



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2013 Newsletter

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 11 and end on Sunday, June 23, the last day of sesshin, with the Shuso Dharma Question Ceremony. Hoshin Bokuren Jake Van Akkeren—Dharma Faith, Unadorned Practice—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. This April issue includes the Practice Period calendar insert.

Buddha's Birthday

On Saturday, April 6, 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 5, or bring treasures from your garden when you come Saturday morning. For more information, contact head chiden Catharine Lucas at cmanerlucas@earthlink.net.



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

April

Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 4/3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 4/4, 6:40 am

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/6

Kidzendo

Saturday, 4/13, 9:30 am

Saturday, 4/27, 9:30 am

One-Day Sesshin

Sunday, 4/14, 5:00 am – 5:00 pm

Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

Friday, 4/26 – Sunday, 4/28

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/27, 9:40 am

May

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 5/2, 6:20 pm

Friday, 5/3, 6:40 am

Half-day Sitting

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

Practice Period Opens—One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 5/11 (see announcement this page)

Kidzendo

Saturday, 5/18

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5/25, 9:40 am



Maylie's Metta Prayer Class with Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke

The Metta Prayer that Maylie Scott created, and that Hozan will present and discuss, is based on the Metta (loving kindness) Sutra. Hozan and Maylie received dharma transmission from Sojun Roshi in 1998. They worked closely together as practice leaders at BZC for many years. Maylie died in 2001.

The class will be held on three consecutive Thursday evenings: April 4, 11, and 18, at 7:15 pm. Cost for the series is \$30. Sign up on the patio bulletin board or email class coordinator Ron Nestor, rnestor1@yahoo.com.

One-day Sesshin Sunday April 14

Sojun Mel Weitsman will lead a one-day sesshin on Sunday, April 14, 5 am–5 pm. We encourage old and new sangha members to participate in this final “tune-up” sitting before spring practice period. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board before Thursday morning, April 11 after zazen.

If this is your first sesshin at BZC, we recommend that you first participate in a full Saturday program and also speak with the sesshin director. The fee is \$35 per day and **should be paid in advance** (a discounted fee is possible for those in need; please speak to the director). Leave checks marked “April sesshin” in the kitchen/community room porch door donation slot.

If you have any questions, contact the sesshin director, John Busch: john@mobu.org, 510.710.7183.

Special First Friday Talk: Friday, April 5

On April 5, we will have a very special First Friday talk (5:40 pm) given by Mira Gordon, 13-year-old Willard Middle School student, whose family has been practicing at BZC for many years (her whole life!). Mira will share her eighth grade culture fair project about her family’s practice, which includes visuals and words about how Buddhism affects and influences her life. Children and adults of all ages are invited to attend.

Mira writes: *When people ask what my culture fair project is about, and I say Buddhism, many ask, “So are you Buddhist?” Although I have been going to a Zen center my whole life with my family, I wouldn’t say I’m religiously Buddhist. I do not meditate often, or pray to the Buddha, or burn incense, or believe in demons and ghosts, as are the stereotypes of Buddhist people. My family practices Buddhism as a way of life. We avoid committing acts of greed, hate, and delusion, as Buddha said that these are the causes of all suffering, and we try to be mindful, compassionate, and kind. From teachings at Zen Center, to conversations about Buddhism with my family, to a goal to end suffering, Buddhism has shaped my life in positive ways.*



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Currently childcare is being done by Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. We need to know by dinner time Friday if you are planning to avail yourselves of childcare on the following day (so she can sleep in if not!). Phone or e-mail Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries@kushiki.org. Childcare for 8:45 am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more information.

Kidzendo Expands!

BZC’s Saturday program for children three and up has expanded. Our new Toolbox and Mindfulness for Families program is offered two days per month, typically meeting on the second and fourth Saturdays, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am. We hope this will support more continuity and cohesiveness. (We are always open to feedback from parents about our program.)

BZC resident Tamar has been trained in offering the Toolbox materials. Nancy Suib, a longtime practitioner at BZC, is co-leading this program using The Mindful Schools Curriculum. See details on our website or in the September 2012 newsletter. Check the calendar online or below for exact schedule. As always, RSVP if you plan to attend (lauries@kushiki.org).

April 6	Buddha’s Birthday
April 13	KIDZENDO
April 20	Childcare
April 27	KIDZENDO
May 4	Childcare
May 11	Sesshin – no program
May 18	KIDZENDO
May 25	Childcare
June 1	KIDZENDO
June 8	Childcare
June 15	Childcare
June 22	Sesshin - no program
June 29	Summer break begins

Family Practice E-mail Group

To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We only send, at most, ONE e-mail per week—just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, e-mail Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org or Marie at marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net.

A Drawing
Comments from Sojun Roshi
April, 2013



Alfred Rethel, *Dance of Death*, 1848

This drawing by Alfred Rethel, from 1848, has held my attention for a long time. It needs no words to convey its timeless message. But I do want to say a few words in response, given that it expresses so eloquently the strong pull of the insanity of our time, driven by ignorance and the evil urge.

