



# Berkeley Zen Center



January 2011 Newsletter

## DHARMA TRANSMISSION FOR RAUL MONCAYO

Dear Sangha Members,

During the week from December 18th to 24th Raul and I were engaged in the Dharma Transmission Ceremony for a priest according to our tradition. We used the community room extensively, as well as the various altars on the grounds in the early morning.

Dharma transmission is a ceremony acknowledging a mature practitioner as a full priest. After transmission is completed, one is given a brown robe, which signifies the ability to teach independently, to ordain others, and to transmit Dharma.

Raul began practicing at Berkeley Zen Center at our old zendo on Dwight Way and was ordained as a priest in 1999. He has served in nearly all of the major positions at BZC. He has been a steady practitioner for more than thirty years. He works as a psychotherapist in San Francisco's Mission District, where he attends mostly to the Hispanic population, and where he has a small dharma group. He will give a talk on Saturday, January 15, and a question and answer (Shosan) the following Monday morning, January 17.

Although Dharma transmission is a stage of completion for a priest, it is also a new stage of beginner's mind. One of the most important elements of the ceremony is the infant crawl: emerging into a new life in a new world.

~ 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.

## B Z C S c h e d u l e

### January

#### New Year's Day (zendo closed)

Saturday, 1/1

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 1/2, 8:00 am - noon

#### Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 1/3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 1/4, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 1/15

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/22, 9:40 am

#### One-day Sitting

Saturday, 1/22, 5 am–9:10 pm

### February

#### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 2/3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 2/4, 6:40 am

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 2/6, 8:00 am–noon

#### Two-day Sesshin

Saturday-Sunday, 2/19-20

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/19, 9:40 am

#### Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2/19, after lecture

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 2/26

## THE BODHISATTVA'S EMBRACE

### Book Release

Hozan Alan Senauke's new book — *The Bodhisattva's Embrace: Dispatches From Engaged Buddhism's Front Lines* — has recently been published. We will celebrate its release with a reading and discussion on Friday, January 14 at 7:30 in BZC's community room. Alan will be glad to talk about the experiences that led to and shaped this collection of essays. Books will be available for purchase and for signing.

### DHARMA GROUP OPENINGS

There are openings available in a dharma study group focused on supporting people who often sit at home. The group meets at BZC every Monday evening from 7:15 to 9 pm for zazen and study, on an academic calendar — *i.e.*, with a winter break, a spring break, and a summer break; it is led by BZC senior student Laurie Senauke. For more information, contact her at [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org). The first meeting in 2011 will be January 10.

### GET ENGAGED!

The BZC socially engaged dharma group is looking for new members. We meet the third Sunday of every month at 6:30 pm in the community room to discuss readings in socially engaged Buddhism, take action around social issues of the day, give each other support for our own socially engaged work, and volunteer at the men's shelter dinners every three months.

In the past we have organized and put on the speaker series, "Path of the Bodhisattva," participated together in anti-war demonstrations, and assisted, every two years, in organizing and offering the Election Sesshin. For more information, contact Ed Herzog, [eherzog@lmi.net](mailto:eherzog@lmi.net), or Stan Dewey, [standewey@comcast.net](mailto:standewey@comcast.net).

### CALLING ALL CHIDENS AND WOULD-BE CHIDENS!

Care of the altars at BZC is a quiet, meditative, and mindful way to extend your own practice while supporting the practice of all. As a chiden, you commit to a week of daily altar care, usually twice a year. To continue, drop, or sign up for the first time, as part of the 2011 roster, call Catharine Lucas, head chiden, at 510 526-3100. In gassho!

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**  
Third Friday of the month before each issue.  
February deadline: Friday, 1/21, 8 pm.



### Family Activities at BZC

**Saturday Childcare** Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturday mornings for zazen from 9:30 to 10:15, then families are welcome to listen to the lecture on the sound system in the community room. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; phone or e-mail Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org). Childcare for 8:45 zazen instruction and beginner orientation may be offered by special arrangement.

**Kidzendo** A program for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday morning of each month (or the fourth if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). We meet at the Senaukes' — 1933 Russell — at about 9:40 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene at 1933 Russell for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

### Zazen, Discussion for Parents, Childcare Provided

**3rd Friday Evening** — 6:15 pm to 8:00 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 provided in the community room. For questions about our Friday programs, contact Marie Hopper, (510) 559-8831.

