



Berkeley Zen Center



February 2014 Newsletter

Beginner's Sesshin

February 2, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

On Sunday February 2, we will be having a Beginner's Sesshin from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. This is being scheduled in part to include five visitors from the Wind und Wolken Sangha in Germany who will be visiting BZC from January 24 to February 5 to learn about our way of practice and be introduced to our forms. The format of this sesshin will include basic instruction on zendo etiquette, sitting and walking meditation, bowing and chanting. There will be a bag lunch and tea.

If you are new to BZC, this would be a great way to become familiar with sesshin forms before participating in a full one-day sesshin. For other members this would be a nice way to support our visitors and new members and to take on some of the critical sesshin positions.

The fee for this sesshin will be \$25. Please pay before or on the day of sesshin.

Sojun Roshi's February Study Sesshin February 22 & 23

Sojun will return from Tassajara (the great Zen Heart-Mind Temple) shortly before the 2-day study sesshin. During his time there, he will decide on the topic of study. With an infusion of fresh inspiration and ideas, Sojun will lead us to a deeper understanding of our practice. Reading materials will be available on the bulletin board shelf prior to sesshin.



The dates are February 22 and 23 (Saturday 5:00 am – 9:00 pm, and Sunday 5:00 am – 3:00 pm). Look for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in early February. The fee is \$35/day, to be paid in advance. Please leave payment marked "study sesshin" in the donation slot. For details, contact sesshin director Carol Paul at caroljpaul AT yahoo.com or 510.206.5051.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

February

Beginner's Sesshin

Sunday, 2/2, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 2/3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 2/4, 6:40 am

Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

Saturday, 2/15, after lecture

President's Day (Zendo Closed)

Monday, 2/17

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/15, 9:40 am

Two-Day Study Sesshin

Saturday, 2/22, 5:00 am – Sunday 2/23, 3:00 pm

March

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 3/2, 8:00 am – 12:00 noon

All Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting

Tuesday, 3/4, 6:30 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 3/3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 3/4, 6:40 am

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 3/15

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3/15, 9:40 am

Work Day

Sunday, 3/30



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.

Sojun Roshi's Study Group

Sojun Roshi's study group will continue with selected koans for the first half of 2014. Our two main sources will be The Blue Cliff Record and The Book of Serenity. There will be five Friday evening meetings on February 21, March 14 and 28, April 4 and 18 from 7:15 – 8:45 pm. A sign-up will be posted. For questions or to register in advance, contact class coordinator, Ron Nestor, at rnestor1 AT yahoo.com. All are welcome. The fee for the series is \$50, payable at the first meeting.



1967. Suzuki Roshi lecturing in the old Tassajara zendo.

Saturday Morning Lecture Schedule

February 1	Vicki Austin
February 8	Hozan Senauke Sensei
February 15	Karen Sundeim
February 22	Sojun Weitsman Roshi
March 1	Hozan Senauke Sensei
March 8	Sojun Weitsman Roshi
March 15	Sojun Weitsman Roshi
March 22	Marie Hopper
March 29	Sojun Weitsman Roshi

Way-Seeking Mind Talks

People have often asked why we don't post the Monday morning and Friday afternoon speakers on the web or in the newsletter. While they are posted on the patio and zendo porch calendars, it is my intention to have the month's speakers in place in time for posting them online and in the newsletter beginning with this newsletter. - Ross Blum

February 3, Monday 6:20 am - Open Discussion
February 7, Friday 5:50 pm - Jed Appelman
February 10, Monday 6:20 am - Bill Milligan
February 24, Monday 6:20 am - Konin Cardenas

Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Supervised play is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Currently supervising is Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. We need to know by noon the Friday before if you are planning to use this service. Contact Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries AT kushiki.org.

Coverage for BZC's 8:45 am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more information.

KidZendo

BZC's Saturday program for children three and up usually happens twice a month during the school year, typically on the second and fourth Saturdays, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am (see schedule below or check online). Several BZC members are teaching in this program: BZC resident Tamar has been trained in a curriculum known as The Toolbox. Nancy Suib and Jin Young, longtime practitioners at BZC, have been trained in the Mindful Schools program, and Seicho Judy Fleischman has participated in children's programs in Brooklyn, NY. RSVP if you plan to attend (lauries AT kushiki.org).

