



Berkeley Zen Center



June 2012 Newsletter

LAY ORDINATION

This year's Lay Ordination ceremony— *Zaike Tokudo* — will take place on Saturday, June 16 in the zendo at 3:00 pm. Receiving lay ordination from Hozan Sensei are Fulani Offut, Jen Copeland, David White, and Jennifer Taylor. Congratulations in advance to all who have been studying and sewing diligently with our sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and the reception afterwards. Check the zendo bulletin board for details, and please sign up for preparation (tenzo assistance and setup) and cleanup.

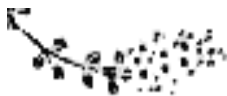
[See p. 7 for Maezumi Roshi's essay on lay ordination.]

HALF-DAY SITTING

Sunday, June 3, 8:00 am–12:00 noon

Here's your chance for further calm practice this spring! BZC offers seven 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 entire four-hour schedule.

There is a \$10 donation requested. Please do not wear scented personal products or clothing laundered using scented products. If you have questions, or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the June half-day director Stan Dewey at standewey@comcast.net or at 510-528-1989. The next half-day sitting will be on September 9th.



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

June

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 6/2, 9:40 am

Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night

Saturday, 6/2, 6:00 pm

Half-day Sitting

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

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 6/4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 6/5, 6:40 am

Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo

Saturday, 6/16, 3:00 pm

Five-day Sesshin

Wednesday-Sunday, 6/20-24

Shuso Hossen, Practice Period Ends

Sunday, 6/24, 3:30 pm

Informal Zazen

Monday, 6/25, morning

July

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 7/3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 7/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7/7, 9:40 am

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)

Sunday, 7/15, 8:00 am-5:10 pm

Work Day

Sunday, 7/22, 8:30 am-4:30 pm

ORYOKI INSTRUCTION

Ellen Webb will be giving oryoki instruction on Saturday, June 16 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.

SEVENTH ANNUAL ZEN WOMEN'S RETREAT JUNE 14-17

The Seventh annual Zen Women's Retreat is scheduled for June 14-17 at Empty Nest Zendo, North Fork, CA, in the Sierra Nevada foothills between Fresno and Yosemite National Park. Many members of BZC have attended past retreats and found them renewing and inspirational. This year's teachers will be Enji Angie Boissevain, Shosan Vicki Austin, and Myoan Grace Schireson. As in previous years, the retreat will offer teaching of body-friendly meditation practices to develop concentration and facilitate healing, discussion of issues facing women in Buddhist practice, and creative writing exercises to bring forth women's distinctive spiritual qualities. This year's retreat will also focus specifically on these open questions regarding Zen practice: How can women inspire each other? How do we learn to express our wisdom? What is women's way to deeper embodiment (body integration) of Zen?

The location is secluded and serene, with mountain views. There is time in the schedule for swimming, enjoying the views and gardens, walking in the hills, building new friendships, and renewing old ones. This retreat has become increasingly popular, and space is limited. A flier is posted on the BZC Zen-related bulletin board outside the community room. To register, or for more information, please email tomehawk@ix.netcom.com or call 209-480-7748. Information is also online at www.emptynestzendo.org.

Some comments from those who have attended previously:

"The retreat was a real journey for me, and I feel that I received such richness, challenge and growth from it. I loved rekindling the writing practice, too. What an amazing form of expression."

"It is the first time I have felt such a strong sense of community with other Zen practitioners and it was very meaningful to me. I know that the ripple effects of being with everyone will continue for much time to come. It truly was a life-changing event."

"We are blessed to have had the opportunity to spend time with and learn from these bold, pioneering women who led our retreat."



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).

June	2	Childcare
June	9	Childcare
June	16	Childcare
June	23	Sesshin—no program
June	30	Childcare

Note: Childcare for July and August by appointment (lauries@kushiki.org)

MOUNTAINS & RIVERS DATE CHANGE

Please note that the date of our next Mountains & Rivers Sesshin has been changed. Originally scheduled for late July, it will instead take place two months later, Thursday-Sunday, September 27-30. In all other respects it will be the same as originally planned, including the location (Coast Camp in Point Reyes).

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
July deadline: Friday, 6/15, 8:00 pm.