January 1	Holiday!
January 8	Childcare
January 15	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
January 21	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
January 22	Sesshin — no program
January 29	Childcare
February 5	Childcare
February 12	Childcare
February 18	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
February 19	Sesshin — no program
February 26	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
March 5	Childcare
March 12	Childcare
March 18	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
March 19	Sesshin — no program
March 26	Childcare

### NEW BZC MEMBER

Please welcome new member Patricia McBroom.

# One More Thought on Metta

A lecture by Sojun Roshì  
from December 2003

**T**he *Metta Sutra* opens with a teaching: “This is what should be accomplished by the one who is wise...” Then it introduces a prayer: “May all beings be happy...” Then it offers guidance on how to do this: “Even as a parent at the risk of one's life, one watches over and protects one's only child...”

Many people feel that zazen assumes the role that prayer takes in other religions. Prayer takes many forms, among which are supplication to a deity, and asking for favors of one kind or another. The highest form of prayer is simply recognized as communion with no other motive.

Many people think that Buddhism is not a religion because it doesn't point to a deity. It is widely thought that Buddhism is atheistic. But a-theistic is just the other side of theistic. I think of Buddhism as non-theistic. There have been, throughout the history of Buddhism, theistic tendencies in both the early and later schools. In India the Pudgalavadins posited the existence of an immortal soul, which was denied by all the other schools. Then the Mahayana came up with Vairocana the Dharmakaya Buddha as personifying the primal source, along with the understanding of the Buddha Nature as the all-pervasive primal reality common to all beings. The Pure Land school chants the name of Amida Buddha and offers prayers for salvation, as do other schools. But for Buddhists, none of this adds up to either a deity or a first cause.



A deity provides a focal point. It is the ultimate parent. But, even though there is no recognized deity in Buddhism, it often seems like there is. We like to say that the true human body is the whole universe: one whole being with infinite phenomenal expressions, and we stress the interconnectedness of all beings. So we direct our effort toward harmonization and right conduct because each one of us creates a positive or negative influence on our immediate surroundings and, through the power of influence, on the world at large. Many Buddhists believe that there is just one soul: the vast being we call Buddha. And each one of us is a unique expression of that one soul. Our individuality is temporal, but our life of unity is universal. Therefore, when we hurt

each other we hurt ourselves, and when we help each other we help ourselves.

In this *Metta Sutra*, or, “Meditation on Metta,” as it is now being called, we offer this prayer: “May all beings be happy, may they be joyous and live in safety, all living beings whether weak or strong, in high or middle or low realms of existence, small or great, visible or invisible, near or far, born or to be born, may all beings be happy.” This prayer for the happiness and well being of all is a truly religious expression. It includes all beings unconditionally. It is on the level. It is an expression of pure faith. There is a Buddhist term, *adhisthana*, which means something like, the sustaining power of grace, or the assistance of the buddhas and bodhisattvas who meet us face to face through our selfless effort. Dogen uses the phrase, “Imperceptible mutual assistance.” In other words, the universe meets us and responds to our effort.

When my son was a little boy, I would read him stories about the ancient world. One was a story about the Vikings and another was about Rome. The Vikings were bloodthirsty. They would take their ships all over their world, pillaging unmercifully. The Romans were somewhat the same. They loved the Coliseum, which was an arena for all the viciousness of human nature. Then the Christians came along and changed the ancient Western world. I think it was a kind of miracle. In that way Buddhism is not different from true Christianity and other religions when they practice indiscriminate loving-kindness.

Even though Dogen Zenji says “Only zazen,” without this effort it's not complete practice. “Only zazen” includes all beings. Whether sitting cross-legged on the cushion or at work in the world, if we are always abiding in Big Mind with all beings, that is “Only zazen.” When we include each being as a part of our big self, even though all beings seem to exist independently, the prayer for the welfare of all beings permeates our practice as a way of life.

# CLASSES

## SOJUN ROSHI STUDY GROUP

Sojun Roshi's 2011 monthly study group will meet five times on the last Thursday of each month, from 7:15 to 9:45 pm beginning **January 27**. We'll skip May due to Spring Practice Period, and end in June. Sojun would like to move between study subjects as the spirit moves him, rather than sustain one subject for the entire six months. The first class or two will be on the koan Yunyan Sweeps the Ground," from the *Book of Serenity*.

