



# Berkeley Zen Center



## August 2011 Newsletter

### SUMMER RECESS 8/15-8/26

On these dates, we will not be offering our normal programs of daily zazen and service (or lecture on 8/20). However, informal zazen will be offered daily. There will be a sign-up sheet on the zendo bulletin board for those who'd like to support this activity by opening and closing the zendo. For more information, contact the zendo manager, Tamar Enoch.

### HALF-DAY SITTING

#### Sunday, August 7, 8:00 am-noon

Here's a chance for mid-summer calm practice! BZC offers eight half-day sittings each year. Each includes five periods of zazen, kinhin (walking meditation) 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 Zen students. Sojun Roshi asks participants to commit to the four-hour schedule. BZC requests a \$10 donation for half-day sittings. If you have questions, contact the August half-day director Stan Dewey at [standewey@comcast.net](mailto:standewey@comcast.net) or 510-528-1989.

### ONE-DAY SITTING SUNDAY AUGUST 14

Come join us for a one-day sitting on Sunday, August 14 from 5 am until 5:10 pm. This will be our last event before the BZC summer recess, which runs Monday, 8/15 through Friday, 8/26.

If you are new to sesshin practice, please complete an information form on the patio bulletin board shelf and be sure to have participated in the entirety of one Saturday program before the 14th. If you have any questions, please contact the sesshin director for the day, Andrea Thach, at [andrea.thach@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.thach@gmail.com). Fee for the day is \$35.



#### 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

### August

#### Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 8/3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 8/4, 6:40 a.m.

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 8/7, 8:00 am-noon

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8/13, 9:40 am

#### One-day Sitting

Sunday, 8/14, 5:00 am-5:10 pm

#### Summer Recess

Monday, 8/15-Friday, 8/26

### September

#### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 9/1, 6:20 pm, Friday, 9/2, 6:40 am

#### Labor Day Weekend Sesshin

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

Sunday, 9/4, 5 am-5 pm

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 9/11, 8:00 am to noon

#### All-Sangha Potluck—Board Nominations

Tuesday, 9/13—dinner 6:30 pm, meeting 7:30 pm

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 9/17

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 9/10, 9:40 am

#### One-day Sitting, Aspects of Practice Opens

Sunday, 9/25 – Saturday, 10/22, See article p. 4

## FIRE MONKS TALK AT BZC ON AUGUST

Colleen Busch's book, *Fire Monks: Zen Mind Meets Wildfire at the Gates of Tassajara*, was published July 7 by Penguin Press. On Saturday August 6 at BZC, Colleen will give a talk along with David Zimmerman, who defended Tassajara during the fire.

## SOJUN ROSHI'S STUDY GROUP CONTINUES

Sojun will be teaching two more study group sessions this year, on Wednesday August 31 and Thursday, September 22, 7:15-8:45 pm. Fee for the two-class series is \$20.00. As always, exceptions are made for financial hardship. A sign-up sheet for the two sessions will be on the patio bulletin board, along with study material on the shelf. Newcomers to the 2011 series are welcome to join the continuing group.

Our subject will be the teachings of Bankei Yotaku, a Rinzai Zen master and abbot in the 17th century whose lifelong theme was the "unborn" Buddha mind. His teaching style was independent, inspired, and uninhibited.

## 20s & 30s DHARMA GROUP

Sojun Roshi invites students in their 20s and 30s to join him once a month for a short period of zazen and open discussion about Zen, Buddhism, the teachings, meditation, and/or your own practice. Selected Buddhist texts may also be discussed.

Meetings are held in the zendo on Saturdays after lecture at 11:30 am. Upcoming dates are August 13 and September 17.

For more information contact Peter Overton, peterovrtn@gmail.com.

## LABOR DAY WEEKEND STUDY SESSHIN

This year's Labor Day sesshin will be led by Hozan Alan Senauke, from 5:00 am to 9:10 pm on Saturday, September 3 and 5:00 am to 5:00 pm on Sunday, September 4. Our study topic for sesshin will be two short fascicles from Dogen's *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*—"Shoji," or "Birth and Death," and "Zenki," or "Total Dynamic Working." Translations will be available before sesshin. For information contact the sesshin director, Mary Duryee, 510-872-0507 (before 9:00 p.m.) or maduryee@earthlink.net.



