



Berkeley Zen Center



June 2002 Newsletter

Welcome new members Earl Wayne and David Corbett, and new friend Faith Fuller.



Jukai -- Receiving Buddha's Precepts...
On Sunday, June 16th at 3pm, Sojun Roshi will lay ordain several members of the BZC Sangha. Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and the reception afterwards. In addition, the ordinees will be sitting for some period of time before the ceremony, so please feel free to join them for this too. Check the zendo bulletin board for details.



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.

June & July Schedule

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

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 6-1, noon to 4pm

Jukai
Sunday, 6-16, 3pm

Five-day Sesshin
Wednesday, 6-19 thru Sunday, 6-23

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6-22, 9:30am

Shuso Hossen
Tuesday, 6-25

Founders' Ceremony
Tuesday, 7-2, 6:20pm
Thursday, 7-5, 6:40am

Interdependence day
Zendo closed, Wednesday, 7-4

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 7-7, 8:30am to 12:30pm

One-Day Sitting
Sunday, 7-14, 5:00am to 5:30pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 7-27, 9:30am

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 7-27, noon to 4pm

Gasshos... Peter Carpentieri has given up the Head Jikido position. The new Head Jikido will be Andrea Thach. Many gasshos and deep bows to Peter for so conscientiously overseeing the cleaning of our zendo.



Jikido... For those who are interested, jikido practice, or temple cleaning, is a terrific work practice, a much-needed service to the community, and a great way to participate in the rhythms of the community.

Jikido volunteers are needed on both a regular and occasional basis. The commitment is about one and half hours, twice a week, and starting in June there will be two ways to sign-up. In addition to signing-up up for a week on the community bulletin board, volunteers can agree to a regular slot on a quarterly calendar (much as chidens do now). For more information on being a jikido, please contact the new Head Jikido, **Andrea Thach at 420-0902.**



In Memory of Marc David Simon....

Our dearly beloved Dharma brother David Simon passed away suddenly on May 18th. David joined the membership of BZC in the 70s at Dwight Way Zendo. At the time, he whole-heartedly plunged himself into a sitting practice both at home and at the zendo. An electrical contractor, David wired much of the current BZC property gratis. After Sojun first became Abbot at Berkeley, David was among the first group of students to receive lay ordination. He was given the name Tai Gaku To Ju,

Unconditioned Peak Constant Practice/Realization. David once said that during service he chanted into his gassho with the hope that his work would bring forth the Dharma. Well-versed in Buddhist doctrine, he always had "a book going," and would engage those interested in passionate dialogue. At a memorial service held at BZC on May 22nd, well over a hundred people filled the zendo and the BZC porches to share stories of David's family, work, and musical life. The service clearly testified to David's enthusiasm, kindness, love, and constant practice/realization. Another celebration of life in music will be held in David's honor on June 8th, at 1pm in Tilden Park. Details will be posted on the BZC bulletin board.



Mountains and Rivers Lite?.. If you've been shying away from our Mountains and Rivers sesshins due to physical problems (or even mental ones), you just ran out of excuses! The upcoming "Hills and Streams Sesshin" will be similar to the Mountains & Rivers we've been doing, but it will be a bit shorter and accommodations will be made for people who cannot walk very far or carry heavy packs. (The campsite will be accessible enough that whatever can't be backpacked in can be trucked in later in the day.) The sesshin will take place in Sunol Regional Park (in the hills southeast of Oakland) **beginning early Saturday afternoon, July 6, and ending early Sunday afternoon, July 7.** Sojun Roshi will be leading it. Information and signup sheet will be posted on the zendo bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call **Ken Knabb at 527-0959.**

Lecture by Suzuki Roshi

True Concentration

True concentration does not mean to be concentrated on only one thing. Although we say, “Do things one by one,” what we mean is difficult to explain. Without trying to concentrate our mind on anything, we are ready to concentrate on something. For instance, if my eyes are on one person in the zendo, it will be impossible to give my attention to others. So when I practice zazen, I’m not watching anybody. Then if someone moves, I can see them.

Avalokiteshvara is the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Originally portrayed as a man, Avalokiteshvara also appears in the form of a woman. Sometimes she has one thousand hands to help others, but if she concentrates on only one hand, the nine hundred and ninety nine hands will be of no use.