*CASE: As Yunyan was sweeping the ground, Daowu said, "Too busy." Yunyan said, "You should know there's one who isn't busy." Daowu said, "If so, then there's a second moon." Yunyan held up the broom and said, "Which moon is this?"*

Copies of the case and commentary are now on the patio bulletin board shelf. In addition, audio lectures by both Zoketsu Norman Fischer and Tenshin Reb Anderson are available on the internet. The study group cost of \$50.00 is for the series only, not by individual session, nor prorated for missed classes. It's easiest for us if you pay by check at the first class. As is always our policy at BZC, if this is financially difficult for you, speak to class coordinator Ron Nestor at the first class to make other arrangements. The class sign-up is now on the patio bulletin board, or you may email Ron at shoppingrk@yahoo.com instead.



## FINDING PRESENCE IN CONVERSATION

We will continue the conversation we started in September on three Thursday nights in January—1/6, 1/13, and 1/20—and return to exploring compassionate listening and expression in our day-to-day lives. I hope that we can find ways in which many of our familiar teachings, such as mindfulness, loving kindness, and right speech, can be informed by practicing them in the context of open and honest talk.

In this series, I propose to offer some specific skills in empathic listening and then, as we did in the fall series, jump into role-playing of actual situations we would like to deal with differently, or resolve in ways more to our liking.

Sign-ups will appear after Rohatsu sesshin. You can contact me at 510-325-2342, or [peterovrtn@gmail.com](mailto:peterovrtn@gmail.com).

~ Peter Overton

## TAOIST ROOTS OF ZEN

When Ch'an flourished in Tang Dynasty China, it grew in soil that had been nurtured for nearly a thousand years by Taoism. Studying the Tao can help us better taste the complex flavors of our ancestors' Zen.



Bob Rosenbaum will lead a four-session class studying selections from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* and Chuang Tzu's writings. We will try to foster the kind of playful atmosphere characteristic of most Taoist writings. We'll meet 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm three Thursdays in February and one in March. Very tentatively, topics will be:

**February 3:** The Tao and being useless: "Just Natural"

**February 10:** The Tao and nondiscrimination: "Making All Things Equal"

**February 17:** Te and a hairsbreadth deviation: Power, Virtue, and "Rightness"

**March 3:** Wu-wei: Doing not-doing

Similar to what we did during Aspects of Practice, we will continue the Thursday discussions during the Friday tea following each class. Each tea will be co-led by Bob and another senior student.

Please register for the class on the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board. The class is open to everyone. You can attend individual classes at \$5 each, but to foster group cohesion Bob encourages whoever can to attend all four classes.

"We go around telling each other, I do this, I do that - but how do we know that this 'I' we talk about has any 'I' to it?

"You dream you're a bird and soar up into the sky; you dream you're a fish and dive down in the pool. But now when you tell me about it, I don't know whether you are awake or whether you are dreaming.

"Running around accusing others is not as good as laughing, and enjoying a good laugh is not as good as going along with things. Be content to go along and forget about change and then you can enter the mysterious oneness of Heaven."

-- Chuang Tzu





## Rebecca Joy Mayeno

### 1932-2010

Reverend Daishin Mitsuzen, Rebecca Joy Mayeno passed away on November 30th in her family's loving presence. The following week Sojun Roshi dedicated the Rohatsu Sesshin to her enlightenment and spoke of how inspiring she was for him, as she always said "yes" as well as her determined nature to "climb onto the tan for zazen at sesshin knowing very well how physically difficult it was for her."

Rebecca grew up in Chicago. Her mother was Jewish. Her father wasn't, but he loved his wife so much, Rebecca said, that he converted, which was very unusual for a man to undertake at the time. As a young child she was confined for a year to bed to convalesce from scarlet fever. As a result, she learned to read at a very early age, thus beginning her thirst for knowledge and her joy in literature. She used to watch her friends playing outside her window, which no doubt informed her adult life. She was well known as a passionate advocate for tolerance and inclusion, both as an elementary school teacher here in Berkeley, and as a parent and Zen student. Although her doctor had told her she would not be able to give birth, this matriarch, in loving union with her husband Arthur, brought five into the world: Ian, Laurin, Sara, Amiko, and Reiko.

