
Tickets	\$13,133
Sponsorships	\$21,450
Silent Auction Receipts	\$11,410
Subtotal Capital Campaign Contributions (Gross)	\$69,563
Fundraising Expenses	
Room at the Greek Orthodox Church	\$250
Alpha Catering: Dinner at \$35/person for 170 guests	\$5,950
· 18% gratuity - see contract	\$1,071
· Wine glasses (\$.80 per person) included	\$0
· Sales tax	\$521
· Linens	\$30
· Bartender - required	\$200
· Wine & non-alcoholic drinks (donated)	\$0
Flowers	\$468
Music - trio	\$700
Misc. - Reservation Cards and Postage	\$56
Invitations (500) - sent 8/1/07	\$1,237
· Postage	\$172
· Graphics Designer	\$153
2nd Printing of Invitations (100) 8/24/07	\$271
Save the Date Poster w/postage	\$98
Graphics:	\$700
· Layout and Design Program: \$200.00	
Printing: Book of Stories and Photos; Event Program	\$1,304
Gift to Sojun	\$660
Other expenses	\$382
Misc Auction Expenses; Thank You's; Postage	\$363
Subtotal Expenses	\$14,586
<i>Net Capital Campaign Contribution</i>	<i>\$54,977</i>

I also wish to remain mindful of the context of this effort. Although we accomplished much in a seemingly brief span of time, there remain other challenges for the future. Our Open Letter to Sangha Members in September presented a goal of raising \$115,000 to meet the costs of a number of large (and not so large) capital projects we anticipate needing to complete over the next two to three years. These are recapitulated below:

Plumbing	1933	\$ 20,000	Original water supply pipes need to be replaced
Paint	1929	20,000	Whole building needs to be repainted
	1933	15,000	80% building needs to be repainted
Seismic	1929	5,000	Issues with support of extension of upstairs apartment and CR porch structure
	1933	3,000	Additional sheer paneling
	1933 1/2	3,000	Additional sheer paneling
	Zendo	4,000	Significant reinforcement needed under zendo
Roof**	Zendo	15,000	Crumbling and leaking, gutters need work
Porch	1929	8,000	Enclosing, cosmetic upgrading, optimizing space/storage
Windows	Various	15,000	Falling apart everywhere.
Other Capital		7,000	Includes remodel of kitchen** in 1933 ½ upstairs

** Completed to date!!

We are planning several capital projects for the coming year, and will be updating everyone with new information. We would like to provide a forum for sharing the priorities shaping our discussion, and get additional input from Sangha members. Upcoming opportunities will be at All Sangha Potlucks, and open discussion (Monday) in early January.

There are two areas of concern facing the Board regarding BZC's finances: A) the need to refocus our energies around how to raise the additional funds necessary to complete the capital projects not yet funded by our current efforts, and; B) the ongoing transition in the abbacy will eventually call for a substantially increased operating budget to support our teachers. Meeting this need will require a careful examination of all of our sources of support in a way that involves the entire Sangha in discussion of how we support the teaching and programs here.

I want to acknowledge that this has been on our collective minds for a while, and the current balance in our Fund for the Future of \$120,000 was, and is, intended for this purpose. So we are not facing an immediate crisis in this regard. However, the Board would like to invite the Sangha as a whole to engage in this issue in the near term. We hope to further clarify the nature of this issue at the Board's upcoming retreat in December.

The above details tell a story of great energy and care on the part of many of our Sangha members and long time friends. The response of our larger community was indeed heartwarming, and extending our welcome and request for support to them brought us together in a way which gives me confidence that Berkeley Zen Center will thrive as we go forward.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, with much gratitude,
Peter Overton, BZC Board President

The Heart Sutra and the Mantra of our Life

From a talk by Sojun Mel Weitsman, May 15, 1983

At the end of the Heart Sutra we chant the mantra, Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi svaha. The sutra refers to the great bright mantra. According to Edward Conze, a mantra is literally, a kind of spell. But spell means various things to us. We tend to think of a spell as an enchantment by a witch or a magician. It is something which takes us over. If we listen to a piece of music, we come under the spell or influence of the music. If we go into the woods, we come under the spell of the trees and plants. If we go to the beach, we come under the spell of sun, wind and water. Watching a movie, we become absorbed in the story. It doesn't have to be seductive, but we tend to think of it that way because of our associations. But mantra is not exactly a spell in that way. Maybe you could say it's a kind of Samadhi, a concentration or absorption. Something that contains the means for absorption or compels our attention.