From ancient times the main point of practice has been to have a clear, calm mind, whatever you do. Even when you eat something good, your mind should be clear enough to appreciate the labor of preparing the food and the effort of making the dishes, chopsticks, bowls, and everything we use. With a serene mind we can appreciate the flavor of each vegetable, one by one. We don’t add much seasoning, so we can enjoy the virtue of each vegetable. That is how we cook and how we eat food.

To know someone is to sense that person’s flavor, what you feel from someone. Each person has his or her own flavor, a particular personality from which many feelings appear. To fully appreciate this personality or flavor is to have a good relationship. Then we can really be friendly. To be friendly does not mean to cling to someone or to try to please them, but to have a full appreciation of them.

To appreciate things and people, our minds should be calm and clear. So we practice zazen or “just sitting” without a gaining idea. At this time you are you yourself. You settle yourself on yourself. With this practice we have freedom, but it may be that the freedom you mean and the freedom a Zen Buddhist means are not the same. To attain freedom we cross our legs, keep our posture upright, and let our eyes and ears be open to everything. This readiness or openness is important because by nature we are often apt to go to extremes. We stick to things and lose our calmness or mirror-like mind.

Zazen practice is how we obtain this calmness and clarity of mind, but we cannot do this by physically forcing something on ourselves or by creating some special state of mind. You may think to have a mirror-like mind is Zen practice. It is so, but if you practice zazen in order to attain that kind of mirror-like mind, that is not the practice we mean. It has become, instead, the “art of Zen.”

The difference between the art of Zen and true Zen is that already you *have* true Zen without trying. Because you try to do something, you lose it. You are concentrating on one hand out of one thousand hands. You lose nine hundred and ninety nine hands. That is why we say “just sit.” It does not mean to stop your mind altogether or to be concentrated completely on your breathing, although these are a kind of help.

When you count your breath, you don’t think much and you have no gaining idea. You may become bored, because counting the breath does not mean much to you, but then you have lost your understanding of real practice. We practice concentration or let our mind follow our breathing so that we are not involved in some complicated practice in which we lose ourselves attempting to accomplish something.

In the art of Zen, you try to be like a skillful Zen master who has great strength and good practice. You say, "Oh, I want to be like him. I must try hard." When you do this, you are learning the art of Zen, not practicing true Zen.

The art of Zen is concerned with how to draw a straight line or how to control your mind. But Zen is for everyone, even if you cannot draw a straight line. If you can draw a line, just draw a line, that is Zen. For a child this is natural, and even though the line is not straight, it is beautiful. So whether or not you like the cross-legged position, or whether or not you think you can do it, if you know what zazen really is, you can do it.

The most important thing in our practice is just to follow our schedule and to do things with people. You may say this is group practice, but it is not. Group practice is quite different, another kind of art. In wartime, some young people, encouraged by the militaristic mood of Japan, recited to me this line from the *Shushogi*. "To understand birth and death is the main point of practice." They said, "Even though I don't know anything about the sutra, I can die easily at the front." That is group practice. Encouraged by trumpets, guns, and war cries, it is quite easy to die.

That kind of practice is not our practice either. Although first of all, we practice with people, our goal is to practice with mountains and rivers, with trees and stones, with everything in the world, everything in the universe, and to find ourselves in this big cosmos. When we practice in this big world we know intuitively which way to go. When your surroundings give you a sign showing which way to go, even though you have no idea of following a sign, you will go in the right direction. The way to practice with everything is to have calmness of mind.

To practice our way is good, but you may be practicing with a mistaken idea. Still if you know, "I am making a mistake, but even so I cannot help continuing practice," then there is no need to worry. If you open your true eyes and accept the you that is involved in a wrong idea of practice, that is real practice.

You can accept your thinking because it is already there. You cannot do anything about it. There is no need to get rid of it. This is not a matter of right and wrong, but how to accept frankly, with openness of mind, what you are doing. That is the most important point. When you practice zazen you will accept the you who is thinking about something, without trying to be free of the images you have. "Oh! Here they come." If someone is moving over there, "Oh, he is moving." And if he stops moving, your eyes remain the same. That is how your eyes will see when you are not watching anything special. In that way your practice includes everything, one thing after another, and you do not lose your calmness of mind.

The extent of this practice is limitless. With this as our base, we have real freedom. When you evaluate your self as being good or bad, right or wrong, black or white, that is comparative value, and you lose your absolute value. When you evaluate yourself by a limitless measure, each one of you will be settled on your real self. That is enough, even though you think you need a better way to measure. If you understand this point, you will know what real practice is for human beings and for everything.



