



# Berkeley Zen Center



## April 2008 Newsletter

### Spring Practice Period

**O**ur annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sitting starting at 5:00 am on Sunday, May 4 and last through the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 22. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations "outside the gate."

Seisen Ikushin Gerry Oliva-Pure Spring, Nourishing Heart-will be the shuso, or head student this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. Myoka Eido Colleen Busch - Subtle River Endless Path- will be serving as Benji.

Our Thursday night class with Sojun Roshi will be on selected koans from various koan collections. For a detailed practice period schedule, see the insert inside this newsletter. Practice period applications will be available on the main bulletin board shelf in early April; please fill out and turn in by April 30.

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### April Work Day

We hope that many of you can join us for the **Work Day Sitting, April 20, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.** There are many tasks around our temple that 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.



#### 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

#### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 4-3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 4-4, 6:40 am

#### Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4-5

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4-19, 9:30 am

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4-13, 9:30 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 4-19

#### Work Day Sitting

Sunday, 4-20

#### Mountains And Rivers

Friday-Sunday, 4-25 to 4-27

#### May

#### One-Day Sitting/Open Spring Practice Period

Sunday, 5-4

#### Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 5-5, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 5-6, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 5-17

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 5-18

#### Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night

Saturday, 5-31

### Newsletter Online

The newsletter is available online with full color pictures 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 Moge.

## Buddha's Birthday

This year our Buddha's birthday celebration will be on Saturday, April 5. 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 his bower, which the sangha 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 4, 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, Anke Perkert - anke\_per@yahoo.com .

## Practice Period Highlights

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**Opening sitting:** May 4, 5:00 am-5:00 pm

**Opening/Shuso Entering Ceremony:**  
May 4, about 11 am.

**Shuso talks:** May 5, 16, & 24; and June 7.

**Classes:** Thursday evenings, May 8 to June 12.

**Bansan:** May 23.

**Dinner and skit night:** May 31, 6:00 pm.

**Shosan:** June 6 and 16.

**Lay Ordination:** June 14.

**Five day sesshin:** June 18 to 22.

**Shuso Hossen:** June 22.

## 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 5	<b>Buddha's Birthday</b>
April 12	Childcare
April 19	<b>Kidzendo</b>
April 26	Childcare
May 3	Childcare
May 10	Childcare
May 17	<b>Kidzendo</b>
May 24	Childcare
May 31	Childcare
June 7	Childcare
June 14	Childcare
June 21	Sesshin – no program
June 28	<b>Kidzendo</b>

## 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.



# From a Talk By Sojun

**H**appiness is not in the pursuit of. Peace must be found within ourselves. That is why we don't say to get rid of your pain in order to be happy. Happiness doesn't depend on the circumstantial causes of pleasure and pain. Buddha Dharma goes deeper than just being happy. The pursuit of happiness is a false pursuit, because happiness is a result of something and not an object.



Since everything is impermanent, if you construct a happiness out of an ephemeral situation it will eventually crumble and unhappiness will be the result. True happiness is like the sun, which is always with us and shines through even when the clouds of like and dislike, grasping and aversion, and the trials and tribulations of our life seem overwhelming.

When we can settle on the self and open to our own light, that light illuminates our self and permeates outward to all beings (Jijuyu Zanmai). If we can open the source of joy within ourselves we can touch it in others. True joy arises from wholeness, but we lose it in partiality. It is easy to believe that if we were rid of all our problems we could have a happy life.

Have you ever noticed those big kelp beds in the ocean? The ocean moves and the kelp moves with it. Whatever the waves do the kelp does, even when it is rooted to the bottom. Often we try to escape the waves, but our resistance is a cause of suffering. Samadhi is like playing in the waves without getting pulled under. If you can do that your life can be happy even though you have many problems. This is the joyful path which cannot be extinguished by circumstances. If you follow this path of shikantaza, (Just This), and no -gaining-beginners mind, your life can be fundamentally happy beyond all circumstances.

Sesshin is a practice of great patience and endurance. Patience is the ability to stay still in the center of each moment. It is fundamental in helping us endure the painfulness of our life. Pain and suffering are not always the same thing. Pain is a feeling and suffering is more of

an attitude toward pain. If we can allow for pain, it is easier to be free from suffering.

It is hard to open ourselves to pain, but when we do, transformation is possible. When we are not controlled by emotions and thoughts, we have the opportunity to rely on our original non-dual Buddha mind, and allow our emotions and thoughts to function in a beneficial way, free from partiality. This is how happiness arises without looking for it.

