



Berkeley Zen Center



March 2010 Newsletter

All-Sangha Potluck and Budget Meeting: March 2, 6:30 pm

All members are warmly invited to share potluck offerings of great food, as well as discussion—and approval—of the 2010 BZC Budget. The budget is our best effort to project the financial goals and realities for BZC in the coming year. Let's all participate in our different ways in this important process. Your presence at this meeting makes a difference! Watch the bulletin board for more details.)

Lay Entrustment

Our Zen practice is one of continuous ripening. In time, after a lay student has been *shuso* or head student, the abbot may invite him or her to sew a new *rakusu* and receive lay entrustment, acknowledging their grounded practice and ability to teach and share their understanding with others.

On Monday morning, February 1, Sojun Roshi conferred lay entrustment on three of BZC's senior students: Heishin Tando Greg Denny, Meikyo Onza Bob Rosenbaum, and Nyu-u Hosho Karen Sundheim in a simple ceremony. Each of them then took several questions from the sangha, followed by a brief personal statement. Throughout the zendo one could feel the warmth and appreciation for these new lay teachers. Congratulations.



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.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

March

All-Sangha Potluck—Budget

Tuesday, 3/2, 6:30 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 3/3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 3/4, 6:40 am

Beginner's Sesshin

Sunday, 3/7, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

One-day Sitting

Saturday, 3/20, 5:00 am-9:10pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3/27, 9:40 am

April

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/3

(See page 5 for details)

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Retreat)

Sunday, 4/4, 8:00 am-5:10 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday 4/5 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 4/6 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/24, 9:40 am

Work Day Sitting

Sunday, 4/18

Family Sangha

Everyone is welcome to attend Berkeley Zen Center Family Practice events, which include Saturday childcare, monthly Kidzendo, and some new Friday programs. The focus of discussions will simply be about the practice of relating to children and others raising them. You may have children in your life in any form – as a parent with children grown children at home, or as an “aunt” or “uncle” to a child.

BZC parents are in the process of re-formulating and upgrading our family programs. We will be offering more childcare on Saturday mornings-- not just for 9:30 zazen, but also for lecture. Sangha members who would like to help out, or who know anyone who might be interested in providing childcare (perhaps a teenage relative), please contact **Laurie Senauke** (lauries@kushiki.org) or **Greg Denny** (greg@techsperience.org, 559-8831).

BZC also offers two festive ceremonies each year where young ones are invited to participate: Buddha’s Birthday in the Spring and Sejiki in the Fall. See descriptions of our various programs below.

SATURDAY CHILDCARE

Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturdays for zazen from 9:30 to 11:15. It’s helpful for planning if you can let us know that you’re hoping to attend. We understand about last minute cancellations. Call or **email Laurie Senauke, 845-2215 or lauries@kushiki.org**.

3RD FRIDAY EVENING–6:30 pm to 8:30 pm–check calendar for dates

A potluck dinner for parents and children in the Community Room, followed by a brief period of zazen and a discussion about family practice, in the zendo. Childcare is provided in the Community Room.

KIDZENDO

A program 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 at the Senauke’s: 1933 Russell at about 9:30 for a meet and greet, then



March 5	Midday sitting and discussion
March 6	Saturday Childcare
March 13	Saturday Childcare
March 19	Potluck, sitting and discussion
March 20	Sesshin-no program
March 27	Childcare, NO KIDZENDO
April 2	Midday sitting and discussion
April 3	Buddha’s birthday
April 10	Childcare
April 16	Potluck, sitting and discussion
April 17	KIDZENDO
April 24	Childcare
May 1	Childcare

sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene at 1933 Russell for more activities, including, possibly, formal tea and one minute of meditation, and/or free play, depending.

ZAZEN AND DISCUSSION FOR PARENTS, CHILDCARE PROVIDED

1ST FRIDAY MIDDAY–Noon to 1 pm–check calendar for dates

From noon to 1:00, childcare is offered in the Community Room, with zazen followed by discussion in the zendo.

For questions about our Friday programs, contact **Marie Hopper (510) 559-8831**.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR BZC NEWSLETTER is 8:00 pm the third Friday of the month preceding each issue. April 2010 deadline: Friday, March 19.



