



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2012 Newsletter

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

On **Saturday, April 7**, we will celebrate Buddha's birthday—an important date on the Zen calendar, marking not only the Buddha's birth but also the fresh possibility of awakening in one's own life. Friends and families are welcome, especially children!

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 after the celebration.

An important part of the ceremony is bathing the baby Buddha in his bower. Everyone is invited to help decorate the flower bower on Saturday morning from 7:30-8:30 am. Donations of flowers are welcome, too. Carnations, irises, daisies, ranunculus, sweet william, and camellias are especially good. Leave flowers on the community room porch before evening zazen on **Friday, April 6**, or bring treasures from your garden when you come Saturday morning. For more information, contact head chiden Catharine Lucas at cmanerlucas@earthlink.net.

SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD

A message from Sojun Roshi:

I am happy to announce our Spring Practice Period, which will begin with a one-day sesshin on Saturday May 12 and end on Sunday, June 24, the last day of sesshin, with the Shuso Dharma-Question Ceremony. Kisen Hoshin Marie Hopper—Radiant Spring, Dharma Heart—will be the shuso this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all.

Note: A more detailed article, including specific Practice Period events and dates, will appear in the May issue of the newsletter, along with the Practice Period calendar insert.



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

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

April

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday 4/3 6:20 pm
Wednesday, 4/4 6:40 am

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/7 (details this page)

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/14 9:40 am

One-day Sesshin

Sunday, 4/15, 5:00 am-5:00 pm

Work Day

Sunday, 4/22, 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Mountains and Rivers

Thursday, 4/26 – Sunday, 4/29
(See article p. 5)

May

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 5/3, 6:20 pm, Friday, 5/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5/5, 9:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 5/6, 8:00 am-noon

Practice Period Opens—One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 5/12 (details this page)

Kidzendo, Saturday, 5/19

Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night

Saturday, 6/2

FINDING PRESENCE IN CONVERSATION

On two upcoming Thursday evenings, April 5, and May 17, this class will meet in the community room from 7:30–9:00 pm. The focus of this inquiry into communication is whatever is present for any one of us when we meet. I hope we will continue to explore ways to find greater freedom in making ourselves known and in hearing each other. At the May 17 meeting, we'll take as our starting point whatever study theme Sojun has chosen for the Practice Period. All are welcome and invited. Facilitated by Peter Overton, 510-848-5239 or peterovrtn@gmail.com.

ORYOKI INSTRUCTION

Ellen Webb will be giving oryoki instruction on Saturday, April 14 after the Saturday program, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. If you have questions, or need to make an appointment for oryoki instruction for another time, please contact Ellen at elweb@sbcglobal.net.

CPR (CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION) & AED (AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR) TRAINING

Saturday, April 14, 12 noon-approximately 2:00 pm in the zendo

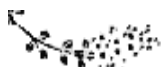
Again this year, BZC is offering CPR/AED training for our “first responders” and the sangha as a whole. First Responders are folks, like some of the residents, who are likely to be at most BZC events. Our goal is to have five-six first responders trained in CPR/AED. We are also offering this training as a service to individual sangha members who do not plan to be first responders. Cost of the training is \$45 per person. Note that if this fee is a financial burden for a first responder, it can be waived.

Sign-up is on the patio bulletin board. If you want more information, please contact Peter Pfaelzer, BZC Health & Safety Coordinator, 510-290-4753 or ppfaelzer@gmail.com.

ONE-DAY SESSHIN

Sunday April 15, 5:00 am-5:00 pm

Denkei Raul Moncayo will lead this one-day sesshin. The schedule will be the traditional sesshin short day. If you have, please contact Mary Duryee, maduryee@earthlink.net.



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning 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 email Laurie Senauke, 510-845-2215, 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 in the community room at 9:30 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene in the community room for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

Family Practice Email Group To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have 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) or Marie (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

April	7	Buddha's Birthday
April	14	Childcare
April	21	Childcare
April	28	Childcare
May	5	Childcare
May	12	Sesshin—no program
May	19	Kidzendo
May	26	Childcare
June	2	Childcare
June	9	Childcare
June	16	Kidzendo
June	23	Sesshin—no program
June	30	Childcare

“Not the flag, not the wind; mind is moving.”