Rebecca came to BZC in the late sixties at the invitation of her friend Liz Okamura, and sat in the attic zendo on Dwight Way. She would later respond to a questioner at her shuso ceremony, "Why do we sit?" with, "We sit to do a better job of standing up and returning to everyday life!" In later years Sojun Roshi and she would drive to Liz's house in Bolinas and listen to their piano-recorder duets. Afterwards, the three of them would play scrabble, and Rebecca would invariably win. She had a way of coming up with words that few knew existed.



Her love of music, art, and nature were most evident to anybody who got to know her. Her curiosity continued to inform and enrich her life and the lives of those around her. There are numerous stories of Rebecca giving impromptu tours at art museums and nature walks highlighting what was before her companion's eyes. She created butterfly gardens to propagate even more visual beauty in the world. Her study of Buddhist imagery led her to begin sculpting images, especially Jizos and Prajnaparamitas. As a protector of children, Jizo was a natural subject. She created the one in our memorial garden, including its "house." Her husband Arthur fashioned the traditional six-ring staff Jizo holds. When sanghas began discussing the importance of women's practice and their less than prominent position in the liturgy, imagery, and history as passed down to us, Rebecca began making Jizos and Prajnaparamitas in earnest for sanghas around the country. She created our own Prajnaparamita (mother of the Buddhas) on the main altar with former resident and continuing sangha member Karen Decotis, as well as the faces of her daughters, as the models. Vases and tea cups abound as well. At her *shuso hossen*, when asked about clay and life she responded, "When you make a pot you pay attention to the emptiness which is the form inside and the outside takes care of itself." At another talk she once described herself simply as "a lump of clay sitting."

Rebecca filled as many practice positions as her busy life allowed--most notably as a very patient sewing teacher and co-tenzo (along with Dolly Gattozzi), thereby feeding her other "children here" at the temple. Her time as shuso in 1991 began the formal recognition of the laity as practice leaders in our community. Photographs of the sangha as children were displayed in the community room for all to see, bringing to light our family of practitioners. She participated in two Tassajara angos. Sojun Roshi ordained her as a priest in 1999 and in the ensuing years her lighthearted, humorous, and loving manner was cloaked and supported in Buddha's robe.

At her cremation ceremony, after loving memories of her life were shared, Sojun Roshi, her family and friends circumambulated her open coffin and placed long-stemmed roses on her. Along with her okesa she was wearing the mala from Mt. Tiantong (where Dogen Zenji received transmission) that her teacher gave her at the event, "Celebrating Rebecca," held here in 2005.

A BZC memorial service for Rebecca is scheduled for January 29th. All are warmly invited to share in this event of remembrance and appreciation.

- Ross Estes Blum

## JIZO CEREMONY AT CLEAR WATER

Dear friends,

On January 30 we will honor Rebecca Mayeno's memory by dedicating a day with her favorite bodhisattva Jizo to her at Clear Water Zendo in Vallejo. We will begin at 10 am and end around 2:30 pm.

As many of you know, Rebecca studied Kaitigarbha/Jizo and made statues of this monk bodhisattva. He is particularly dedicated to children who have died. Rebecca and I had planned to offer a workshop and ceremony dedicated to Jizo but her health began to decline before we could do it. So I am going to offer the ceremony and dedicate it to her.

The Jizo Ceremony is offered to support those who have lost a child in any way, from miscarriage or abortion to illness or accident. Sometimes people come to grieve never having had a child. It is up to those who take part to decide to whom to dedicate their participation. Men are welcome as well as women.

On the day of the ceremony, we gather mid-morning and sew or otherwise create rakus for our chosen Jizo statue. There is one in the garden and various other small ones about the temple. People are asked to bring red fabric, ribbons, thread, and other decorations to share for the rakus. We are silent during this time, thinking of those we have lost.

We will have a silent bag lunch then do the ceremony itself. We will chant, and then offer the rakus. At this time each person will have a chance to speak to or about the child they have lost. It is not required that one speak out loud. Those from Berkeley can take their rakus back to BZC if they like, and put them on the Jizo statue Rebecca made there. After the ceremony we will have tea. Please let Mary Mocine know at [mmocine@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mmocine@sbcglobal.net) if you'd like to participate or have questions.

## BZC OFFERING TO THE HOMELESS

A small group of BZC members has been working on a project we call Metta Bags for the Homeless. We have assembled a gallon Ziploc bag of items our research told us would be appreciated by homeless folks.