## 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. 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.

*Note: family programs (potlucks, kidzendo) resume in September*

August	6	Childcare
August	13	Childcare
August	20	Interim—no program
August	27	Childcare
September	3	Sesshin – no program
September	10	Childcare
September	16	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
September	17	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
September	24	Childcare
October	1	Childcare
October	8	Childcare
October	14	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
October	15	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
October	22	Sesshin – no program
October	29	<b>SEJIKI Ceremony—come in costume!</b>

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**  
**Third Friday of the month before each issue.**  
**September deadline: Friday, 8/19, 8 pm.**



## *Extending From the Center*

*Sojun's Reminder, August, 2011*

It seems to me that our body/mind is like a microcosm of the universe. The center of our individual universe is correctly called the solar plexus, while the extensions, the arms, legs, and head are like the planetary satellites that make up our human mandala. The thinking mind, the feelings, emotions, consciousness and breath are manifestations of this vital center. The vital center has various names, like Ki, which also means breath, strength, unity, peace, or happiness. Like the sea of Ki, it is our calm impartial mind, and the seat of intuition.

All of our activity in the zendo is based on this understanding. In zazen, all the extensions—arms legs, bones, organs, fluids, feelings, breath, and thoughts—take their place in a harmonious balance around the vital center. The function of the thinking mind is to think the thought of zazen without getting sidetracked, and to encourage the other limbs to maintain their part.

This attitude will then be extended to all of our activity. When we are serving food in the zendo we learn to maintain the same harmonious balance. Our mandala, which extends from our vital center, meets and mingles with that of the one who is being served. When we walk up the aisle we are aware of doing so quietly. When we serve the food, we stir things up from the bottom. In other words, we maintain the spirit of zazen through awareness of the harmony of body, breath, and mind, together with mindful attention to the material things we are working with. We treat the pots and pans, bowls, and utensils with respect, according to their shape and function.

The doan learns to sound the bells without punishing them. Sounding the bell is an act of love, an offering to the sangha. Although the hand holds the striker, the impulse begins in the hara, and extends through the arm, hand, and striker, and the resonance of the bell reflects the inspiring intention of the doan, in turn inspiring the chanting. The same for the fukudo, who maintains the beat while resonating with the hollow sound of the fish drum. Suzuki Roshi used to admonish us not to give the poor thing a heart attack. When we lead the chant we should find a pitch that is not too high and not too low so that everyone can feel comfortable, and at the same time we should take leadership without being strident. The secret is to lead and follow at the same time.

Breathing deeply, not just in zazen but continuously, is how we remain centered. When we move, and our movements extend from the center, we can move with ease and grace, without restriction. As our life is transformative, we can breathe in adversity and breathe out love. The purpose is not to become an expert but simply to be a vehicle of light; a buddha field for our surroundings.



## CARING FOR BUDDHA'S ROBE

If you need assistance (or simply time and space) with rakusu/okesa/robe repairs, replacement, or finishing of already started rakusu, the following dates are on the calendar. Each session is from 1-5 pm. Please contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk (510-655-0820), before you attend the first time. Any changes to the schedule will be made on the bulletin board. Material fees only apply for envelopes or new (second or replacement) rakusu, and the usual class fee applies for new rakusu, which must be started by the end of August.

Starting first rakusu for Lay Ordination will begin in January as usual. If you are considering this, please speak with your teacher and then also speak with the sewing teacher before the winter break begins.

Sunday, Aug. 7	Saturday, Oct. 1
Saturday, Aug. 20	Sunday, Oct. 16
Sunday, Aug. 21	Saturday, Oct. 29
Sunday, Aug. 28	Saturday, Nov. 5
Saturday, Sept. 10	Sunday, Nov. 13
Sunday, Sept. 18	

## BOARD NOMINATIONS

The BZC Board is finalizing its search for prospective candidates for our member-at-large election this October. Formal nominations will be made at the all-sangha meeting on Tuesday, September 13, immediately following the potluck that begins at 6:30 pm. In recruiting candidates we have identified a variety of skills that support our work, including but not limited to: communication, organization, information technology, money management, fundraising, engineering, building maintenance and nonprofit law. Board members are expected to attend monthly Sunday morning meetings as well as to serve on one or more working committees—finance, project management, development, and ethics and reconciliation (EAR). At our September meeting all BZC members are welcome to nominate fellow members for this position, but please contact them first concerning their willingness to be nominated.

We hope to see you at the dinner and meeting, and wholeheartedly welcome your participation in the nomination process!

## BATTERY RECYCLE

BZC recycles spent batteries from temple use at Whole Foods Market on Telegraph Avenue. Please recycle yours there as well and not with the temple recycle items on the community room porch.