There are no mantras in the six hundred volumes of the Prajna Paramita Sutras. So, to have this mantra at the end of the Heart Sutra is rather unusual. It is the mantra that expresses Prajna Paramita, or crossing to the other shore. Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate: gone gone, gone to the other shore, svaha. Svaha is not exactly translatable. It's a kind of exclamation; something like "well-gone." This mantra is called the great bright mantra, the supreme mantra, the unsurpassable. What does it mean and how does it apply to the sutra?

I used to think of Suzuki Roshi's life as a mantra. We tend to think of a mantra as a phrase which we repeat over and over again. Sometimes people ask, "Can you give me a mantra?" --something to repeat over and over in order to evoke or to maintain a certain concentrated or pure state. But when I observed Suzuki Roshi it seemed to me that the way he lived his life was as a mantra. His life had a very obvious form. Every day at the old Sokoji

Temple at Bush Street (in San Francisco), I would see him enter the zendo from his office and light the incense, sit zazen and do service. Every day he did the same thing, which was amazing to me. I had never seen anyone do that kind of activity before. His life was devoted to sitting zazen, bowing, lighting incense, and the various other things that he did.

When there were so many other things to do in the world, here was this person simply doing these things over and over again every day. And he had been doing them over and over every day for most of his life. I never thought of myself doing anything like that in what seemed like such a narrowly disciplined way of life. So I was impressed by it. After a while, it occurred to me that his life was a mantra. Everyday he had these tasks that he would do. He was always concentrated and went about his activity in a light and easy manner. Somehow, it was not just repetitive. It was a dynamic that was always producing light. One way to produce energy is to have something going around in a circular path. If you hook up a conductor to that energy producer, the energy flows from it as a dynamo. That's why he had so much spiritual power.

The form that he gave to Zen Center is what made Zen Center work so well. The schedule is also like a mantra. The mantra is a powerful basis. There also has to be sincerity and some incorruptible leadership. With good leadership and the strong, powerful, dynamic mantra of form, the Prajna Paramita reveals itself and is lived through the form. And the forms we meet in our life.



SAVE THE DATES

Study Sesshin with Shohaku Okumura Roshi

On Saturday, January 26, we will again offer our special study sesshin with Shohaku Okumura Roshi. The schedule has not been finalized, but we will begin at 5 am as usual for a one-day sitting. Check the January newsletter for more details.

Introduction to Buddhism Class Offered

Hozan Alan Senauke, our vice abbot, will teach a six-week Introduction To Buddhism class on Thursday evenings from February 7 to March 13. The text we'll be using is "The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching" by Thich Nhat Hanh. Copies will be available for you to purchase well in advance of the class. Although we don't emphasize study so much in Zen, the foundational principles of Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching which Alan will present are essential to understanding this path. The class is not just a presentation of information but a discussion of how we actually do it. Therefore everyone, regardless of experience at BZC, is invited.

Appreciation for Our Practice

The annual ceremony to express our gratitude to our founder, the Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony, will be held at 7:40 pm, Monday, Dec. 3. Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony will follow lecture on Saturday, Dec. 8. Although these ceremonies are traditionally performed as a part of Rohatsu sesshin, all sangha members and friends are encouraged to attend.

Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate. Before the winter break (mid-Dec), please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman. After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

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

December 1	Childcare
December 8	Sesshin – no program
December 15	Kidzendo
December 22	Interim – no program
December 29	Interim – no program
January 5	Childcare
January 12	Childcare
January 19	Kidzendo
January 26	Sesshin – no program

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.

New 2008 Calendars Out

Included in this newsletter is the BZC Event Calendar for 2008. We want to alert you to a couple items: Practice period will start a week earlier than the last couple years, so we'll have a full six weeks of zazen and study together before the 5-day sesshin. We're taking a break from offering Kanzeon sesshins for the time being, however we've scheduled a Beginner's Sesshin on March 9. Watch for details in the February newsletter.