ASPIRATION

Thoughts from Sojun Roshi
June, 2012

What is it that we aspire to in our life? What is it that leads us and gives us direction, and how do we decide, or do we decide? Aspiration gives us purpose—and inspiration gives us momentum. Two of the fundamentals of Soto Zen are: to understand that Buddhas and ordinary beings are not two; and, to practice with no gaining idea. When we begin sitting zazen we may not aspire to become Buddha, but it is not unusual to want something from practice.

Suzuki Roshi's teaching never strayed from these fundamentals. Sometimes we confuse “no gaining mind” with no aspiration or no goal. Gaining here is associated with selfishness or self-centeredness. So, no gaining means not adding something that obscures what is fundamental. Don't put another head on top of your own, don't stick some idea of enlightenment on top of your original endowment.

When our aspiration is pure, that is, not self-centered, it naturally becomes Buddha's practice. That is why it is important to practice for the sake of practice, without expectations. So our goal is not the usual goal of getting something, but rather of letting go. It is not wrong to aspire to enlightenment. What brings us to practice is our own light that needs to be revealed and developed through practice in order to express itself fully. It is like a piece of incense that is burning all the way down. It is the same light at the beginning and the end, and goes through many transformations as it burns. The light and the incense are one column, inseparable. Our original thought of enlightenment is the light that stays with us through our entire life of practice, and illuminates our everyday activity. Nothing special.

Our Bodhisattva practice is to help all beings in their quest for fundamental maturity and realization. Enlightened practice, therefore, is to stop seeking enlightenment, and practice for the sake of practice, which matures one's self on the one hand, and others as well. Dogen calls this *Jijuyu Zanmai*, self-fulfilling or self-joyous samadhi that is complete when we let go and extend our light to others.

Some time ago I ran across a little kids' book from Singapore called *The Adventures of Leo: Rahula Leads The Way*. It is about a boy named Leo. One day his mother said, "Why don't you go to the temple and offer flowers to the Buddha?" So he went to the temple, and behind the Buddha was a boy who looked a lot like him and seemed to be his own age, ten or twelve, but he was a little monk named Rahula. He had a shaved head and a robe. They became friends and traveled around together. And whenever they encountered a tricky situation, Rahula always gave Leo a message or teaching about it. They got into a fight with some kids and Rahula helped him to understand it. Whatever situation Leo found himself in Rahula was always there to teach him how to deal with it. Leo and Rahula are like the two sides of one person: ordinary, and Buddha. When we are mature enough to let Buddha lead, we can help people. When these two sides become one, we can forget our self and teach others.

So, aspiration, in the first place, is just to find the path and stay on it no matter how difficult it is, or how discouraged we may get. Enlightenment includes inspiration and determination that keeps us going. When we fall down, we get back up. That is the rhythm of practice. Negotiating our way through difficulty and adversity gives us the strength and confidence to live our life one moment at a time in faith that we are Buddha.

So this is our aspiration: no gaining mind, but strong practice to express the way and to embody the way. When you have this, nothing can stop you, even though you have many obstacles and seeming barriers. When you become one with Dharma it is transmitted to you by the universe, and you have your own true way.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

Our temple relies entirely on us, the members, to support our teachers, maintain the buildings and grounds, and to support our day-to-day operations. Three bellwether categories of support are Member Donations, Donations for Operations, and Donations for Buildings. Last March the sangha approved budget goals of \$55,000, \$35,000, and \$20,000 in these categories, respectively. These are realistic goals both in terms of our needs and past performance. (See the bar chart.)

One third of the way through the year, how are we doing in meeting these financial goals? As of April 30, member dues of \$20,170 were received, about 37% of the budget. (Some members pay all or half their dues early in the year.) We need to gather additional dues of \$34,830 by the end of the year to meet our goal.

Donations to support operations now lag far behind our goal: we've received only \$3,729, or about 11% of the amount budgeted, as of April 30. Donations for buildings and grounds are also far below budget: only one donation of \$500 has been received to date. Donations often are made late in the year, so we needn't be alarmed by these numbers, just aware.

For BZC to remain solvent, we members will need to continue to fulfill our dues pledges and to donate generously during the remaining eight months of 2012.