## Aspects of Practice 2011 — The Heart of Our Forms

Aspects of Practice, led by Vice-Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke and BZC senior students, begins with sesshin on Sunday September 25 and continues through our closing sitting on Saturday October 22. As always, this is an opportunity for new and old students to study and practice together the basics of zazen, forms, and dharma here at BZC. And of course, we will share work, practice discussion, and tea.

This year we will investigate “the heart of our forms.” Lectures and classes will draw from these sources, and copies of relevant texts will be available in advance.

The emphasis will be on the expression, meaning, and involvement conveyed through the formal side of our practice. What do the words in our chanting—including those in Japanese—point to? Why don't we change to a more American-style format? How did Suzuki Roshi and now Sojun Roshi understand the process of evolving forms? What makes the difference between a stagnant and lively expression of our Zen forms?

These are a few questions that could arise. We're wondering what kind of questions you might have. We will have a chance to discuss, as a group, issues that may be on your mind concerning the meaning and expression of our forms and process. Please send an email to Hozan at [alans@kushiki.org](mailto:alans@kushiki.org), or leave a note in his box on the porch with a suggested question or topic. This will help all of us to focus where interest is strongest.

Aspects is a little earlier this year than in the past. As the seasons turn, please join us for this opportunity to refresh our timeless practice. All the relevant information and sign-up sheets will be posted early in September. See you there.

## FAMILY PRACTICE EMAIL GROUP

To make it easier to publicize, announce, and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we've started a Yahoo group. We'd love to have you join this list if you have children in your life, even if you don't typically attend family practice events. We promise to only send, at most, ONE email per week, just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, just email Laurie ([lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org)) or Marie ([marie\\_hopper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net)).



## BZC HAS A PHOTO SITE

Photos of Jukai 2011, plus a "foteo" combining them with video and music, are now on BZC's so far little-known photo site, [berkeleyzencenter.shutterfly.com](http://berkeleyzencenter.shutterfly.com). Jukai 2010, 2009, Sojun's 80th birthday party and other events can also be found here. The site was set up by Dean Bradley in 2009. There are so many other events we could add! For further info regarding this site, contact Dean Bradley or Ko Blix.

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### Notes from the Librarian

Dear Sangha,

Greetings from your librarian! I'd like to invite you to contact me with any questions or suggestions you have about the library. The best way to reach me is via email, which I've included at the end of this note. I am also working on hosting regular library hours, when you'll be able to stop by and get any library help you need in person. I haven't finalized these hours as of the newsletter deadline, but by the time you are reading this I hope to have them posted on the bulletin board, so please check there. Generally, I will try to be available on Saturdays after lecture as often as possible, and one or two afternoons or evenings per week.

We have recently acquired a number of interesting books, including *Eat Sleep Sit: My Year at Japan's Most Rigorous Zen Temple* by Kaoru Nonomura. The author spent a year living at Eihei-ji when he was thirty, and the book is a first-person account of his experiences there. Also, coming soon is *Endless Path* by Rafe Martin, in which the author retells ten of the jataka tales, or stories of Buddha's past lives, for

adults. The stories are chosen to illustrate the Ten Paramitas. If you are looking for a particular book or would like a book about a specific or general topic, please let me know and I'll do my best to direct you to what is available in our collection.

Finally, I would like to request that if you have a library book that has been checked out for more than two months, please consider returning it so that others may enjoy it. Thanks to everyone for your support and care for our library, and I hope to see you in the community room soon!

Gassho,  
Veronica Reilly  
[very23@gmail.com](mailto:very23@gmail.com)



### Benji poem

*For Shinko Seiwa Leslie Bartholic*

*As a painted arrow moves with graceful effort,  
The bodhisattva of many hands extends her  
shining practice*

*Through Old Plum Mountain.*

*Pure as a deep lake, clear and peaceful.*

*Her soft, gentle presence surrounds bodies  
sitting upright.*

*Composure embraces delusion and confusion.*

*Moment by moment ordinary mind is the way.*

*Let us hear the shuso!*

*Shiken Seigetsu Carol Paul  
June 19, 2011*

### **BZC CAMPOUT**

You are warmly invited to the somewhat-annual Berkeley Zen Center Campout, scheduled for September 10-11. We've reserved a group campsite in nearby Tilden Park and will meet for a potluck dinner and possibly a short hike, as well as s'mores and songs around the campfire, followed by oatmeal and coffee/tea/cocoa in the morning. Join us to pass on the silly campfire rounds we grew up with, tell stories, and learn the latest songs from our own kids.