What is the difference between ignorance and evil? Ignorance is characterized by greed, ill will, and delusion. We do horrible things, driven by ignorance, while thinking that we are doing the right thing. As Jesus said to his oppressors, "I forgive you, as you know not what you do." Evil has the same characteristics of greed, ill will, and delusion, the difference being that the perpetrators of evil know they are doing the wrong thing and go ahead and do it anyway, disregarding the consequences to others. On the world stage, munitions manufacturers create divisiveness among nations, manipulating differences into bloodlust and profiteering by selling arms to both sides, hoping to keep the battle lines going for as long as possible. Evil has many definitions, but I think of it as getting pleasure and delight at causing and witnessing the suffering of others. Divide and conquer is the name of the game. Keep the game simmering as long as possible by making it look like your enemy is going to destroy you at any moment. Torturers are evil cowards because they inflict suffering on helpless people and enjoy it. But evil is also ignorance, because those who purposely indulge in it are mostly unaware of the karmic consequences, not realizing that just beneath the surface of their success is deep suffering.

We have the seeds of both sanity and insanity within us. An enlightened person will admit to delusion, or that they can be a little nutty at times, because we all can. We are easily seduced by the powerful forces that are flowing through our senses and influencing our mind and emotions. So we should know how easily we can be turned around, and that we need to always keep the thought of practice before us. This means to meet greed with generosity and non-attachment, ill will with good will, compassion, and loving kindness, and delusion or divisiveness with an attitude of unity and clear mindedness.

May 4: Save the Date! CPR Class

It has been over two years since BZC hosted an adult and child Lifesaver CPR class. We are planning one now, for Saturday, May 4 at 1:00 p.m. The class will take about three hours.

Please join us! There will soon be a sign-up sheet on the patio bulletin board, which will include further details about the class.



Three-day Mountains and Rivers Sesshin: Friday, April 26 – Sunday, April 28

Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place Friday through Sunday, April 26-28, 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).

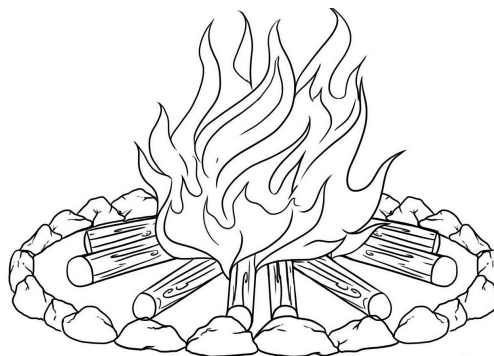
The sesshin will begin with an orientation meeting Thursday evening, April 25, in the community room. Friday morning we will carpool to Point Reyes, then hike from the Palomarin trailhead to Wildcat Camp (5.5 miles), moving at a moderate pace with frequent rest stops and lunch along the way. We will 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 three days, but provision will also be made for those who may have to arrive late.

The sign-up sheet is posted on the BZC bulletin board. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, April 20. The fee is \$60. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at 510.527.0959 or email him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Save the Date! BZC Campout!

You are warmly invited to the annual BZC campout, scheduled for July 13-14. 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, and, the next morning, oatmeal and coffee/tea/cocoa. 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.



Inside the Gate, Outside the Box

The BZC Bazaar and Fundraiser planning is underway. The event will be held **September 28** at BZC after the Saturday program. Once again, we'll have scrumptious food, a festive atmosphere, a silent auction, and a raffle for many excellent prizes, including dinner at Greens Restaurant. There are innumerable ways that sangha members can contribute to the fun and success of this event:

Raffle: We accept and encourage donations of raffle items. In prior years, people have donated gift certificates, handmade goods, and purchased items. Contact Veronica Reilly at 609.915.7909/ very23@gmail.com, or Andrew Corson at 510.541.2004/ andrewcorson@sbcglobal.net with donation ideas.



Silent Auction: In lieu of a committee-organized silent auction featuring items donated primarily from the wider community—though we will have one or two of those—we invite you to participate in our BZC member-to-member silent auction. This is an opportunity for sangha members and friends to offer skills, services, or talents to raise money for BZC's Leadership Fund. It's also a great excuse to



spend some leisure time together. Popular examples from past silent auctions have included gourmet home-cooked meals, hikes, and workshops with local Zen luminaries. Among this year's offerings is a behind-the-scenes tour of the Oakland Zoo with docent (and BZC Treasurer) Paul Farber. What might you offer? Think inside the gate but outside the box and bring your ideas to us! You will not need to be present on party day or monitor bidding, and we'll help you get organized. For more info or to share an idea, contact Peter Pfaelzer at 510.843.1490/ppfaelzer@gmail.com or Jeff Taylor at 925.997.7831/jeft2k@yahoo.com.

Details about karma-free cookies and our hula-hoop refresher to come in future newsletters...



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 10. 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 non-profit law. At the September meeting, all BZC members are welcome to nominate members-at-large for the board.