***From a Talk on February 18, 1992
by Sojun Roshi***

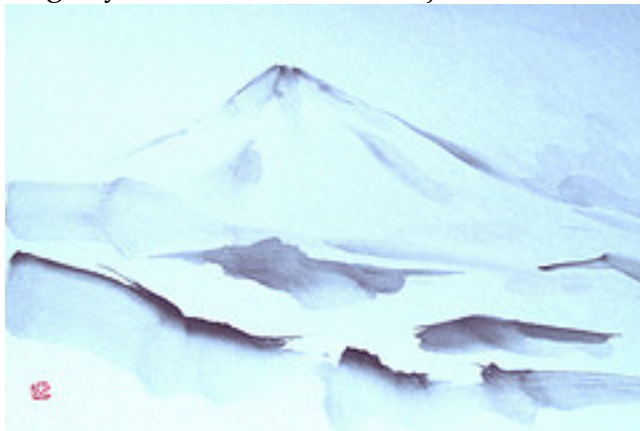
When we come to practice we have to put some limitation on our life. It's like a bowl of water. If you put water into a flat dish it doesn't have much depth, but if you have a nice deep bowl it will hold a lot of water. It has form and some shape to it. Practice has to have some form and shape. It can hold some deep water and when there are turbulent waves on the surface there is a ballast of calm deep water. This is one of the things that people struggle with in our society because there is so much opportunity, and it keeps us strung out. The things that only a king would have had in the past, every one of us has the opportunity to have today. It's amazing. The kings were some of the most distraught people because they had so much and had to protect it. It's hard to put limitations on ourselves but necessary. If we want to practice, we have to put some limitation on our activity which can be a big relief because then we don't have to run after everything we see. We don't have to own everything that's advertised. One TV might be enough.



Master Mumon says, "Don't discuss another's faults." That's right. Just look to yourself, examine your own life. Don't blame others for what is happening to you. "You made me angry." No. "You did something and I got angry." "You walked by and made me fall in love with you." No. "You walked by and I fell in love." In other words, take responsibility for your own feelings, take responsibility for your own thoughts, and your own actions: don't blame. If you can refrain from blaming, then you can examine yourself in a very clear way, no matter what, even if, as the sixth ancestor says, someone else is in the wrong. This is a very important point. Even if someone else appears to be at fault, do not fall into fault-finding. See if you can do that. See what that brings up for

you. Don't explore another's affairs; just take care of your own life. Don't gossip, don't pick into someone else's life. Just make sure that you are doing the right thing. Make sure you are following your own intentions. As the saying goes, if you want the tiger's cub, you have to go into the tiger's cave. If you really want something, you really have to put yourself on the line. But better to just do it, without looking for something. This is one secret of practice. The koan "mu" is one of the fundamental koans, maybe the first koan that many students receive. If you recite "mu" all day long with the idea of having Kensho, it won't work. If you think that by sitting zazen you'll become enlightened, you will be waiting a long time. Just sit.

Dogen Zenji has a saying from the Genjokoan. "To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self." If you want to study yourself you have to forget your self. This is Genjokoan. How do I study the self by forgetting the self?



Another way of saying this is, to attain the Buddhadharma is to attain the self, and to attain the self is to forget the self. According to Buddhadharma there is no self. The self is not exactly a self. It's a dynamic flowing of elements; a dynamic flowing of Buddha nature. There is nothing you can grasp. So to forget the self is to forget our idea of self, to forget our idea of who we are. It is a turn toward our true self. The only way to do

that is to not hanker after anything. Then we can see clearly who we are. And when we bow, we bow in gratitude. When we have some insight we bow in gratitude. That is all. We bow to our true self, or better yet, we just bow.

Instead of trying to get something from practice, or from the Dharma, it's better to serve the Dharma. Buddha and Maitreya are servants of the Dharma. "It." What is the example of the Buddha? To serve the Dharma—to serve the truth. That's all there is. When you serve, you're fed.



Buddha's Birthday

This year our Buddha's birthday celebration will be on Saturday, April 3. 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 9:40 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 2. Carnations, iris, daisies, ranunculus, sweet william, and camellias 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 Chidens: Stephanie Solar (sdsolar@earthlink.net) or Nancy Suib (nsuib@earthlink.net).