Case 29, The Mumonkan

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
May deadline: Friday, 4/20, 8:00 pm



On Lighting Up Our Own Corner of the World

Thoughts from Sojun Roshi

April, 2012

We are so fortunate as human beings to be living here in Berkeley, California in the year 2012. California is the cornucopia of the world, and Berkeley is an oasis for progressives. The spirit of tolerance and liberality here allows us to pursue more or less unrestricted freedom to explore creative solutions to universal problems, unhampered by religious or political bigotry. As we go about our normal daily activities in our relatively safe environment, we are haunted by the enormous suffering that is being inflicted on ordinary populations all over the world. When we do open ourselves we can easily be overwhelmed. In order to have some mental and emotional freedom to pursue our activities we often set up a barrier or compartmentalization in order to have some objectivity and go about our business.

Allowing ourselves to focus on the atrocities, inequalities, manipulations, deceptions, power struggles, criminal corporate control, and unemployment problems of our own country, let alone the rest of the world, day after day, leaves us with a frustrated and seemingly insurmountable feeling of helplessness.

These problems have been with us since the beginning of time, and now, because the world is becoming a smaller place, we no longer have the luxury of only dealing with our local problems. So the question is: How, in the face of these overwhelming disasters that will always be with us, can we do something positive and not be drowned by so much negativity?

We can work for change by voting and adding our names to petitions for change and supporting organizations for justice and so forth. But most importantly, how in the face of this endless process of fighting or putting out one fire, only to have a new one flare up, can we maintain an attitude of equanimity and optimism, supported by wisdom and compassion? Suzuki Roshi once described our practice as “Lighting up our own corner of the world.” In the Diamond Sutra it says, “Although there are no sentient beings to be saved, we must save them all.”

What does it mean to light up our own corner of the world as well as saving all beings? As self-creating humans, we have the capacity to influence our own house and our own environment and surroundings.

Each one of us has a sphere of influence. When we do zazen in the morning prajna arises in the world, radiant light arises and manifests in the world, and our activity proceeds from zazen and is sustained as compassionate action. The influence of our practice can have a positive far-reaching effect in the world. We can practice for the benefit of all beings without being attached to impossible results. This is Shikantaza, just doing. It is Genjo Koan, the koan of our daily life, moment by moment as it proceeds from zazen. True joy runs deep like the bottom of a river and does not depend on good and bad circumstances. It supports us through all of our suffering, and manifests through our sincere continuous practice. When we can forget our self and support those around us, the way of harmony appears unhindered. Strong confidence comes little by little through small successes.

VICE ABBOT'S REPORT TO THE SANGHA

In last month's newsletter Sojun Roshi offered an "Abbot's Report to the Sangha" which touched on fundraising—where I second his comments—and Sojun's thoughts and intentions for the future. The BZC board has encouraged me to offer my own thoughts, a "Vice Abbot's Report to the Sangha."

I truly appreciate Sojun's confidence in and support for my ability to teach and lead in our community. When or whether I might become abbot...no one really knows about the future. What I do know is that practicing at BZC, receiving Sojun's teaching over all these years, is not something I ever could have imagined in earlier and wilder days. Living here I have seen my children grow and flower, just as so many of us have. I still have rough spots to polish and gaps to bridge in my understanding. With Sojun's help and yours, I will continue to work on these areas.

Sojun Roshi has clearly communicated his intention to continue as abbot as long as he is able. If there has been any uncertainty about this on my part and among others, now it is settled. This moves me to consider my own plans for the next several years. At the age of 64 I face several realities. First is a kind of amazement that I am aging—as well as I can, but getting older nonetheless. Second is that I have skills and a faith in the Dharma that I wish to offer. BZC is central to my life, and has been for a long time. As vice abbot I make efforts to help Sojun and meet the needs of our sangha. When we are both around Sojun and I talk almost daily. When he is away it is usually my responsibility to fill in. I am grateful for the opportunity to teach at BZC, to meet with people and help them along. I try to support the complicated machinery of community—sometimes behind the scenes and sometimes in front of the curtain.