This early announcement is meant to provide sangha members adequate 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. If anyone has further questions about member-at-large responsibilities or the nomination/election process, please feel free to contact BZC vice-president, Jake Van Akkeren, at 925.933.3486 (before 9:00 pm) or at jvanakkeren@comcast.net.

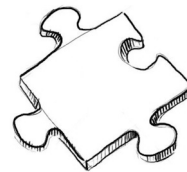
Bird Haven Zendo

Longtime BZC members and priests Catherine Cascade and John Mogey have created an intimate home-style practice place in their new home in rural Oregon. It's called Bird Haven Zendo and is situated on five wooded acres in the foothills between the Willamette Valley and the Coast Range mountains.

The schedule there includes morning and evening zazen, along with a Wednesday evening sitting and discussion group during the winter months. And beginning this spring, they will lead one-day silent retreats on the second Saturday of the month. This is an opportunity to settle into a day of silent sitting and walking meditation, both indoors, in the zendo, and outdoors, where the natural world proclaims the Dharma in a thousand voices. Overnight accommodations are available.

On the website www.birdhavenzendo.org you'll find a calendar with retreat dates, along with more information about the retreats, daily zendo schedule, Winter Wednesday sitting group, and opportunities for solo retreats and dokusan.

Email contact@birdhavenzendo.org with any questions or to arrange a visit.



HOW TO WORK A PUZZLE

You can get started with an edge--
parts with straight sides
build the border
even if you don't know which end is up.

Group by definition and color
blurry browns and greens over here
whites with sharp grey lines off to the left
light blues mauves over there;
watch for rare bits of red
a peculiar curve, odd group
of knobs, points, hollows.
Suddenly a piece--
sometimes two
or even three or four you've
stared at for a long time
or absent-mindedly half-seen--
falls into place almost
on its own.
The rest look unrelated but you know
from experience
more will come together
for you or someone else.

Sometimes it helps to stand and see the whole sweep.
Sometimes your fingers take
a piece and place it without checking
as if behind-the-eyes grasps a whole
you didn't/couldn't think about
just seems to be bestowed
although of course it came from you--
where else?

It helps to stop trying.
Give it a rest.
There's a space I can't figure out—I really think
a piece may be lost
but in the end
nothing is missing.

~ Judy Bertelsen

Report from the Treasurer

At the March 5 all-sangha potluck, the BZC members present had the opportunity to review the 2012 year-end financial reports and review and approve the 2013 budget. Copies of the reports from that evening are still available, and are placed each day on the bulletin board shelf.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- 1- Our overall cash and investments increased by \$22,517 (12%) in 2012 over the 2011 amounts.
- 2- Our unrestricted gross income increased by - \$25,555 (12.8%) compared to 2011, due mainly to increased support by the members through their dues and unrestricted donations. We also had a positive cash flow from unrestricted operations, in contrast to 2011, when we had a negative net cash income of \$21,789.
- 3- We were able to meet our annual fundraising goal of \$20,000 for our building improvement fund which, with the balance already in this fund, will allow us to complete our community room kitchen remodel, redesign the community room porch and begin much-needed renovations for the bathroom and kitchen in the upstairs apartment of 1929 Russell. We are also hoping to raise \$20,000 in 2013 for the leadership fund which provides future support for our abbot and vice abbot. Additional details will be available soon.
- 4- Income from class and sesshin fees was higher in 2012 due to better attendance, in contrast to the decreasing numbers we had experienced in the previous three years.
- 5- The 2013 budget that was approved projects a gross income level that is only \$1,239 higher than what was received in 2012. We are projecting a positive cash flow for 2013. The budget includes funds for much-needed projects such as website enhancement, IT assistance for our office computer, garden improvements, and the continued funding of the prudent reserve (contingency) fund.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Paul Farber, our treasurer, at pfarber@pfarber.net for more details.

BZC Senior Students at SFZC

On February 20th, San Francisco Zen Center hosted a panel exploring the path of lay entrustment and teaching in our Zen lineage. Laurie Senauke and Bob Rosenbaum joined Wendy Johnson, Martha DeBarros, and Laura Burges as panel members; they talked about what led them to choose the lay path, and about some of their current activities.

There was a lively discussion afterwards exploring issues such as training, authority, and development of forms for the teaching and expression of lay practice. It was a joyous and thought-provoking meeting of minds and bodies.

Helpful Practice Tips

For Wednesday afternoon dokusan, please wait near the dokusan hut as your time approaches. The previous person will have an easier time finding you.

If you see a new person in the zendo who appears confused about what to do, please offer some assistance. This typically comes in the form of showing them how to lay out their zabuton for service, as well as pointing out the page in the sutra book we're chanting from.

~ Ross Blum



Life as scenery
A scenic life
All manner of scenarios
Parade freely
In front of the inner eye

~ Kata Galasi

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Third Friday of the month before each issue

May deadline:
Friday, April 19, 8:00 pm

Berkeley Zen Center
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Berkeley, CA 94703