Family practice schedule:

February 1	Supervised play
February 8	Kidzendo
February 15	Kidzendo
February 22	Sesshin - no program
March 1	Supervised play
March 8	Kidzendo
March 15	Sesshin - no program
March 22	Kidzendo
March 29	Supervised play
April 5	Buddha's Birthday
April 12	Supervised play
April 19	Supervised play
April 26	Kidzendo

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 AT kushiki.org or Marie at marie_hopper AT sbcglobal.net.

Please—always RSVP for ALL family activities to lauries AT kushiki.org! Thank you.

Monkey Mind



I just saw a wonderful play based on the Chinese novel Monkey. It was written around the sixteenth century and is one of the most well known tales in China.

Monkey is a novel about the journey of Tang Dynasty monk Hsuan Tsang, who traveled from China to India in the seventh century to bring back Buddhist scriptures. In those days it was a very arduous journey through the Pamir Mountains and the Gobi Desert. Hsuan Tsang thought he would be gone for a couple of years but it took sixteen. He accomplished his task, came back, and spent his life translating scriptures and founding a school. He was regarded as a hero. His journey was very dangerous. Whenever he got into a tough situation he chanted the Heart Sutra.

The story begins with the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin looking for someone to go to India to bring back the scriptures for the unfortunate people who don't have them. She picks Hsuan Tsang who is very pure. Because it is so dangerous, she wants him to have some disciples to be his companions on the way.

The star of the novel is not Hsuan Tsang, who embodies the qualities of strong determination and magical powers; it's the monkey king. One day the monkey king realizes that he wants to be immortal. In the old days in China, the Taoists were always looking for the secret of immortality. The monkey-king decides, "I want to be an immortal." So he dashes off, journeying miles searching for a teacher who can help him find immortality. He runs into many teachers, but he is so clever that he outwits them all. Finally he winds up in heaven. He totally trashes the place because he is so mischievous.

The monkey is the symbol of the mind. Monkey-mind is very clever and difficult to control. In the story, nobody can control Monkey and everyone in heaven is angry with him. It turns out that Monkey's last challenge is the Buddha, who says, "I'll tell you what. If you can hop out of my hand, you win. You'll be immortal." Using his Taoist powers, Monkey runs to the ends of the earth, where he takes a leak against a big tree. Then he comes back to Buddha and says, "I made it to the ends of the earth, out of your hand." But Buddha lifts up a finger and says, "This is the one you peed on!"

So Kuan Yin says to Hsuan Tsang, "I have this mischievous monkey, whom I think will make you a good companion." When Hsuan Tsang agrees, Kuan Yin ordains Monkey, saying, "You will be the disciple of Hsuan Tsang, who is called Tripitika, or 'three baskets of learning.'"

Hsuan Tsang's next companion is a pig. The pig also gets ordained and becomes a disciple. Then they meet another demon called Sandy Monk, who had fallen from heaven and taken to eating travelers. Sandy Monk thought there was no redemption for him, but Kuan Yin says, "If you take good care of Tripitika all the way to the western land, you will be redeemed." So for one reason or another, all three – Monkey, the pig, and Sandy Monk – have fallen from heaven and need redemption. And now the four of them, the three disciples and Tripitika, go on an adventure.

Hsuan Tsang, or Tripitika, is a symbol of purity, of lofty intention and faith. He walks into all kinds of situations. The three disciples are always rescuing him. It's a wonderful way of thinking about the passions – to think of them as your disciples. Tripitika is always training the disciples and correcting their bad behavior. At the same time, the disciples continuously rescue Tripitika from his naive bungling. So there is a wonderful balance between all four of these characters.

Tripitika is constantly getting hung up, and the disciples try to help him get to the western land. He keeps saying, "How much farther is it?" Monkey will get on someone's shoulders and say, "Ten thousand miles." Then Tripitika will say, "Let's keep going." At some point, the disciples look at each other, and Monkey says, "If he would only stop, he would find it." And this is the point of the story.