## The Character of Soup and the Soup of Character

*Continued, Part 4*

By Raul Moncayo, Senior Student

**I**n May of 1223, or thereabouts, Dogen arrived in China and met an old monk who was the Tenzo at a Zen monastery. They talked for a while but then the monk said he had to leave because he had to bring back the groceries to feed the monks. When Dogen asked him to stay because there should be others capable of preparing the meals, and that he was too old to be laboring in what appeared to Dogen to be a useless activity, the old monk burst out laughing and remarked, "My good friend from abroad! You do not understand what practice is all about, nor do you know the meaning of characters."

At that time Dogen did not understand the meaning of practice or the meaning of characters although he realized that there was a lot more he needed to understand about practice and character. A couple of months later Dogen was staying at a monastery, and the old Tenzo came to visit him. Dogen again asked him, "What are characters?" The monk answered "One, two, three, four, five." Then Dogen asked, "What is practice?" The monk answered, "There is noth

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# BZC Budget Report

By John Rubin BZC Treasurer

**O**n Tuesday, March 4, 2008, over thirty BZC members gathered in the community room for dinner and to hear the Treasurer's report on 2007 financial results and presentation of the 2008 budget for approval. A lively discussion ensued and many questions were asked and answered before the budget was unanimously approved.

A high priority for the BZC Board of Directors is to improve the communication and discussion of important matters with the whole sangha. In that spirit, the following paragraphs give the highlights of our financial picture. For anyone who didn't attend the meeting and want to see the whole open-book report, a copy of the 15-page budget handout is posted on the outside bulletin board. If you have questions or comments about anything in the handout, please talk about them with any of our Board members. Your input is much appreciated.

## **2007 Financial Highlights**

The BZC balance sheet continues strong with no debt. Total assets at year-end 2007 exceeded \$600,000 for the first time. The Fund for the Future was renamed the Leadership Fund and now is over \$127,000 in size. There was a \$13,000+ operating gain for the year (\$142,000 income minus \$129,000 expense). Both operating income and expense came in somewhat less in amount than our 2007 budget numbers, but the year's net gain from operations wasn't far off the mark. When we look at operations, we're talking about the ongoing income and costs of regular BZC activities that make up our practice. Dues, rent, donations, and sesshins are the main income items. Salaries and benefits, kitchen costs, insurance, payroll and property taxes, and utilities are the biggest major operating expenses. We're now separating the capital budget from the operating budget to provide more clarity about our financial priorities. Capital projects are longlasting in results and usually sizeable in dollar cost. Most of them apply to our buildings and property. Examples are redoing the zendo

roof, rehabbing the 1933 1/2 Russell St. upstairs kitchen, reworking the Senauke's back porch, and painting all of our buildings as needed. The actual cost of capital projects in 2007 was \$22,000+. Our ongoing capital campaign was in full gear last year, with Sojun's letter re the zendo roof and the 40th anniversary party resulting in a combined net inflow of nearly \$55,000. As a result, there's a \$32,000+ capital cash carry forward into 2008.

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## *Notes from the Board*

By Peter Overton, BZC Board President

In late February, as part of the education and training programs that the Ethics and Reconciliation Committee (EAR) now sponsors each year, we held a workshop in Non-Violent Communication (NVC), the approach developed by Marshall Rosenberg. It was led by John Kinyon, and was attended by 25 to 30 people. A follow up communication practice group has been organized and is now meeting on Friday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Everyone is welcome. If you did not attend the workshop, and do not have experience with, or knowledge of, NVC, please contact Peter Overton for more information. Thanks.

This year our budget process (See John Rubin's summary in this newsletter) brought together a number of new issues for us to consider. I was very pleased to find that sangha members are much more engaged and informed about what the Board is up to lately. This makes me feel confident that we (the Board) are capable of communicating important information, and in a way that supports our decision process by eliciting meaningful feedback. Much thanks to everyone.