FIVE-DAY SESSHIN CONCLUDES SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD: 6/20-24

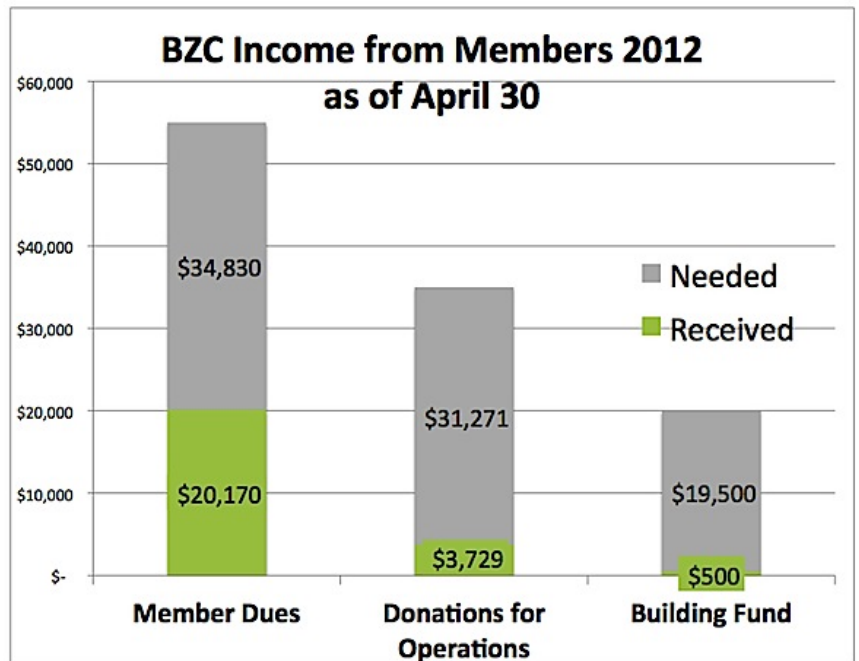
Our Spring practice period will conclude with a five-day sesshin from Wednesday, June 20 to Sunday, June 24. The first four days' schedule is from 5 am until 9 pm, while the final day's schedule is from 5:00 am until 3:00 pm, immediately followed by Shuso Hossen, Dharma dialogue with the shuso. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board for a minimum of three days, two of which should be consecutive. Sign-ups close on Wednesday morning, June 13.

The Shuso Hossen ceremony will begin promptly at 3:30 pm, and will be followed by a reception. All practice-period and sesshin participants should support the shuso and come with a question.

If this is your first sesshin at BZC, it is strongly recommended that you first participate in a full Saturday program, and that you speak with the sesshin director.

The fee is \$35 per day and should be paid in advance. Leave checks marked "June sesshin" in the kitchen/community room porch door donation slot.

If you have questions, contact the sesshin director John Busch at john@mobu.org or 510-710-7183.



This chart shows the amounts budgeted for 2012 in three categories—Member Dues, Donations for Operations from members, and Building Fund donations from members—at the top of each bar. The amounts in green indicate funds received to date: the amounts in gray indicate additional funds needed by the end of the year. [Note: our printed newsletter is in black and white only; the version available on our website shows colors.]



Photo by Ross Estes Blum

Whether a strawberry is dangling on the edge of a precipice or secluded within the cracks of an urban sidewalk, can you stop and enjoy this moment?

—R.E.B.

*You do not even have to leave your room
Remain sitting at your table and listen
Do not even listen, simply wait.
Do not even wait, be still and solitary
The world will freely offer itself to you unasked
It has no choice
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.*

Franz Kafka

LIVING BY VOW—SUMMER STUDY GROUP STARTING IN JUNE

For six sessions, meeting every other week, we will study Shohaku Okumura's *Living by Vow*, his just-released commentaries on the chants used daily in Soto Zen temples. We will spend a week with each chapter, covering the Four Bodhisattva Vows, the Verse of Repentance, the Three Refuges, the Robe Chant, the Meal Chants, and the Verse for Opening the Sutra. Ryushin Andrea Thach will facilitate the group, which will begin the last week of June. We will meet at a day and time that works best for those interested, with a request that group members attend the majority of the group meetings. If you are interested, please contact Andrea at andrea.thach@gmail.com. Books will soon be available through Wisdom Publications or Sanshin Zen Community at <http://sanshinji.org/books/> (proceeds from sales to Sanshin directly benefit Okumura Roshi's work), as well as the BZC Saturday book table. There is no fee for this group.

BZC CAMPOUT!

