



# Berkeley Zen Center



February 2011 Newsletter

## 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).

## TWO-DAY SESSHIN

There will be a two-day study sesshin on February 19-20 (Saturday 5:00 am-9:10 pm, and Sunday 5:00 am-5:10 pm). The sesshin will be led by Sojun Roshi, with the topic yet to be determined. Please watch the bulletin board for an announcement regarding the topic.

All are welcome to attend, but if this will be your first sesshin at BZC it is strongly recommended that you first participate in a full Saturday program, attend oryoki instruction, and speak with the sesshin director.

After you’ve read the sign-up information on the patio bulletin board and signed up for sesshin, please complete a sesshin information form if you haven’t already done so. If you have questions, contact the sesshin director, Jake Van Akkeren, at [jvanakkeren@comcast.net](mailto:jvanakkeren@comcast.net) or 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 pm).



### 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

### 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

### March

#### **All-Sangha Potluck—Budget**

Tuesday, 3/1, 6:30 pm

#### **Founder’s Ceremony**

Thursday, 3/3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 3/4, 6:40 am

#### **Half-day Sitting**

Sunday, 3/6, 8:00 am-noon

#### **One-day Sitting**

Saturday, 3/19

#### **Bodhisattva Ceremony**

Saturday, 3/19, 9:40 am

## BEGINNERS' SESSHIN

On Sunday, February 27, BZC will offer a beginners' sesshin from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. This is a day to refresh and deepen our zazen and our experience and understanding of other zendo forms, especially kinhin, service, and moving into activity. Andrea Thach will offer instruction in the basic forms of our practice—zazen, kinhin, service—while maintaining our ground in meditation throughout the day. The talk will be on zazen and the activity of everyday life, and there will be plenty of time for questions. Both beginning and longtime students are welcome.

Participants should bring a bag lunch, which we will eat informally in silence at midday. For more information contact Andrea at [andrea.thach@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.thach@gmail.com), or Sesshin Director Mary Duryee at [maduryee@earthlink.net](mailto:maduryee@earthlink.net) or 510-872-0507.

The cost will be \$15 for the day. Please see the zendo bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and further information.

## TAOIST ROOTS OF ZEN

Zen has deep roots in Taoism. Bob Rosenbaum will lead a four-session class studying selections from Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. We'll meet Thursday evenings 7:15 to 8:45 pm on **February 3rd, 10th, 17th** and on **March 3rd**. Similar to what we did during Aspects of Practice, we will continue the Thursday discussions during the Friday tea that follows 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.

*"Mysteriously, wonderfully, I bid farewell to what goes, I greet what comes;  
for what comes cannot be denied, and what goes cannot be detained."*

~ Chuang Tzu

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Please give a warm welcome to new members Steve and Chie Treagus, and new friends Sarah Hart and Molly Kihanya.



## 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.

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| 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                               |
| April 2     | <b>BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY</b>                |
| April 9     | Childcare                               |
| April 15    | <b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b> |
| April 16    | Sesshin - no program                    |
| April 23    | Childcare                               |
| April 30    | Childcare                               |

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Third Friday of the month before each issue.  
March deadline: Friday, 2/18, 8 pm.

## An Anecdote from Sojun Roshi

as told to the sangha at Dwight Way Zendo December 26, 1968

**T**his evening while I was preparing soup just before zazen, a huge man appeared in the doorway. He said, "My name is Bernard." He asked if he could stay. I told him it was a little early and would he please sit down. He did. When I asked him to come into the zendo, he seemed not to hear me, but sat looking straight ahead. I could see that he was on something. He said he couldn't see too well, so I led him up the stairs to the zendo. I proceeded to show him how to sit.

Bernard must have been at least six foot four, and he must have weighed close to three hundred pounds—all solid muscle. His hands were huge and had the quality of baby elephant legs. When he sat down the whole floor sank a little. I seated him on two zafus and four pillows. His knees stuck up nevertheless. He did everything I told him to and said, "Yes, sir," to everything. I could see that it was painful for him, and that he was very tied up both physically and emotionally. As soon as he was established in his posture he began to cry and whimper. It quickly turned into deep sobbing.

The feeling in the zendo became tense but very still, except for Bernard's sobbing. Nobody knew what he was going to do next. Fortunately I was feeling very calm and somehow knew exactly how to handle him. I knew that he trusted me completely. I forgot to mention that while downstairs, I asked him how he came to know of this place. He said he was driving down the street and the next thing he knew, here he was. This gave us both a confidence in the destiny of the situation.