What is interesting is how we think about these figures. The pig is greed, Monkey is delusion, and the Sandy Monk is ill will. The story is really about controlling the monkey mind, controlling the greedy mind, the destructive mind, and the restless mind. Monkey is restlessness, and is often used in Buddhism as a metaphor. Monkey mind is very hard to control. How does one control the mind? How does one control the emotions, the passions? That is uppermost in Buddhist practice, something we're always dealing with. If one is too controlling, life becomes constricted. If there is no control, our life becomes a mess. So how do you control without controlling? How do you bring the elements of the mind into balance, without stifling yourself? This is an

ongoing problem for everyone.

Monkey wants freedom and immortality, but something is missing. The mind has a function, but it can't work well without faith and inspiration. Hsuan Tsang is the spirit of faith, of inspiration and purity. The mind must be the servant of faith. These days, we tend to feel that the mind should be served, not the other way around. It's all backwards and perverted. We believe that desire should be served instead of desire being subservient to the spirit. Many people feel that our destructive ill will should be served. Ill will is a very strong, passionate force. But this energy should be in the service of aspiration and faith. How do we bring these dharmas under control so that they are servants of the true master? There is a Zen koan, "Who is the master?" which I sometimes give to people to contemplate. Who is in control? Who is to be served?

We always put emphasis on aspiration and intention. Aspiration and intention are so important because they steer us in the right direction. Once we have the right direction, all the other aspects of the mind line up behind it. In the Eightfold Path, it's called "right thought," or "right aspiration." If we have right thought in front of us all the time, we don't become so ambivalent. Greed, ill will, and delusion are always vying for supremacy. We go back and forth with them, in our ambivalent way. That's why aspiration is so important, not the aspiration to get something, but to cultivate the way.

This is exemplified through posture. When we have the aspiration to sit up straight, the body and mind follow and line up with each other. When you get sleepy, they fall apart. So you wake up and re-align them. This off-and-on process continues over and over but at least you know which way to go.

Too many people are lost. No matter how smart they are, it doesn't help. As smart as poor Monkey was, it didn't help until he became the servant of his true nature. The heart and mind should be in balance. Hsuan Tsang was the heart and Monkey was the mind. The mind by itself has a tendency to become arrogant and cunning. Monkey was the master of cunning. When the mind is not controlled by the heart, it becomes cunning, arrogant, and destructive. When they're in balance, things work well. When mind and heart take care of each other and are settled in the hara, there is balance and harmony.

Student: The story seems to be saying that greed, hate, and delusion are necessary for survival.

Sojun: They're not, but they are aspects of our mind. All aspects of our mind want to propagate themselves. The desirous aspect of our mind doesn't want to have any limits, so it becomes greed. Desire in itself is neither good nor bad. Desire is life force. When desire has a direction for practice, it is called "way-seeking mind" rather than desire.

Student: I wonder if you'd say a little more about right aspiration. We may have the goal of meditating, but the difference between doing it and not doing it is very fine.

Sojun: We're creatures of habit. We're cultivating good habits or bad habits. We are also creatures of rhythm. In order to accomplish something, we have to establish a rhythm in a sustained way. Our lives are controlled through various rhythms: the rhythm of school, the rhythm of work, the rhythm of family. If you don't establish a rhythm for zazen, you won't do it. We have strong currents in our life, and if the rhythm of zazen is not one of them, another current will come along and cut it off. Your intention has to be very strong because there are a lot of forces both outside and inside that will keep you from sitting even though you want to sit. Wanting is the first step but it is not enough. One has to create a rhythm. If you go to a monastery, the rhythm is already set up. Everybody practices and that's what you do there. If you are not into that, you leave. In a sense, that's the container. But here, you have to create your own container. That is the challenge of lay practice. A way to do that, for instance, is to take a month and say, "For this month, I will sit zazen on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday." Then honor that intention by following that program. That way you create a rhythm. At the end of the month ask, "Is this the right rhythm for me?" Maybe the answer is, "No. I'll change to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday." Then you do that for a month. Every month, look at it and ask, "Is it right?" If it isn't, then change it. If it is, then continue. Don't leave it open-ended. That's what leads to failure. So this is how you create a sincere practice, a practice that helps you and works for you. Be careful what you commit yourself to and honor your commitments.