You are warmly invited to the somewhat-annual Berkeley Zen Center Campout, scheduled for July 14-15. 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 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 if you have questions, and look for a sign-up on the bulletin board in early July.

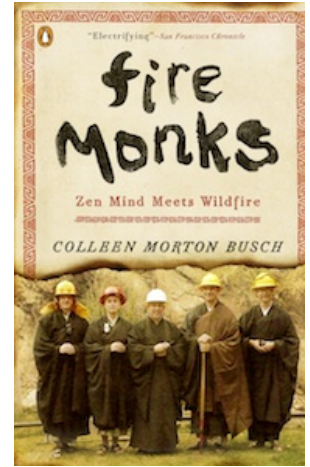
THE SILENT AUCTION IS COMING! SHHHH!

Start saving now, because on 9/22, you will be bidding on some fabulous prizes! A week in a cabin in Mendocino (better than Bodhidharma's cave), a home-cooked dinner (veggie, of course) with professional musicians, stunning art, a Midori Tea! There's a rumor that Mdm Tso-Dum-Pee will be there....

But it's not just about the prizes. This fundraising, and your donations, are an offering to the sangha, as important to BZC as is your participation. One is many, many is one! Get it?

FIRE MONKS OUT IN PAPERBACK

Colleen Busch's book about the Tassajara fire will be released in paperback June 26. *Fire Monks* was named a best book of 2011, will be excerpted in *Best Buddhist Writing 2012*, and is currently being translated into German. Colleen will launch the paperback with several Bay Area events. Come hear her read and bring a friend or three. More events will be added and listed on her website soon: colleenmortonbusch.com. For *Huffington Post* blogs, visit <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/colleen-morton-busch>.



Tuesday, June 26

Paperback Launch!

Diesel Books on College Avenue, 7:00 pm

Monday, July 9

East West Bookshop in Mountain View, 7:30 pm

Sunday, July 29

Book Passage in Corte Madera, 4:00 pm

WORK DAY—Sunday, 7/22, 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 are provided. If you have questions, please contact Diane Schnapp, kimodi@mac.com.

But wait! There's more! As you wander your daily path, perhaps you've seen or will see an auction item you can donate or point us towards. The most popular items in the past have come directly from sangha efforts and talents. If you have an item or an activity you'd like to donate, please contact Jeff Taylor or Colleen Busch. Jeff can be reached at 925 997 7831 (before 9:00 pm) or at jeft2k@yahoo.com. Colleen can be reached at colleen@mobu.org. Deep Bows.



SANGHA WEEK

Over the years Sangha Week at Tassajara has created an opportunity for Zen practitioners from disparate Suzuki Roshi-based centers to meet each other and to join the Tassajara community in work, zazen, and recreation. Last month I had a chance to lead one of Zen Center's Sangha Weeks for the first time.

Over five days, a harmonious group of about a dozen people from groups in Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, and Fort Bragg shared food, hiking, and discussion. As participants in Tassajara's guest practice program, we worked from 8:30 to noon each morning, then had free time and guest dinner in the dining room. It was a warm encounter, building new friendships and great appreciation for the practice we share. My role was very low key, just helping people connect, answering questions about our practice and forms, and leading a circle of discussion.

Now that I know what it's about, I want to encourage BZC folks to join me next year. It would be wonderful to spend some relaxed time together in this precious environment.

- Hozan



NOTES FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Dear Sangha,

Greetings from your librarian! I'm writing to update you on our library. Library hours are currently being held on the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 pm and most Saturdays after lecture from 11:30 am until 12 or 12:30. Special events may supersede library hours, so check the calendar or email me if you are in doubt. During library hours you are welcome to stop by the community room with a question, a suggestion, or just to browse the library.

I also wanted to let you know about a few of our recent acquisitions. You'll find *Zen Questions: Zazen, Dogen, and the Spirit of Creative Inquiry* by Taigen Dan Leighton on the New Arrivals shelf. This book is a wonderful complement to our practice period study of Genjokoan, as it investigates the way we inhabit the moment, and it does so from a variety of angles. An interesting look at modern

Japanese philosophy, particularly in relation to Dogen and Buddhism, can be found in *Purifying Zen*, a translation of Watsuji Tetsuro's *Shamon Dogen*. This early twentieth-century work reintroduced Japan to Dogen and his approach to Zen. You might also enjoy the lovely book *Moon by the Window: The Calligraphy and Zen Insights of Shodo Harada*, as well. It contains beautiful works of calligraphy by Harada Roshi, as well as his commentary on each piece.