I took my seat and began zazen. All during zazen, Bernard was swaying from side to side. Then, after about ten minutes, or maybe a little longer, he began rocking back and forth. Pretty soon his rocking became more exaggerated and I was afraid he was going to fall backwards. I silently concentrated on saying, "Don't fall, Bernard. Don't Fall." Then the inevitable happened. Bernard fell over backwards with a crash that shook the house. The strange thing was that he was still in zazen posture, just like a little Buddha statue that you might tip over on its back. I walked over to him and said, "Bernard." His eyes were still looking straight ahead at the ceiling. "Bernard," I said. "Do you want to continue?"

"Yes," he said. "Climb back on your cushion, then." Bernard climbed back onto the cushions. Someone came to me and whispered, "Do you think that man should sit in his state? Aren't there times when a person shouldn't sit?"

"He should sit," I said.

When zazen was over, we had service. I told Bernard to get up and showed him how to hold his hands in gassho. He just stood there in gassho throughout the service. Then I led him downstairs.

I asked him to stay and eat, which he did. He was still in a somewhat spaced-out state but much more aware than when he came in. Finally, after some silence, he asked if he could tell me the story of his life. There were four of us eating, and the soup that I had originally made for two was stretched. Bernard told of his life as a child in the south. How he had been football material but joined the army instead. He said that his life had just been taking one bad turn after another ever since he could remember. He was most upset because his wife had left him. She told him he was not a man. Since then, he had been trying to find himself. He said that tonight he realized he was just Bernard. He didn't have to be anyone else. Just Bernard. He said it had always been Bernard and white folks. But now he said we were all plain people and that made him feel like Bernard. He left, and said he would come back.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ALL-SANGHA POTLUCK AND BUDGET MEETING –

**Tuesday, March 1, 6:30 pm**

All members are warmly invited to share potluck offerings of great food, as well as discussion and approval of the 2011 BZC budget. The budget is the Treasurer's best effort to project the financial goals and realities for BZC in this new year. Your presence at this meeting makes a difference. Watch the bulletin board for more details.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR ANOTHER BZC PARTY!

Berkeley Zen Center will kick off its Leadership Fund drive with a party on Saturday, April 16, from 11:00-1:00. BZC is fortunate to have two wonderful teachers, Abbot Sojun Mel Weitsman and Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke. The purpose of the Leadership Fund is to raise money specifically targeted to their support. Come celebrate our teachers and help raise some money through a silent auction and a raffle, and enjoy great food, drinks, music and some surprise entertainment. More details will be provided in the March newsletter.

## Lay Zen Teachers' Meeting

On January 14 to 16 the second annual meeting of the Lay Zen Teachers' Association was hosted by San Francisco City Center. The LZTA provides a forum for those who have received lay entrustment to support each other as we explore ways of bringing the dharma into our everyday life.

Twenty-six teachers from around the country attended, including Meghan Collins, Susan Moon, Bob Rosenbaum, Laurie Senauke, and Karen Sundheim from BZC. We enjoyed learning of the diverse traditions we bring from our various lineages, and were inspired by the many skillful means our fellow lay teachers use in their sanghas, as well as the myriad settings in which they practice outside the temple gates.

We have scheduled the time of the Monday morning talk on March 21 to bring this information to our sangha, but if you're interested in learning more before then, feel free to contact any of the people who attended.

## CHANGING HANDS

A big welcome to **Peter Overton** as the new coordinator! Peter has taken over filling and assisting all those in practice positions and coordinating all the temple activities. Thank you, Peter! He catches the baton from **Andrea Thach**.

For the last year, **Dave White** has quietly supplied our scrap paper, stamps, pens, brochures, and more, and has answered temple phone calls and e-mails as well as tending to dozens of other little tasks as the admin assistant at BZC. Thank you, Dave. Look to **Paul Ridgway** for those special tasks now. Welcome, Paul!

## NEW ARRIVAL IN THE ZENDO!

### A note from Mary Durvee:

Dear everyone,

The zendo manager has asked me to explain a new non-sentient being in the zendo . . . a Kore stool.

It is an alternative to a chair, or a kneeler, for those who are protecting knees and backs. We tried it out at Rohatsu, and it gained enough



The Kore Stool

approval for BZC to own one, so one has become a permanent resident.