- Sojun Roshi. *This lecture is reprinted from the January 2001 Berkeley Zen Center Newsletter*



All Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 pm

All members and friends are warmly invited to share potluck offerings of great food, as well as discussion and approval of the 2014 BZC budget. The budget is the treasurer's best effort to project the financial goals and realities for BZC in this new year. Your presence at this meeting makes a difference. Watch the patio bulletin board for more details.

Half-Day Sitting Sunday, March 2, 2014 8:00 am - 12:00 noon

BZC is offering five half-day sittings this 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.

A \$10 donation is requested for half-day sittings. If you have questions or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the March 2 Half-Day Sitting Director, Nina Sprecher, at sprecher.nina AT gmail.com or 510.848.3585. The next half-day sitting after this one will be on June 1.

*Photos:
Ko Blix*

Oryoki Instruction February 18, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Come Tuesday, February 18 at 6:30 pm and learn the finer points of our meal practice from Gary Artim, so you can fully enjoy oryoki in the zendo on Saturday mornings or during sesshin.

"When eating oryoki, you take care of each article, each thing is conscientiously washed and put away. If you do oryoki completely, every moment flows easily into the next with no unnecessary motion. Done in this way, Oryoki is enjoyable. Sometimes people say, 'I don't enjoy oryoki at all.' I think this happens when a person doesn't understand the process of having one movement flow logically into the next. When one does oryoki with this flow in mind, then it doesn't feel mechanical. It's a wonderful feeling, moving smoothly and experiencing that coordinated activity." – Sojun Roshi, from the September 2002 *Berkeley Zen Center Newsletter*.

Finding Presence in Conversation February 27, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

This open dharma group focuses on practice in the context of everyday communication. These meetings, addressing ways we speak and listen to each other, have been ongoing for a few years, are open to everyone, and are coordinated by Peter Overton. The upcoming meeting will be held in the BZC community room, Thursday evening, February 27, 7:00-9:00 pm. For further information contact Peter at 510.325.2342, or peterovrtn AT gmail.com.



Our Venerable Kitchen Makeover

You may be wondering what went on behind that yellow caution tape in the courtyard. The kitchen renovation plans included many improvements: repositioning and widening the entry door, replacing the refrigerator and shifting it to a corner, increasing the amount of counter workspace and storage, and replacing flooring and lighting. Originally the project was slated for completion during the December interim.

However, just as you cannot predict what mind you will find in zazen, you can't know what lies behind a wall until you open it. Once the walls and flooring at 1929 Russell – a nearly 100-year-old building – were peeled away, previously hidden issues revealed themselves and required pauses for discernment and purchase decisions. The floor in the community room bathroom had rotted out due to a leak below the toilet. The toilet, subfloor framing, and floor were all replaced. Crumbling studs in the exterior wall had to be shored up. Removal of the transom window to accommodate the new door necessitated an upgrade to a stove hood with more venting capacity. Current building codes, as interpreted by an inspector, required new outlets, LED ceiling lights, and an update to the electrical panel.

While both the timeline and costs for the kitchen remodel exceeded expectations, improvements in efficiency, traffic flow, and structural integrity will be well worth resources spent. Thank you for your forbearance as Gustavo Salcedo and his crew worked to improve this essential space. And deep gratitude to Shelley Brock, Mary Duryee, and other BZC members who gave time and energy to planning and execution and responded gracefully to each unexpected discovery.



Rotting Studs Get "Sistered"



Old Kitchen, New Kitchen





*A fine winter day –
past and present
nothing changes in my old home town.*

- Kazumi Cranney

New Year's Poem

No father
No God
No redeemer
No savior

No me
No you

No one to find,
No one to seek,

No one to abandon
or embrace,

And yet
I open these arms wide
because
I see you
and this action
is as natural
as breathing.

Your clear eyes
see me too,

see a world
of possibilities
in an authentic smile,

this lightness of sight
offering a light touch

simply showing up,
willing to listen,
wanting to understand,

it's easy now,
giving myself over
not to you
or me
some idea

called God
or Jesus
or Buddha

but to your
my
no self

Not self less
soul less
purpose less

Not two
for

without you
this whole world
is not whole

and recognizing this,
we are all
born anew,

in other words,

through you
one love
comes
alive.

- Judy Fleischman

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
Submit to bzcnewsletter AT gmail.com.

February deadline:
Friday, February 21, 8:00 pm

Berkeley Zen Center
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