



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2002 Newsletter



Practice Period... Our annual practice period will begin Saturday, May 11 and last through Tuesday, June 25. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding those obligations "outside the gate."

Doug Greiner will be Shuso/Head Student this year, sharing Sojun Roshi's seat as an example for all of us. For more on practice period, see the insert inside the newsletter.



Ashes Ceremony for Maylie... In memory of our beloved teacher Maylie Scott, on **Saturday, May 18 at 2 p.m.**, we will place her ashes in a special place in the Jizo garden here at BZC. All are invited to this ceremony.



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.

Vallejo Zen Center, Clear Water Zendo Garden Celebration...

On **Saturday, June 1**, Vallejo Zen Center will be having a blessing and ceremony for their newly completed garden. The ceremony is at 2pm and Sojun will be there. In addition, Sojun is giving the lecture at 10:10. For those of you who don't already know, BZC senior student Mary Mocine is the head priest and teacher at Clear Water, which she started. Many BZC sangha members have visited and helped out at Clear Water, including helping create the garden, so please come spend the day there, join the celebration, and enjoy this wondrous new space that will be used for

May Schedule

Founders' Ceremony
Thursday, 5-2, 6:20 pm
Friday, 5-3, 6:40 am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 5-5, 8:30am to 12:30pm

One-Day Sitting
Open Practice Period
Saturday, 5-11, 5am to 9:20pm

Spring Practice Period
5-11 through 6-25

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 5-25, 9:30 am

outdoor walking meditation, ceremonies and breaks during sesshins. Clear Water Zendo is at 607 Branciforte, corner of Florida, in Vallejo. For more information call Mary at (707) 649-2480.



A message from Greg Fain and Eric Greene... We would like to thank the Sangha for all of the effort that was put forth to make the ordination ceremony possible. Many people were involved, spending numerous hours planning, cleaning, cooking, sewing, and rehearsing. The pure practice of Berkeley Zen Center was visible to everyone, and our gratitude for this is boundless. Additional thanks go to the sangha members who contributed financially to aid in the purchase of our robes. Although we could never adequately thank all those who participated, we will strive to manifest the spirit of Berkeley Zen Center during our training at Tassajara, and we will carry all of you in our hearts, minds, and haras.

Deep bows

Greg and Eric



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.

May 4	Childcare
May 11	No program
May 18	Childcare
May 25	Childcare
June 1	Childcare
June 8	Childcare
June 15	Childcare
June 22	No program
June 29	Childcare

Anecdote from Sojun Roshi

As told to Sangha at Dwight Way Zendo
December 26, 1968

This evening while I was preparing soup just before zazen, a huge man appeared in the doorway. He said, "My name is Bernard." He asked if he could stay. I told him it was a little early and would he please sit down. He did. When I asked him to come into the zendo, he seemed to not hear me but sat looking straight ahead. I could see that he was on something. He said he couldn't see to well, so I led him up the stairs to the zendo. I proceeded to show him how to sit.

Bernard must be at least 6'4" tall and he must weigh close to 300 pounds - all solid muscle. His hands were huge and had the quality of baby elephant legs. When he sat down the whole floor sank a little. I seated him on two zafus and four pillows. His knees stuck up nevertheless. He did everything I told him to and said, "Yes, sir," to everything. I could see that it was painful for him and that he was very tied up both physically and emotionally. As soon as he was established in his posture he began to cry and whimper. It quickly turned into deep sobbing.

The feeling in the zendo became tense but very still except for Bernard's sobbing. Nobody knew what he was going to do next. Fortunately I was feeling very calm and somehow knew exactly how to handle him. I knew that he trusted me completely. I forgot to mention that while downstairs, I asked him how he came to know of this place. He said he was driving down the street and the next thing he knew, here he was. This gave us both a confidence in the destiny of the situation.

I took my seat and began zazen. All during zazen, Bernard was swaying from side-to-side. Then, after about ten minutes, or maybe a little longer, he began rocking back and forth. Pretty soon his rocking became more exaggerated and I was afraid he was going to fall backwards. I silently concentrated on saying, "Don't fall, Bernard. Don't Fall." Then the inevitable happened. Bernard fell over backwards with a crash that shook the house. The strange thing was that he was still in zazen posture, just like a little Buddha statue that you might tip over on its back. I walked over to him and said, "Bernard." His eyes were still looking straight ahead at the ceiling. "Bernard," I said. "Do you want to continue?"

"Yes," he said.

"Climb back on your cushion then."

Bernard climbed back onto the cushions.

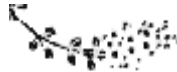
Someone came to me and whispered, "Do you think that man should sit in his state? Aren't there times when a person shouldn't sit?"

"He should sit," I said.

When zazen was over, we had service. I told Bernard to get up and showed him how to hold his hands in gassho. He just stood there in gassho throughout the service. Then I led him downstairs.

I asked him to stay and eat which he did. He was still in a somewhat spaced-out state but much more aware than when he came in. He finally, after some silence, asked if he

could tell me the story of his life. There were four of us eating and the soup that I had originally made for two was stretched. Bernard told of his life as a child in the south. How he had been football material but joined the army instead. He said that his life had just been taking one bad turn after another ever since he could remember. He was most upset because his wife had left him. She told him he was not a man. Since then he had been trying to find himself. He said that tonight he realized he was just Bernard. He didn't have to be anyone else. Just Bernard. He said it had always been Bernard and white folks. But now he said we were all plain people and that made him feel like Bernard. He left and said he would come back.



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