Besides toiletries, warm socks, etc, the bags feature a beautiful altar card with a photo of one of Rebecca Mayeno's Prajnaparamita sculptures on one side and Maylie Scott's Prayer for Peace on the other side (these are two of BZC's sangha members who have passed on). We have a couple of bags available in the community room for people who enter our gates, and we want to make the bags available for purchase by sangha members after the Saturday program, to give to homeless people we know. This will enable us to raise money to assemble more bags. The materials in a bag

cost about \$12 (many items were donated) and we plan to sell them for \$20. The altar cards will also be available for sale for \$2. We will also place a receptacle in the community room to collect more SMALL donated items (see list below). For more information or to join this effort, contact Laurie Senauke, [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org).

### Items we used:

Laminated altar card  
Laminated Food Helpline cards  
Small mala  
Rain poncho  
Warm socks  
Toothbrush, paste, floss  
Small towel  
Hand sanitizer or bar of soap  
Small notebook and pen  
Energy bar

### Other items which could be donated:

Gloves  
Hat  
Scarf  
Underwear  
Band aids, antibacterial ointment  
Individually wrapped wet wipes  
Tissues  
Nuts, dried fruit, other ready-to-eat foods  
Grocery gift cards, scrip  
Children's books, toys  
Flashlight  
Sewing kit  
Reading glasses  
Phone card  
Stamps, stationary  
Clock  
Tape measure/tools  
Gifts

## CHANGING HANDS

The officers and other members of the Board would like to express their deep appreciation to outgoing members Courtney Gonzalez and Peter Pfaelzer, and recording secretary Ken Powelson. They have each contributed much time, energy, and expertise to the Board and will be much missed. At the same time, an enthusiastic warm welcome is extended to new members Colleen Busch and Ed Herzog, and to Rondi Saslow, who will be recording secretary.



## SOUNDING BOARD

*This is one of a regular series of reports from the BZC Board.*

The themes that emerged at the Board's final meeting of 2010 were change, transition, and continuity in various areas of service at BZC. Practice positions shift from one person to another, board membership changes, including the various subcommittees and their leaders, and new or amended policies evolve. Teaching roles also develop and find their place. Impermanence is alive and well at BZC.

One of our main responsibilities as a board is to attempt to channel this most fundamental fact of life into stable and harmonious sangha practice. While our practice is to be all here, just now, we obviously have to reflect on past experience and consider the future. In the "God Giving" chapter of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* Suzuki Roshi says,

"To do something new, of course we must know our past, and this is all right. But we should not keep holding onto anything we have done; we should only reflect on it. And we must have some idea of what we should do in the future. But the future is the future, the past is the past; now we should work on something new."

In this spirit we discussed a number of issues ranging from our 2011 pattern of fundraising to the evolving roles of abbot and vice abbot (minutes are on the bulletin board). Then we washed our tea cups.

## A REPORT FROM THE TRENCHES

Dear Friends,

After finishing Rohatsu sesshin, I was curious how I spent my time. Here is what I came up with for a typical day:

How Time Is Spent In a Typical Day of Sesshin			
Activity	Minutes	Hours)	Prcnt.
Zazen	370	6.2	39%
Kinhin	80	1.3	8%
Services	50	0.8	5%
Dining	150	2.5	15%
Rest	135	2.3	14%
Lecture	50	0.8	5%
Work	105	1.8	11%
Stretching	30	0.5	3%
Total	370	6.2	100%

I wasn't surprised to see that we spent most of our time in zazen. But, we also spent lots of time eating and resting.

Thanks to everyone who made the Rohatsu sesshin such a memorable event.

## HALF-DAY SITTING

**Sunday, February 6, 8:00 am-noon**

BZC offers eight half-day sittings each year. Each includes five periods of zazen, kinhin and an informal tea. A half-day sitting is a great opportunity to focus on "just zazen," and is appropriate for beginning as well as experienced sitters. Sojun Roshi asks participants to commit to the four-hour schedule and, in support of everyone's practice, to refrain from using scented products in the zendo. BZC asks for a \$10 donation for half-day sittings. If you have questions, contact Nina Sprecher, the February half-day director, at 510-848-3585 or [ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net).

## The Cranes Arrive to Winter Over

The cranes arrive to winter over --  
mother writes to know  
if I'll come too.

- Kazumi Cranney



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