Families and those without children are all welcome—if you prefer not to stay for the night, come for the dinner and company. If you would like to stay but are missing a tent or sleeping bag, let us know, and we can almost definitely find one for you. Contact Katherine O. at [klo999@yahoo.com](mailto:klo999@yahoo.com) if you have questions, and look for a sign-up on the bulletin board in August.

### **PRACTICE DISCUSSION WITH SENIOR STUDENTS**

You might find it helpful to be in contact with a practice leader about how your practice is going. All of BZC's senior students are available for formal or informal practice discussion by appointment. There's a list of all the practice leaders on the zendo porch and in the front of the *BZC Member Directory*. If you don't have a directory, you can leave a note on the main bulletin board or ask around for contact information.

Additionally, there is a calendar on the zendo porch with slots to sign up with some senior students, currently Andrea Thach, Alexandra Frappier, Raul Moncayo, and Bob Rosenbaum.

These four practice leaders will also be leading the Friday teas for the rest of the year.



*Photo by Ross Blum*



*Photo by Ross Blum*

**"Suzuki-roshi, I've been listening to your lectures for years," I said, "and I really love them, and they're very inspiring, and I know that what you're talking about is actually very clear and simple. But I must admit I just don't understand. I love it, but I feel like I could listen to you for a thousand years and still not get it. Could you just please put it in a nutshell? Can you reduce Buddhism to one phrase?"**

**Everyone laughed. He laughed. What a ludicrous question. I don't think any of us expected him to answer it. He was not a man you could pin down, and he didn't like to give his students something definite to cling to. He had often said not to have "some idea" of what Buddhism was.**

**But Suzuki did answer. He looked at me and said, "Everything changes." Then he asked for another question. ~ Introduction to *Crooked Cucumber***

## *Art Currently Displayed at the Berkeley Zen Center*

Kasumi Bunsho was a student of two very famous Zen teachers and calligraphers, Nantembo and Dieryu. In fact, he succeeded Nantembo as abbot of Kaisei-ji in 1943. He was known for his large drawings of begging monks on the walls and screens of the temple. The Mount Fuji scroll and the Zen Fan below are both his works.



### **Mount Fuji**

Kasumi Bunsho (1905-1998)

*It is fine when it is cloudy  
And fine when it is clear.  
The original form of Mt. Fuji  
Never changes*

#### *GOOD FORTUNE*

The large character for Good Fortune is painted in the shape of a snake and to emphasize this form, a fleck of gold leaf has been placed to create the eye. The poem reminds us that in this world of shape shifting change,

our true original nature is eternal, constant and unchanging. This scroll was a gift to Sojun Mel Weitsman by Belinda Sweet in 2009, and is currently on display next to the altar in our zendo.

### **Plum Blossom**

*The plum tree withstands the  
winter cold and still retains its  
fragrance*

Purchased at Tian Tong temple in China as a gift for Sojun by participants in the 2001 BZC China temple tour, this scroll can currently be seen at the end of the west tan in our zendo.



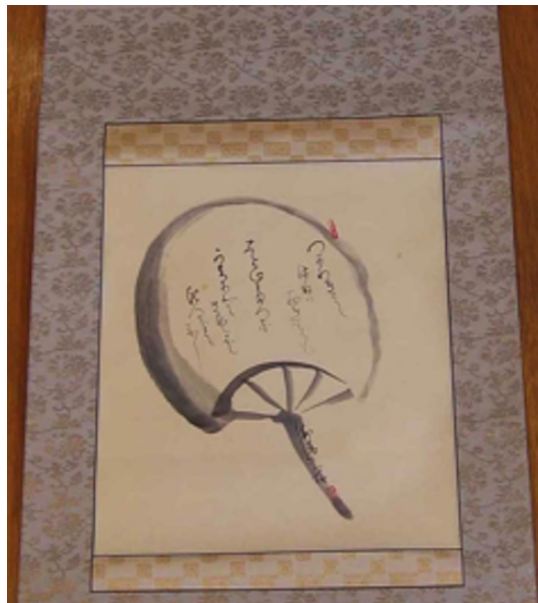
### **Zen Fan**

Kasumi Bunsho (1905-1998)

*When you use  
It skillfully  
Spring comes again;  
For a fan to work  
You need not rely on others*

Fans are a popular theme for Zenga: a fan is inexpensive, easy to use by oneself and works well in the worst conditions. A Zen student should be the same; accessible, independent and beneficial.

This scroll was a gift to Sojun Mel Weitsman by Belinda Sweet in 2009. It currently hangs over the altar in our community room.



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