## 2008 Budget Notes

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The operating budget for 2008 projects income and expense equally balanced at \$154,000. Dues are expected to rise back to the 2006 level, with a modest dues increase at mid-year, including some adjustment of tier levels based on ability to pay, more emphasis on dues collection, and smaller capital campaign needs in 2008 following the big push last year. Rent increases by 2% via the annual inflation adjustment per City of Berkeley policy. \$24,000 of unrestricted (non-capital) donations are needed to balance the budget. The past 5-year range for these donations have been \$22,000-\$37,000. A makeup salary inflation adjustment for Sojun raises his salary by 16% to a \$40,000 annual rate. As Vice-Abbot, Alan continues to get a \$12,000 rent credit. Additionally, he becomes a BZC employee with an initial \$12,000 per year salary, resulting in his total annual compensation doubling to \$24,000. The Office Manager's salary is raised by \$100 a month to an \$8,400 annual amount. There will be modest increases in payroll taxes and worker's compensation insurance due to the higher salaries and addition of Alan as a BZC employee. A new expense line this year (total = \$5,000) is the Leadership Fund, reflecting the Board's intention to increase it in size. All other 2008 operating expense items are budgeted in line with their 2007 actual amounts. The capital budget for 2008 lists estimated project costs of \$41,000. Nearly half of this is for necessary plumbing work for the 1933 Russell Street building. This big 2008 capital project budget is nearly twice last year's actual cost total and is evidence of some of the deferred maintenance conditions on our aging buildings that we need to address. Payment for the 2008 capital projects will largely come from the \$32,000 cash and carry forward from last year. The remaining estimated \$8,523 needed to pay for 2008 project costs will be obtained via additional donations that we intend to get from our continuing capital campaign.

## PEOPLE

Welcome to new co-Sesshin Director **Tamar Enoch**. She'll join **JR Rubin** in taking care of the many details that make a sesshin seem ... well ... seamless.

Welcome to new members **Daniel Bryant and Tim Wilson**. Daniel practiced here a few years ago and returned to practice a few months ago. Tim has practiced at the SF Zen Center since 1993 and recently moved to the East Bay.

### Character of Soup

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ing in the world that is hidden."

The Tenzo revealed to Dogen the Tenzo's character by ending the conversation and leaving Dogen to attend to his responsibilities to the monks regardless of his age or his seniority.

Then at a later time he came back to visit him. Dogen at that time did not understand the meaning of ordinary mind is the Way. He did not understand the meaning of character or of characters (letters/numbers/signifiers). A letter, a number, a word, or an action, reveals the self-mark of the subject or the object. This is this, the Tenzo is the Tenzo, and Dogen is Dogen, and when the Tenzo became the Tenzo, then Dogen became Dogen. Or as our beloved Suzuki roshi said: "when you are you, then Zen is Zen."

In the distinguishing characteristic of each thing, letter, or subject lie its Absolute, and not just its relative value. The world is not a collection of things, beings, or words, because each thing/letter/subject is empty in its own being and therefore depends on the entire universe for its manifestation. But the Absolute is not the totality of things or an abstract/ethereal spirit but rather the concrete universal. Each character is marked by universality in its particularity. A character is the self-mark of the subject and of the object. It is the mark of both emptiness and particularity. This is you, me is this, the writer is the reader, the reader the writer, and this is this.

# Outside The Gate

## BPF Statement on the Uprisings in Tibet

By Rev. Hozan Alan Senauke on behalf of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship community  
Friday, March 14, 2008

**A**s hundreds of Buddhist monks and ordinary citizens take to the streets of Lhasa protesting Chinese occupation of Tibet, like their brothers & sisters in Burma last September, they have been met with beatings and bullets. Lhasa's Drepung, Sera, and Ganden monasteries have been closed and surrounded by troops for the last three days.

Yet the monks are undeterred, and continue to protest in Tibet's cities wherever possible.

In solidarity with the people of Tibet, our brothers and sisters in dharma, we condemn the Chinese government's suppression of peaceful demonstrations, the closing of monasteries, and the broad imposition of martial law. The violent response Chinese security forces only adds fuel to fires that they set many years ago.

The Chinese occupation, in place since 1951, continues throughout Tibet, amounting to de facto ethnic cleansing, destroying indigenous Tibetan culture by a massive Chinese population transfer and economic infiltration, backed up by the barrel of a gun. According to the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), "In Tibet's cities and fertile valleys, particularly in eastern Tibet, Chinese outnumber Tibetans by two and sometimes three to one."

*We agree with John Ackerly, President of ICT, who says:*

The recent events in Tibet and reported deaths of Tibetans are a tragic consequence of decades of Chinese misrule in Tibet. The only lasting solution for the Tibetan problem is for the Chinese government to react positively to the Dalai Lama's call for a negotiated solution for Tibet.

A statement from His Holiness the Dalai Lama

appeals "to the Chinese leadership to stop using force and address the long-simmering resentment of the Tibetan people through dialogue with the Tibetan people...I also urge my fellow Tibetans not to resort to violence."

We second the Dalai Lama's appeal, and condemn the violent repression of natural and proper protest of China's longstanding repression of Tibet. We ask all friends of Tibet - people and governments - to do the same. We call on the government of the People's Republic of China to release all Tibetans held on political charges. Finally we encourage the brave and patient people of Tibet to stay strong, and to uphold the Buddha's teachings of nonviolence.