Note from our Tenzos:

Please advance post your menu for both Saturday cooking and sesshins 48hrs in advance. An ingredient list is needed in advance for sesshins. Please forward a copy to the sesshin director. As always, thanks for nourishing the sangha!

One-day Sitting

There will be a one-day sitting on Saturday, March 20 from 5:00 a.m. to 9:10 p.m. For more information please see the announcement on the bulletin board or contact Sesshin Director Jake Van Akkeren at 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 p.m.) or e-mail: jvanakkeren@comcast.net

Zazenkai: A Day of Just Sitting

On Sunday, April 4, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:10 p.m., BZC will provide an opportunity to spend the day doing nothing but zazen, kinhin, bowing and eating. We will maintain silence throughout, with the exception of bells to mark meditation periods, and chanting the Refuges aloud at 5:10 p.m.

Participants are encouraged to come for the whole day, but morning or afternoon half-day registration is also an option. A break from 12:20-1:00 will allow time for sack lunches to be eaten in the Community Room or, if we're enjoying fair weather, outdoors.

Following the practice Maylie Scott taught the Arcata Zen Group, there will be a ten minute period of bowing at your own pace prior to the lunch break, and we will have two periods of fast kinhin. Both of these activities can be adapted to harmonize with individual needs and abilities.

The Zazenkai will be co-led by BZC priests Andrea Thach, andrea.thach@gmail.com, and Catherine Cascade, catherinecascade@sbcglobal.net. Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions. A signup sheet and further information will be posted on the courtyard bulletin board.

Just Old Fashioned Sitting: No Photography in the Zendo, Please

The practice committee recently discussed the new appearance of technology in the zendo: camera cell phones in action. We agreed that it is important that people be able to come to the zendo to practice, and set aside technology and outside or unwanted observation. We do not want members or visitors to use their camera phones in the zendo. We ask that all visitors and members turn off their cell phones and camera in the zendo. If you are interested in capturing the beauty of our zendo on camera, please make arrangements with the Zendo Manager, John Moge first. Thank you.



A special thanks to **Dean Bradley** for covering us. Dean has donated a canopy to BZC. It will be used to shade the tea table on hot, sunny days or protect the teatable on rainy work and sesshin days. Thank you, Dean for keeping our tea table cool and dry!

Changing Hands:

A deep bow of thanks to our outgoing librarian, **Britt Pyland**, whose broad and deep knowledge of books and dharma sources was invaluable during his tenure. We extend a warm welcome to **Veronica Reilly** as our new librarian.

Thanks to **Veronica** for her service as bathroom attendant this past year. And we welcome **Dawn Farber** into that position. Thanks go out to Dawn as she finishes filling in for our kitchen keeper these past three months.

We offer a gassho to out-going Head Jikido, **Richard Urban**, for his months of care for our zendo. He hands over the position to the capable hands of **Matt Gilliam**.

Beginner's Sesshin 8:30am-4:30pm Sunday March 7

Our Founder, Suzuki Roshi, taught Zen Mind is Beginner's Mind. Seven hundred years earlier Dogen Zenji wrote in Bendowa a beginner's wholehearted practice of the Way is exactly the totality of original enlightenment.

This sesshin will include instruction in zazen, posture, and forms in the zendo. We will chant and discuss The Fukanzazengi, Dogen's Universal Guidelines for the Practice of Zazen.

There will be plenty of time for questions. Please bring a bag lunch. We will eat in silence. For more information please contact the teacher, Karen Sundheim at ksundheim@gmail.com or the Sesshin Director, Jake Van Akkeren at 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 p.m.) or e-mail: jvanakkeren@comcast.net \$15 suggested donation.



Class on Zen Women by Abbess Moyoan Grace Schireson

Zen Abbess Moyoan Grace Schireson of Empty Nest Zendo and a Practice Leader at BZC will be teaching from her book *Zen Women* and from Case 35 in the *Mumonkan*. The case is "Seijo and her Soul are Separated." This particular case has also interested activists, psychologists and feminists in addition to being a favorite koan of our beloved late Zen Abbess Seisho Maylie Scott. How is it we are not fooled by our own compartmentalizing and splitting? How do we find our true path when our obstacles are pulling us in two different directions? How do we wake up from both the dream of our longing and our just going along with an intolerable situation? When do we speak up? When do we bear our suffering silently? These issues and others related to finding the true Self – the real Seijo-- will be explored in two more classes:

Class Schedule:

Sunday, March 21st in the BZC zendo from 1:00pm-4:00pm

Saturday, May 1st in the BZC zendo from 1:00pm-4:00pm

Sign-up posted on bulletin board.