As many of you know, for over more than twenty years, beginning with my work at Buddhist Peace Fellowship and

through current work with my own nonprofit, Clear View Project, I have been an internationalist. That means, as an "engaged Buddhist," learning from and supporting friends in Asia and elsewhere. I've been involved with the democracy movement in Burma since 1991. Now that movement is bearing fruit and calling on friends to help build a peaceful civil society. Also for the last four years I have been working with "new Buddhists," ex-untouchable youth in India. These are often the poorest of the poor, but they are smart, eager to learn, and committed to Dharma practice. I intend to maintain relationships in these countries with annual visits.

From time to time there are other communities and organizations I work with, here in the U.S. and abroad. I have no interest in being a peripatetic Zen teacher, but I am willing to explore places where I have something real to offer and an opportunity to develop true practice relations.

I have been working with Sojun Roshi, the board, and with my family to find the right balance among these commitments. For now we have worked out a reconfiguration of my position as vice abbot, to see it as a three-quarter-time position, and, of course, to review my compensation. This will allow me both time to travel and dedicated time at home at BZC. Sojun and I will do our best to coordinate our schedules, and to let people know when we might be traveling.

We have an unusually mature community, people with amazing gifts. I trust that maturity, and I rarely worry about our collective ability to care for our practice. I also hope that what I learn, and what each of us learns in the wider world, finds a place right here in our practice, enriching all of our lives. I like to think the Bodhisattva way is a path we walk side-by-side.

I look forward to our continuing exploration of the present and the future. And as Sojun Roshi closed his statement: please feel free to come to me with any questions or concerns.

- Hozan Alan Senauke

BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS BEGINS

Although it's only April, the board is already beginning its search for prospective candidates for our member-at-large election next fall. Formal nominations will occur at the all-sangha meeting on Tuesday, September 11. Being a candidate is a wonderful way to serve the sangha. All candidates, whether elected or not, will be invited to serve on one of the board's working committees: finance, building projects, or development.

In preparing to recruit candidates, we have identified a variety of skills that support BZC's work, including but not limited to: communication, organization, information technology, money management, fundraising,

engineering, building maintenance, and nonprofit law. At our September meeting all BZC members are welcome to nominate members-at-large for the board.

This early announcement is meant to provide sangha members plenty of time to think about potential candidates and to contact those people concerning their willingness to be nominated. We wholeheartedly welcome your participation in the nomination process.



WORK DAY

April 22, 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Twice a year we get together for work day. This is an opportunity for us to dedicate our time to our place of practice as a community.

There are a variety of jobs around BZC that take differing skill sets; everyone's efforts are welcome and appreciated. If there is something in particular you would like to work on, or if you are holding on to a secret talent, this is the time to let it out.

We look forward to your joining us for a half or full day of work—lunch and yummy snacks provided.

If you have questions, please contact Diane Schnapp. Kimodi@Mac.com.

FOUR-DAY MOUNTAINS & RIVERS SESSHIN

Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place Thursday through Sunday, April 26-29, at Point Reyes. Ryushin Andrea Thach will be leading our services and discussions, drawing on Shohaku Okumura Roshi's recent commentaries on Dogen's *Mountains and Rivers Sutra* (commentaries which will be published in the next year or two).

The sesshin will begin with an orientation meeting Wednesday evening, April 25, in the community room. Thursday morning we will carpool to Point Reyes, then hike from the Palomarin trailhead to Wildcat Camp (5.5 miles), moving at a moderate pace with frequent rest stops and lunch along the way. We will get back to Berkeley around 5:00 pm Sunday. All meals are provided and camping experience is not required. Everyone is encouraged to do the full four days, but provision will also be made for those who may have to miss a day or two.

The sign-up sheet will be posted on the BZC bulletin board. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, April 21. The fee is \$75. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at 510-527-0959 or email him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

SHODAIGYO CEREMONY

Sunday, April 29, 10:00-11:30 am

BZC's Lotus Sutra Study Group has invited Nichiren Shu priest Ruei Michael McCormick to lead them and all interested BZC members and friends in Shodaigyo meditation practice on Sunday, April 29, from 10:00 to 11:30 am in the zendo.