## Attention Income Tax Itemizers

BZC members who itemize deductions on their Federal and State tax returns are probably well aware that BZC policy (while not giving specific tax advice) has been that we think sesshin fees are not deductible items for tax return purposes even though a number of people have wanted to do just that. With the assistance and approval of BZC's outside CPA, Valerie Bach, we've reviewed this issue, and have now decided to turn our policy around to say that, yes, we can deduct Sesshin fees.

To accomplish this, we'll no longer use the term "sesshin fee." From now on, our sesshin signup sheets and announcements will use the words, "recommended donation."

Please keep in mind we're sticking to daily charges of \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members as the right amount for recommended sesshin donations. In other words, there's no change in sesshin costs for participants. We're just labeling things differently in an appropriate way to allow those members who do itemize to get a greater charitable tax deduction. If you have questions or comments about the new policy, please contact our Treasurer, John Rubin.



# SAVE THE DATES

## **BZC Campout**

On the weekend of August 2 and 3, we will have our annual BZC Campout for members, families, and friends. The campout will be in Tilden Park, a mere 20 minute drive from BZC, at a beautiful spot close to hiking trails. We'll 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. Details will follow closer to the time. For more info, talk to Marie Hopper (deagin@california.com ) or Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org).

## **One-Day Sitting to Open Practice Period**

On Sunday, May 4, BZC will open the Spring Practice Period with a one-day sitting. The sesshin will start at 5:00 am and end at 5:00 pm. A sign-up sheet for the sesshin, giving more details, will be posted on the outside bulletin board at BZC on Wednesday, April 16. Marking the start of our spring program, this sesshin is intended to give all who participate an opportunity to deepen their practice and get off to a strong start in the Practice Period, which runs through June 22.

## **April 9 Burma Peace Walk Across Golden Gate Bridge**

On April 9, the Olympic Torch will be hosted by San Francisco, as part of its journey to Beijing in August. With China as one of the main supporters of the Burmese junta, this is a time to shine a light on how China can help support democracy in Burma. BPF is working with other groups to organize a Peace Walk across the Golden Gate Bridge in support of the monks & nuns in Burma. Gather at 9:30am, Vista Point (Marin side), walk at 10am ( rain or shine). Visit [www.bpf.org](http://www.bpf.org) for updates!

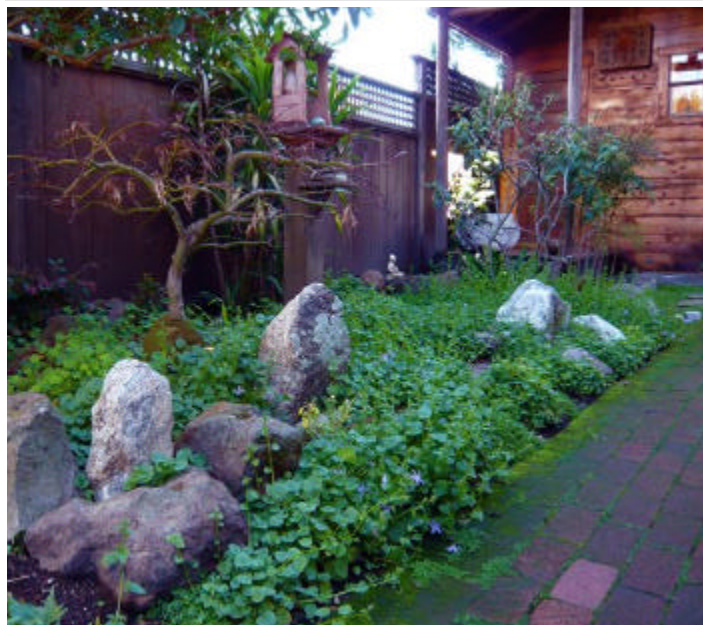
## **20th Mountains and Rivers Sesshin**

BZC's first Mountains and Rivers Sesshin was in 1995. For the next few years we did them annually and they were all two days long. Due to popular demand we now do them twice a year and they are three days long. The next one will be our twentieth. So if you've been holding back to make sure that this is not just a flash in the pan, wait no more! So far there have been relatively few fatalities, and several participants have attained complete perfect enlightenment. The next one could be you!

The sesshin will take place at Point Reyes, Friday through Sunday, April 25-27. 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 sheets are posted on the BZC bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb (527-0959) or email [knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

## **Women's Retreat**

Mark you calendars: The Third Annual Women's Retreat at Empty Nest Zendo, July 10-14. Watch this space for more details.



**BZC Memorial Garden** photo by Ross Blum

**Berkeley Zen Center**  
**1931 Russell Street**  
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