The class fee per class is \$20 or what you can afford.

BZC Documentary: Music

About five years ago, I began work on a documentary about the Berkeley Zen Center. This documentary includes interviews with many BZC members, including Sojun Roshi, an inside and up-close look at a sesshin, as well as footage of the events, environment, and life at our unique Zen center.

I am making progress on the lengthy and time-consuming editing process and I am looking for BZC musicians to create some original music to include in the production. I am especially interested in classical music on recorder, flute, guitar, and/or piano. I am also looking for photos from BZC's early days on Dwight Way.

If you play an instrument, compose music, or have historical photos, please email me at herzog@lmi.net
--Ed Herzog

BZC Board UPDATE: March 2010

Thank you to everyone who responded to our annual fundraising letter and to our notice in the December Newsletter that encouraged sangha members to check to see if they were up to date on dues. Your response was so generous that we were able to meet all of our 2009 expenses and even repay funds borrowed earlier in the year from the Leadership Fund.

At our January Retreat we addressed three of four areas previously identified by Board members as needing action in 2010. They include: 1) Managing the sangha's finances in a difficult environment and projecting ahead for future needs; 2) Project management/infrastructure maintenance for our center that consists of aging structures; and 3) Developing clear and realistic policies that will facilitate a smooth running, harmonious organization. The fourth priority area, fund raising for our capital needs and the Leadership Fund, will be addressed at our February 28th Board meeting. Further discussion on project management guidelines and policy making will take place at our March 14th meeting.

Remember that all BZC Board meetings are open to the sangha. The 2010 schedule of Board meetings will be included in our minutes that are posted on the patio bulletin board.

Zen Practice and the Alexander Technique

April 3-24 3:00 – 4:30 pm in the Zendo

On four Saturdays in April, Anke Perkert, a Certified Alexander Teacher and long time Zen student, will be teaching a four week class on using the principles of the Alexander Technique in our Zen practice. The Alexander Technique offers a gentle, non-invasive approach to working with the physical and psychological challenges of sitting. It is known to bring about subtle yet profound changes in the way we move, think and experience ourselves.

Emphasis is given to understanding how our body functions in relationship to our awareness and how we as individuals can make conscious choices for both body and mind. This class will give people

tools not only for their sitting practice, but also for their daily lives.

Schedule:

April 3: Introduction to the Alexander Technique

April 10: The Structure of the Body and how we can work with it

April 17: Breathing

April 24: How to attain balance, movement, coordination and ease during

See the patio bulletin board for a sign up sheet. You are encouraged to come for the entire series but drop-ins are accepted. A teacher donation of \$10 per class is kindly requested.

Please feel free to contact Anke at 925-631-1080 if you have any questions about this class. You can also visit her web site: www.gracefulmoving.com.

What do Chiden Review, Potluck, and Ikebana have in common?

On **March 27** Sojun will be offering a chiden review for all chidens, as well as for sangha members who would like to find out about this position. The review will begin at 11:30 and will end at 12:30.

A chiden potluck follows in the community room from 12:30-1:30.

From 1:30 until 3:00 Barbara Strauss will be offering The "Way of Flowers: an introduction to ikebana" (Japanese floral art) .A brief overview of the history of ikebana (literally, living flowers) will be given in addition to a short demonstration. The objective is to give a conceptual overview of the governing aesthetic principles as practiced in the Sogetsu School – one of the largest – both in Japan and worldwide. Special attention will be given to practical guidelines for our alter arrangements.

It is said that altar arrangements represent the Buddha's robes – a way of making an offering that many practitioners can appreciate and enjoy. There will be a \$5.00 fee for the class.

A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. We look forward to seeing you for a portion or the complete program.

--Boughs, Nancy and Stephanie

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