This Nichiren Shu practice includes alternating periods of chanting *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* (the Japanese way of pronouncing the full Chinese title of what we call Lotus Sutra) to the beat of a drum, and silent sitting. Ruei McCormick will lead us with some invocations (as our kokyo does), and some bowing. For more information contact Paul Ridgway, plridgway@lbl.gov.

Save The Date!

A DAY TO EXPLORE INTUITION, CREATIVITY AND THE USE OF JOURNALING IN MEDITATION PRACTICE with Angie Boissevain, Zen Teacher and Poet Sunday, May 6

Angie Boissevain, a dharma heir of Kobun Chino Roshi and Vanja Palmers, brings us her wisdom and experience in helping people discover the fruitful combination of meditation and journaling. A number of BZC members have worked with her during the annual Buddhist women's retreat at Empty Nest Zendo, and here at BZC. She is a leader of Floating Zendo in San Jose, and teaches each year in New Mexico and Europe. She was one of the founders, with Kobun Roshi, of Jikoji, a Zen temple and retreat center in the Santa Cruz mountains. She has three sons, and is a published poet.

We will meet in the Community Room, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, with time to share a bag lunch at noon. Questions about the workshop: contact Lisa Nelbach, lisa.nelbach@gmail.com.



SANGHA WEEK AT TASSAJARA

Sangha Week at the beginning of the Tassajara guest season welcomes Dharma teachers and members of affiliated and other sanghas to practice together — teachers with their students who want to spend some time together; groups of sangha members without their teacher; and individual practitioners who wish to come alone or with a friend. Sangha weeks are an inspiring time for practice and to meet others on the Way. Sangha Week I this year will be led by Hozan Alan Senauke.

In the morning, Sangha Week participants will be joining the residential community for zazen, breakfast, work practice, and lunch. The afternoon and evening schedule includes Dharma events and allows for personal time. Dinners will be in the guest dining room.

Sangha Week 1:

**Sunday, May 6 - Thursday, May 10 (4 nights)
with Hozan Alan Senauke**

\$277 per person, no stage; \$332 per person, with stage
\$554 per couple, no stage; \$664 per couple, with stage

SOUNDING BOARD

April, 2012

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

The board has recently clarified the way in which our annual fundraising efforts are focused on three elements: leadership, (future support for our abbot and vice abbot), buildings or capital projects, and daily operating expenses. Previously we had devoted most of our attention to buildings and leadership. However, after our income for operating expenses fell short in 2011 we realized that the three funds are closely interdependent, and that we can't assume that total income from dues, sesshins, classes, and other sources will always cover operating costs. This led us to discuss how to balance goals for the three funds, given the generous nature of our community, in a way that doesn't create a burden for our members. Subsequently, we've decided to emphasize only two of the three funds each year and to set our target amounts in such a way that daily operating expenses are likely to be covered. Our plan is to have one big yearly fundraising event, focused on one fund only. In the fourth quarter we'll send out our annual letter from the president, reviewing the year and asking for additional support as needed. Hopefully this will create a rhythm and clarity to supporting BZC that the sangha can easily respond to.

If you have comments, questions, or suggestions for the board on this plan or any other issue, you are invited to speak to or email any of the board members listed on the first page of the BZC directory, as well as President Gerry Oliva and Communication Chair Ron Nestor.

SCHEDULING A PRACTICE DISCUSSION

We're trying something new regarding our practice leaders' availability for practice discussion. Unlike the dokusan calendars, where specific days, times, and venues are pre-set, opportunities for scheduling practice discussion will be more interactive. There is now a list of practice leaders and their contact information below the dokusan calendars on the zendo porch. Please call or email the practice leader of your choice to schedule a formal or informal meeting to discuss your practice at an agreed-upon location. This can range from the cross-legged position face-to-face here at the temple to walks, teas, or other more casual but still intentional places for a dialogue about Dharma.

FAMILY SITTING:

A NEED, A PLAN, A HAPPENING

BZC's first one-day Family Sesshin is scheduled for October 7. Laurie Senauke interviews Marie Hopper about her inspiration for this event, its purpose, its format, and what the sangha can do to help.