PEOPLE

It's that time of year again. A deep gassho to our Sesshin Director of the last two years **Leslie Bartholic**. Her light touch and equanimity in this central position have been widely appreciated. Taking over for her in 2008 are **John Rubin and Alexandra Frappier**. In the cascading domino effect, we further thank **John Rubin** for his year and a half as Co-Work-Leader, and **Ellen Doudna** for stepping up to this role. Ellen has been a tireless shopper for BZC as Kitchen Keeper; taking over for her will be **Christy Calame** - thanks Ellen and Christy. More deep bows to retiring Head Server **Claire Rubin**, and new Head Server **Courtney Gonzalez**, to **Everett Wilson** for tending the bulletin boards, and to **Ellen Webb** taking over for him. We'd also like to thank **Sue Oesher** AGAIN for quietly manufacturing an endless supply of oryoki sets.

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Welcome to new member **Wanda Hennig**. Wanda has been practicing at BZC irregularly for three years and had been a resident for three and a half years at SFZC in the early nineties. She is from South Africa and practiced there and has also run workshops there.

Have you changed? Let us know!

The 2008 directory will be going to press soon, so please mark any changes on the printout outside the kitchen door by the mail slots. You can also e-mail the changes to jmogey@comcast.net

Thank You

Thank you! Thank you! To all of you who sewed with Jean on my ceremonial okesa! Thank you, **Jean**, for organizing it. I am deeply touched by the participation of my Berkeley sangha. When I wear the robe, I will be surrounded by all of my sanghas, my sangha. Clear Water Zendo plans a teacher-inviting ceremony when it is finished, probably early next year. You will all be invited. Thanks again. Warmly, **Mary Mocine**

New Year's Eve Sitting and Celebration

New Year's wouldn't be the same without the BZC New Year's Eve Sitting and Party. You can attend any portion or the entire event; please enter the zendo between periods.

Here is the schedule:

8:00 Zazen

8:35 Kinhin

8:45 Zazen

9:20 Kinhin

9:30 Zazen

10:05 Tea

(10:13 108 Bells begin)

10:30 Kinhin

10:40 Zazen

11:20 Kinhin

11:35 Zazen

12:10 Slow chant of Heart Sutra/End, then a celebration in the community room. Watch the bulletin board for details, and to sign up to help make merry with food and clean up.

BZC's 40th Anniversary Celebration

(photos by Dean Bradley)



Over 170 sangha members and friends attended BZC's 40th Anniversary celebration honoring our abbot Sojun Mel Weitsman. A great time was had by all schmoozing, dining, and raising money for BZC in the silent auction. (see above)



Life's course.....Berkeley 1989
prognosis not so good

Berkeley Zen Center
must go there

monks clothed in black
one monk clothed in brown
every morning same practice
every morning same practice
every morning same practice
every morning same practice

Life's course.....Oakland 2007
prognosis much better

heart wide open
gratitude overflowing
joy abounding
Life itself

One monk clothed in blue

By Peter Carpentieri
Reprinted from the BZC 40th Anniversary
Booklet

Board of Directors Election

Congratulations to re-elected BZC Board members **Doug Greiner** and **Walter Kieser**, to new Board members **Mary Duryee** and **Jake Van Akkeren**, and to our new Recording Secretary **Meghan Collins**. Continuing on the Board are **Marie Hopper** and **Carol Paul**. **Peter Overton** will continue as President, **Gerry Oliva** as Vice-President, and **John Rubin** as Treasurer. All paid positions - **Sojun Roshi** as Abbot, **Alan Senauke** as Tanto, and **John Mogey** as Office Manager - were confirmed.



OUTSIDE THE GATE



Free Burma

BZC vice-abbot Hozan Alan Senauke recently spoke at a demonstration in San Francisco (shown above) sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the Burmese American Democratic Alliance calling for a speedy and peaceful transition to democracy in Burma. The nonviolent uprising continues in many forms, remarkable things are stirring in Burma, and there is hope for the people of that country if the world continues to stand with them. For more information on how you can help, contact the Buddhist Peace Fellowship website: www.bpf.org Photo by Denise Forrest.

New Jikido Procedure

It has been increasingly difficult to fill the weekly jikido calendar. To keep the zendo in tip-top shapes, we've come up with a new plan. During morning soji Tuesday - Friday, we will assemble a small team of four to five jikidos who stay for 15 minutes and do a portion of the weekly work. There will be a point person for each day who will assign a set of tasks. We're hoping that each person who sits in the morning and has the time will pick one day a week to join this activity - join a team and get your energy flowing for the day!

**Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA. 94703**