Sit on it as if you were sitting on an exercise ball: place your feet square on the floor and adjust the stool to the desired height. The stool rocks—it has a convex bottom.

This allows you to adjust your position to a straight-spined one, in micro-movements. It might feel a little unsteady at first; however, you will settle into a position that suits.

Please let the zendo manager know if this is something that interests you. It turns out that it is very difficult to find additional kneelers similar to what we have, so it is good to know what the satisfactory alternatives are.



## Effortless Effort, a gassho from the outgoing coordinator

Sojun's first comment to me was, "We do not call the position the 'director' because you are not directing anything." Dogen Zenji says the director's (aka coordinator's) "job is fulfilled for the sake of everyone, both in the community and all beings. To say for the sake of everyone means without acting on private inclinations. Acting without private inclinations is contemplating the ancients and yearning for the Way."\*

We have over sixty positions here at Berkeley Zen Center now. The coordinator's job is simply to see through the clouds of activity, preferences, and ideas to reveal the starry night sky. The clear night sky contains the stars of each person's aspiration and the constellations of activity, constellations that are formed by many students generously and harmoniously working together. From this vantage, the coordinator sees what many do not—the hidden efforts of the numerous temple members working individually, collectively, and collaboratively. There are the fresh flowers at the memorial stones in the Jizo garden and the new bamboo flooring, shoe racks, and kitchen racks that magically appeared, and the ever-carefully-tended temple grounds; the tent for the tea table, books filed away, newsletters posted, and a refrigerator that sparkles weekly. Then there are the numerous events and ceremonies scheduled, and those added throughout the year, all energetically offered. For well over two years together, by doing little more than asking and having you respond, I have had the opportunity to see you each step forward and create our mature and settled practice. Truly, this coordinator has just been the woman behind the curtain. The Sambhogakaya manifests through each of you, and through us collectively. I have been grateful for this opportunity, and have very much enjoyed working with you as coordinator. Thank you. Let us continue our intimate practice together yearning for the Way for a long time. ~ Andrea Thach

*\*From Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community, translated by Leighton and Okumura; 1996:p155.*

## In Memoriam

### Shu-un Mitsuzen Lou Hartman, 1915 - 2011

*From San Francisco Zen Center:*

Our dear dharma friend Shu-un Mitsuzen Lou Hartman died on January 20 at 3:45 pm, surrounded by his wife of over sixty years, Zenkei Blanche Hartman, their children, a granddaughter, and a great-granddaughter. Lou and Blanche have four children, eight grandchildren, and a growing number of great-grandchildren. Lou was a long-term resident, priest, and practitioner at all three Zen Center locations. He and Blanche, who began their Zen practice at Berkeley Zen Center in 1969, were ordained in a 24-person ceremony in September 1977 by Zentatsu Richard Baker.



*Photo by Renshin Bunce*

Lou's deep love of practice, his wit and presence, inspired us all. He was a great storyteller. Blanche said that what many people remember and appreciate about Lou is his choice to live as a monk, not as a Zen teacher.

A memorial service was held on the evening of January 20 in the Buddha Hall at City Center, officiated by Sojun Mel Weitsman.

### SuRei KenPo Darlene Cohen, 1942 - 2011

SuRei KenPo Darlene Cohen, Zen teacher, with her husband Tony Patchell at Russian River Zendo, and author, who served as an inspiration for those suffering with chronic illness, died of cancer at 1:15 am on January 12 at her home in Guerneville, surrounded by her husband and family. Her senior disciples prepared the body and carried her to the zendo, where ceremonies were performed, and many came and went throughout the following day to sit zazen with her.

*From Sweeping Zen:* Known for her work with those suffering from chronic illness, Cohen focused on the synchronization of mind and body through attention to the minutiae of everyday life as a means for healing. She also wrote four books, *Arthritis: Stop Suffering, Start Moving*, *Finding a Joyful Life in the Heart of Pain*, *Turning Suffering Inside Out*, and *The One Who Is Not Busy: Connecting with Work in a Deeply Satisfying Way*.

A memorial service is scheduled for 3:00 pm on Friday, February 25 at Green Gulch Farm.



*Photo by Alan Senauke*



Imo Denkei Raul Moncayo — Suchness--Field of Blessings. On his way to work, and at the completion of Dharma Transmission

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