Some thoughts about Jukai from a practice leader and Shuso....

Our practice here at BZC is a wonderful mixture of honoring tradition and contemporary expression. 2500 years ago, Shakyamuni Buddha and his followers sat under trees. We sit under a roof made, in part, from trees.

Another tradition we maintain and celebrate annually is Jukai (Lay Ordination). This is also known as *Zaike Tokudo*. The practice of tokudo or, home-leaving, is already within each one of us. It is the realization that yes, there is something deeper to experience beyond the world of appearances. To reveal the awakened mind, *bodhicitta*, see into the root of *dukkha*, and thereby lessen one's suffering, and experience the interconnectedness of life is the inspiration which brings the zendo to us.

In the Buddha's day, those who wished to follow the path of practice formally "left home", becoming a monk in a ceremony called *Shukke Tokudo*. The disciples would gather discarded rags, sew them together and dye them all the same color, thus making a readily identifiable robe. In addition, the head was shaved, thus "cutting away" defilements.

For *Zaike Tokudo* the disciple leaves the world of attachment (as represented by the home and personal relationships), while remaining IN the world. This relationship to practice is unique in Buddhism for it acknowledges that while the West lacks the monastic model in mainstream culture (unlike Asia), it does have many serious students of Buddhism who desire authentic practice.

Suzuki Roshi recognized the sincerity of his students and to acknowledge his support, he ordained them. Not quite monk, not quite lay persons, we at BZC continue this tradition of practicing monastic forms in the world. Sojun Roshi says we're all wearing invisible robes. At Jukai, the ordination group is presented a visible robe or *rakusu*, which each has sewn, as well as a lineage paper, *kechimiya*, which traces the relationship of teacher to disciple from Shakyamuni through India, China, and Japan, to America with Sojun Roshi to you. It then returns to Shakyamuni, thus completing the circle.

While the *rakusu* and *kechimiya*, are the visible symbols of ordination, what takes place at the ceremony is much more subtle. Jukai literally means receiving the precepts. At the ceremony, the preceptor purifies the space. The ordineses recite the vow of atonement, thus purifying themselves. They are then ready to receive the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts, and formally take on practice. A Buddhist name is given and is calligraphied on the back of the *rakusu*. Two names comprise the Buddhist name: one, expressing your current manifestation in the preceptor's mind; the other, the one to grow into, or aspire toward.

I have attended numerous Jukai ceremonies, and while the focus is on the current group being ordained as a confirmation of their practice, I always experience a renewal of my own practice and my own intention to continue to penetrate the Way. We look forward to your presence on June 16th.

Seishi Tetsudo Ross Estes Blum



Class... A class on Suttas from the Old Way Pali Canon will be held on five successive **Thursday evenings beginning September 12th and ending October 10th**. This class will be taught by our old friend **Norman Fischer** in what has become an annual event. Please mark your calendars and look for the sign-up on the bulletin board in August.

Newsletter submissions are typically due by the third Tuesday of every month. To make a submission or to receive your newsletter by e-mail, contact Greg Denny at: gdenny@probusiness.com, 595-8162, or via the mail slot on the community room porch.

Also check out the Berkeley Zen Center web site at <http://berkeleyzencenter.org> or email BZC at bzc@berkeleyzencenter.org.



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.

June 1	Childcare
June 8	Childcare
June 15	Childcare
June 22	No program
June 29	Childcare
July 6	Childcare
July 13	No program
July 20	Childcare
July 27	Childcare
August 3	Childcare
August 10	No program
August 17	Childcare
August 17-18	BZC Campout!
August 24	Childcare
August 31	No program

At Maylie's One Year Memorial

A year has slipped by
And still you fill this room
The moon has passed its prime,
But it will come again.
It always has.
I know this in my bones.

Yet a cold wind of regret
Reaches through the cracks
Into the cabin of my heart.
Maylie, I miss your steady hand.

Though you are teaching in another world,
Your body has become the imperishable sangha
body.

Your voice is still in this world.

Listen, listen...

As I open my hand

The tall trees play your song:

K u s h i n S e i s h o

Tonight your mind shines through all the world
Tonight as the wooden man sings,
Somewhere the stone woman gets up to dance.

Alan Senauke

5.10.02

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