



Berkeley Zen Center



March 2002 Newsletter

Welcome new members Sherry Smith-Williams and Ken Powelson.



Schedule Changes for April... We have had to make several changes to the April Schedule. Major events have been rescheduled because of Sojun's travels and conflicts in the zendo calendar. So please make the following changes to your calendar. More details will follow next month, but these dates are firm.

- 6 April** – Saturday – Buddha's Birthday
- 7 April** – Sunday – Sesshin
- 14 April** – Sunday – Women's sitting
- 20 April** – Saturday at 6pm – Priest Ordination for Greg Fain and Eric Greene
- 21 April** – Sunday from 9 to 5pm – Kanzeon Sitting (formerly Elders' Sitting)
- 27-28 April** – Saturday & Sunday – Mountains & Rivers Sesshin



Transitions... Linda Eby is stepping down as web master of the Berkeley Zen Center website, and Laurie Senauke will take over. Gasshos to both Linda and Laurie. For



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 preference, age, and physical ability. May all beings realize their true nature.

those of you who don't know, the URL for the BZC website is www.berkeleyzencenter.org.

As of April, Malcolm Fairbrother takes over for Mark Copithorne as Zendo Manager. So beginning then, make sure to see Malcolm (841-0158) for any questions about activities and events in the zendo, including well-being and memorial services. Many deep gasshos to Mark for filling this very time-consuming position. He admirably performed these duties even while taking on the demands of new fatherhood. And thanks to Malcolm for taking over.

March Schedule

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 3-2, 9:30 am

Half-day Sitting
Saturday, 3-2, noon to 4pm

Founders' Ceremony
Monday, 3-4, 6:20 pm
Tuesday, 3-5, 6:40 am

Three-Day Sitting
Friday, 3-15 thru Sunday, 3-17

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 3-30, 9:30 am

Half-day Sitting
Sunday, 3-31, 8:30am to 12:30pm

Finally, Claire Rubin takes over for Malcolm as Co-Saturday Program Director, another job not without many responsibilities. Thank you Malcolm and Claire.



Buddha's Birthday....Buddha's Birthday will be celebrated at Berkeley Zen Center on **Saturday, April 6th** this year. This is one of the important dates on the Zen calendar, marking the birth of the Buddha and the fresh possibility of awakening in one's own life. Check the zendo bulletin board for the full schedule. Please feel free to bring your friends and families. Children, who embody our hope for enlightened peace and our hope for the planet's future, are especially encouraged to attend.

An important part of the ceremony is the baby Buddha's bower or arbor, which the sangha decorates every year. To help, please bring donations of flowers to the community room porch Friday afternoon and/or come early Saturday morning to weave the blossoms into the bower. Work begins on Saturday at 8am. **For more information, contact BZC head chiden Catherine Lucas at 526-3100.**



Correction.... Mary Mocine's class on The Four Noble Truths will begin on Thursday, March 14th not Thursday, March 7th as published in last month's newsletter.



3-Day Sesshin....Friday-Sunday March 15-17. The sesshin begins 5AM Friday and ends by 5:30 PM Sunday.

When parking on Friday morning, consider signs indicating parking restrictions. Please carpool. The signup deadline is Tuesday, March 12, Midnight. You are encouraged to sit all three days. Minimum participation is the full Saturday and Sunday schedule.



Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered on Saturdays from 9:15 to 11:15. The cost is \$5 per family. Note that the childcare schedule is tentative. Childcare is not offered if no one's planning to come, so please call Laurie the Thursday before to let us know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie Senauke, 845-2215.

March 2	Childcare
March 9	Childcare
March 16	No program
March 23	Childcare
April 6	Buddha's Birthday
April 13	Childcare
April 20	Childcare
April 27	Childcare

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

To Whom Do We Bow?

Part One

In the *Mumonkan*, Case #45, Master Wu-tsu said, "Shakyamuni and Maitreya are servants of another, tell me who is that other?" Master Mumon comments. He says, "If you can see this other and distinguish him clearly, then it is like encountering your grandfather at the crossroads: you will not need to ask someone whether or not you are right. In this verse, Mumon continues, "Don't draw another's bow, don't ride another's horse, don't discuss another's faults, don't explore another's affairs." It's a very short koan. Wu-tsu said, "Shakyamuni and Maitreya are servants of another. Tell me, who is that other?" Shakyamuni of course is the past Buddha, and Maitreya is the Buddha who will appear in the future and in between is, who?" ["Us," says a student.]

The written character for the word "another" literally means "that one." So the koan could also be read as, "Even Shakyamuni and Maitreya are servants of that one." This has a slightly ambiguous meaning. "Another" is a more generic term, and "that one" points to someone in particular. So to whom does Buddha bow? To whom does Buddha make obeisance? Even Shakyamuni and Maitreya make obeisance or bow to that one – that "other."

We just finished the Bodhisattva Ceremony where we acknowledge all of our past karma and renew our intention to practice. During the ceremony, we bow many times to the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Who are these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas? When we bow to Buddha to whom are we bowing? This is a question that always comes up when we give instruction to beginners. Someone will say, "Well, who are we bowing to?" And even after 10 years of practice someone will ask the same thing. A very good question. You are bowing to yourself. How do you bow to yourself? You can't see your own eyes, you can't see your own nose, we don't see our own face. It's pretty hard to bow in this direction [toward ourselves], we're always bowing in that direction [away from ourselves]. If you bow in that direction, you meet yourself. So who is this self? That question begs the other. If I bow to myself, then who is this "myself" that I'm bowing to?