Many other fine books are available, or will be soon, so I hope to see you in the community room!

With a bow,
Veronica Reilly
very23@gmail.com

How Does the Ocean

The ocean's alive on all sides and horizons.
Rough landscapes of water stretch edges of sight.
Hills and mountains, valleys and caves
pass through in a vision, become buried at sea.

There's the ledge where the moon may appear.
Here's the place my breath sings, almost silent.
How does the ocean fall into the ocean?

A pelican, black, dives in and emerges.
Gulls vie for status, a seal swims in a wave.
The blue wave rolls over and hides the brown seal.
An airplane flies low to make the skies rumble.

The wind on my face brings salt and fine mist.
Where the skyline curls over, a tiny metal ship.
How does the sea cross and carry the ocean?

Waves tumble like children test and wrestle each other
or crawl, try to stand, then collapse in great tantrums.
Now nothing is left but the splashing and ranting
the foaming of falling as tots turn to water.

Giant cupful of wonder splashes sides, spilling nothing.
Placid, even playful from this perspective of distance.
How does the ocean climb out of the ocean?

Orange sun casts her ribbons on the hair of her sister
Green ocean looks up and smiles back, a reflection.
The sea is aglow, motley rose petals stream.
White sand turns to brown as the sun plunges seaward.

I lift up and listen to a shell from the seashore.
Who is this guest when the house is abandoned?
How does the ocean remain in the ocean?

Steve Treagus
(inspired by the July 2011 Mountains and Rivers Sesshin)

June 2012 BZC Newsletter

**Lay Ordination (J. *Zaike Tokudo*):
The Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts
for those who remain at Home**

Shobogenzo, “Jukai,” states, “All Buddhas and Ancestors taught that receiving the precepts is the first step in the Way.” Dogen Zenji also tells us that upon receiving the Buddha's precepts we immediately enter the position of all Buddhas. How so? Because these wonderful precepts arise from the purity of self-nature and reveal the Buddha-nature—our true nature.

The ceremony of receiving the precepts as lay followers is called *zaike tokudo* or lay ordination. According to definition, “ordain” means to invest with the functions of an office or position. In understanding Buddhist ordination, we should know that the functions we are invested with are those of a Buddha. This is exactly the meaning of “upon receiving the precepts we immediately enter the position of all Buddhas.” To have *zaike tokudo* is to acknowledge our true nature and confirm our intent to realize it fully.

The ceremony itself consists of several significant elements to which we should give thought. First, there is the invocation in which the officiant priest invites all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to be present as witnesses. The officiant acts as their representative, but we should know that actually the Buddhas are our *Acariya* or preceptors, therefore, we receive the precepts directly from all Buddhas.

Secondly, all who wish to receive Buddha's precepts must first purify themselves through confession and repentance in which we acknowledge past and present wrongdoing and delusion. We do this by chanting the verse of “Formless Repentance” and personally looking into our own hearts.

Having purified ourselves, we may receive the Bodhisattva precepts—that is, the Three Refuges (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Prohibitory Precepts—a total of 16. The *Nirvana Sutra* states, “Although all living beings are replete with the Buddha Nature, they must uphold the precepts as the cause before they can perceive it.” Therefore, let us give thought to the meaning of “keeping the precepts is exactly Buddhahood.” Until we fully understand our true nature and penetrate it thoroughly, we may understand the precepts as guidelines for daily living and a framework for Buddhist practice.

Lastly, in acknowledgment of our receiving the precepts and joining the family of Buddha, we are given a *rakusu* (small Buddhist robe which one sews according to the traditional way) and a *kechimyaku* or lineage paper upon which our Buddhist name (given on this occasion by the teacher) is written along with the names of all ancestors in the lineage from Shakyamuni Buddha to our present teacher. The red line that connects your name and all others written therein illustrates the truth that the precepts are indeed the lifeblood of all Buddhas.

Receiving the precepts is an important part of Buddhist practice available to anyone regardless of mental or physical ability. It is the way by which we manifest the truth of our own Buddhahood here in the world, right now.

Taizan Maezumi Roshi
(used with permission of Zen Center of Los Angeles)

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