Laurie: What was the original impetus for having a family sitting?

Marie: BZC has been a very important part of my life for 14 years now, and naturally, I would like to share it with my children. Also, being a parent really restricts the amount of time I can spend in the zendo and at BZC. It's always painful to ask, Where do I want to be today, with my family or at sesshin? The Family Sitting solves the problem. I know just where I want to be: Right here at BZC with my boys!

Laurie: What are you hoping for?

Marie: Recently I've had a growing curiosity about family practice - what that might look like. Part of my fantasy with this sitting is to explore ways we could offer to the kids and the parents the relaxed alertness that we develop during zazen, as well as the sense of community and the feeling of taking care of something special.

Laurie: What kinds of things are you planning to do?

Marie: A mix of being together and apart, for kids and adults. Like zazen for adults while the kids are being taken care of nearby, but with older kids joining in for short sittings. We can expose the children to chanting and bowing and kinhin - the forms. And I look forward to eating mindfully together and working together - I'd love to have my son alongside in the kitchen! And I see activities like art or drama that could let older kids begin to develop a community with each other.

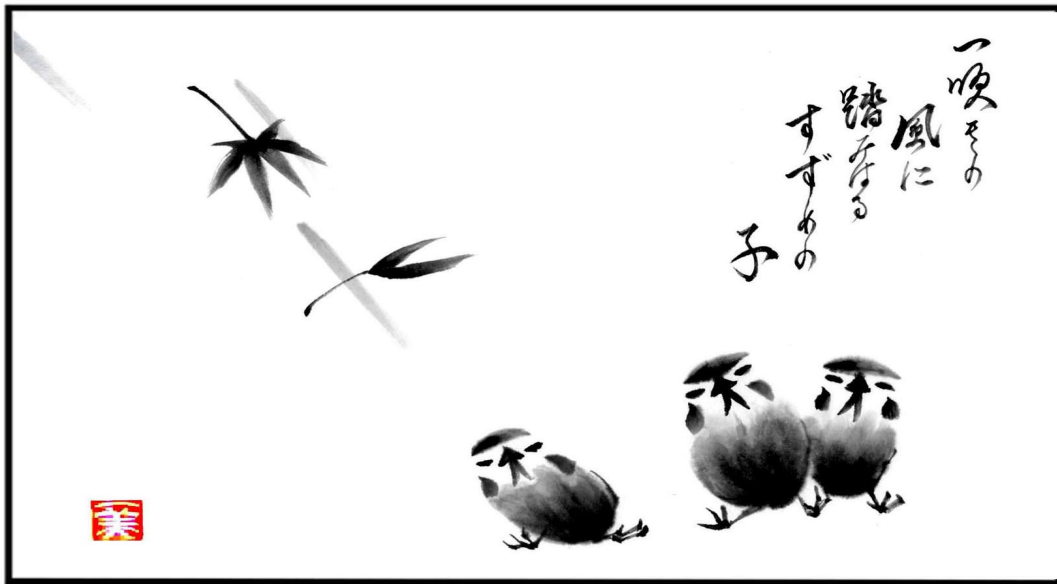
Laurie: What kind of support do you need from the sangha?

Marie: We would love to have sangha members who are not currently in the midst of raising children to join us. They could share in leading activities for different age groups of children as well as help with the various sesshin roles - be models and extra hands and eyes, along with the paid childcare we plan to provide.

Laurie: Any final thoughts?

Marie: We are very excited about opening up a new way for BZC to support the many sangha members who are currently balancing practice and family life. I've wanted to find a way parents can be here more without having to exclude our children from the experience. And we think the sangha as a whole will be strengthened by not "losing" our parents while they are tied down by family and childcare responsibilities.





Little sparrows
standing fast—
a puff of wind

— Kazumi Cranney

BZC member Kazumi Cranney has been working in haiga painting for more than 30 years. Haiga is a form of painting that combines three traditional Japanese arts: haiku, calligraphy, and watercolor. She is a longtime resident of Berkeley. Her paintings have been exhibited in many locales throughout the Bay Area, including the Japan Cultural Community Center, Gallery Voyage in San Francisco, the San Ramon Community Center, and the Berkeley Art Center.

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