Therein is the fundamental koan, who is myself, and how do I bow to myself? The Buddha statue, the Buddha figure on the altar, is a kind of focal point. We make a beautiful Buddha figure in order to express our feeling about Buddha, but strictly speaking, Buddha is just an idea, a concept that we have. But behind Buddha is our true nature, so when we talk about Buddha, we shouldn't get it mixed up with

some particular person or even some person from the past, who was born 2500 years ago. When we talk about Buddha we are referring to our own fundamental nature.

So, to whom does Shakyamuni Buddha bow? In our lineage we say that when you have true understanding, you are the teacher of Shakyamuni Buddha. You are the teacher of Maitreya Buddha. As a matter-of-fact you are Shakyamuni Buddha. Who is Maitreya Buddha? Maitreya Buddha is like the messiah, comparable to the messiah in the West. When will this messiah appear? People are always waiting for somebody to do something. I was talking to somebody the other day who was dissatisfied with the state of Buddhism in America and in Japan and in Tibet. He said that we just keep going until some real leader appears. That's wonderful. But how will this religious leader appear? Who is your religious leader? There was a book about 10 years ago, which was kind of cute. The title was *What To Do Till The Messiah Comes*. One reason why we offer incense is to invite the spirit of prajna to come forth in our practice. When we have service, we offer incense to invite the spirit of prajna to arise. We ask Buddha to join our practice. We ask them to come and visit us, but nothing comes from outside to visit. It is just a way of evoking that spirit from within, because the spirit is no place else but here. Maitreya Buddha is nowhere else but here. Shakyamuni Buddha is no place else but here. There is no Buddha out there. No *tushita* heaven where Maitreya Buddha is waiting to come down. Maitreya Buddha is right here. Who is going to save us? Don't look around.

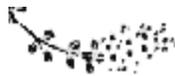
Very often, when I talk to people about practice, they seem very discouraged. They say something like, "At first I had a lot of enthusiasm for practice, but now I wonder why am I doing this. I don't feel like I'm getting anything, and then I become kind of discouraged." That's right. If you have an attitude of wanting to get something, you'll be very discouraged because nothing will appear. This is the law of practice. If you want something, you will be disappointed. The second law of practice is... (I'm making this up [laughter])... The second law is: in order to make practice come alive, you have to give. You have to present yourself as an offering. You have to offer yourself completely to what you're doing. Then, unexpectedly, something may appear. But you can't ask for it, and you can't expect it. You can't shake the tree and make the apple come down. Actually there's only giving. There's also receiving, the counterpart of giving. So when you give yourself to the practice you stimulate generosity and then you receive something. You stimulate the nature of generosity. This is sometimes hard for people to understand when we simply want something. We want enlightenment, or we want to feel better. We want to improve ourselves, or we want to be calm or peaceful. These are good things to want. We want to be strong and imperturbable. These are all good qualities. Practice is not like going into the supermarket. "I'll take some of these and some of those." You can't select the things you want. You can't just select the "good things" and put them in your bag, then leave the store. It doesn't work that way.

Practice is like making a vow. I hesitate to say, "vow." So instead I usually say "intention." "Vow" is good but I would not say to any of you that you should make a vow. If you want to practice you should have a strong intention to practice. Whatever your intention is, you should honor that intention. If you want a practice, then you should decide, for example, "I'll sit zazen three times a week. Monday, Wednesday, Friday," or whatever. And then you put that on your calendar, and when the time comes, that's what you do. If you don't honor your intentions, then it's hard to maintain a steady practice. There are so many competing activities being displayed before us, enticing us to pick them up, that if we don't maintain a strong way-seeking mind, we can't sustain the practice.

If you think about all the things that you promised yourself you would do and didn't do, and look back on that, you'd be amazed at all the intentions you had that you didn't honor. Sometimes this holds us back. So that's why we have such a thing as the Bodhisattva Ceremony. We avow all of our ancient karma and unrealized intentions, and renew and honor our intention to continue. This is one of the most important factors of practice, that you have an intention, and honor it. Everything else flows from there. Enlightenment, peace, it's all there in our intention. We also fall off, but when we fall off we come back. As a matter-of-fact, we're always getting sidetracked. That's the nature of our life: to have this intention, get sidetracked, and come back. One of the obstacles is, "Now that I've fallen off, I can't come back." Or, "I've been bad." So the nature of practice is to make the effort, that no matter what happens, to keep renewing or returning to our intention.

(First of two parts)

January 18, 1992



Members and Friends.... Recently, the BZC Board thought it might be useful to clarify the difference between being a BZC Member and a BZC Friend. The Friend category was originally intended for people who wished to support Berkeley Zen Center, but for whatever reason (like physical distance, for instance), couldn't or didn't want to practice regularly at the zendo. The Member category is for anyone who practices regularly at the zendo (once a day, once a week, once a month), regardless of his or her capability for financial contribution. It was the Board's observation that many people, who practice regularly, had joined BZC as Friends because they could not afford the \$30 regular dues amount. However, it is Berkeley Zen Center's policy that everyone who wishes to practice, be welcomed and encouraged to practice as Members, regardless of financial situation.

So if you practice at BZC, pay what you can and be a Member. And if you don't come to practice, or can't, but wish to support the practice of others, be a Friend.

If you wish to change from a Friend to a Member, or vice versa, please leave a note for the Office Manager in the Community Room mail slot.



Dues... On a similar topic, in going over the budget the Board recently noted as well that many members and friends have fallen behind in their dues. Of course, it need not bear repeating that our practice at BZC is dependent on all of our financial support, so suffice to say that if you are a bit behind, get those checks in as soon as you can. Many gasshos.

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