



Berkeley Zen Center



June 2003 Newsletter

Jukai -- Receiving Buddha's Precepts... On Saturday, June 7th at 12:30pm, Sojun Roshi will give the Bodhisattva Precepts to Kellie Hobbs, Kalle Nemvalts, Mark Ray, Sherry Smith-Williams, and Liam Morissey.

The Jukai ceremony is done once a year and is an important and significant ceremony for each participant, as well as for the whole sangha. The attendance of the sangha is not only an encouragement and support, but we have the feeling that we are all participating as witnessing and welcoming the ordines into the lineage of Sakyamuni Buddha.

Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and the reception afterwards. In addition, the ordines 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.



BZC Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night... Please come on **Saturday, June 7th at 6pm**, to the practice period dinner in the community room. There will be delicious food and great conversation. Afterwards at about **7:30pm** join everyone in the zendo for an evening of performances by Sangha members. If you would like to help with either of these events, or are interested in performing in a skit, please see the sign-ups on the BZC bulletin board.

June & July Schedule

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

Shosan with Sojun
Friday, 6-6, 5:40pm

Lay Ordination/Jukai
Saturday, 6-7, 12:30pm

Practice Period Dinner & Skit Night
Saturday, 6-7, 6pm

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 6-8, 8am to noon

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6-14, 9:30am

Five-Day Sesshin/
End Practice Period
Wednesday, 6-18 through Sunday, 6-22

Shuso Hossen
Sunday, 6-22

Founders Ceremony
Wednesday, 7-2, 6:20pm
Thursday, 7-3, 6:40am

Interdependence Day
(zendo closed)
Friday, July 4

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 7-12, 9:30am

Kanzeon Sitting
Sunday, 7-13

One-Day Sitting
Sunday, 7-20, 5am to 5:30pm

Further Announcements...

Shosan... No Bansan on Friday, June 6th. Instead, we will have Shosan with Sojun Roshi. Shosan is a formal, open questioning session with the abbot or head teacher; a kind of group dokusan. Since we have a morning sangha and an afternoon sangha, we have had the morning session, and now we will have the afternoon session. All members are welcome (including morning overlaps). This will take the place of zazen.

Women's Sesshin is scheduled for Sunday, September 21. This is a reschedule from the original date of March 30.



Transitions... After three years of patient and thoroughgoing practice, Richard Haefele steps down as BZC coordinator. He is replaced by Greg Denny, who moves on from his position as newsletter editor, also after three years. The new newsletter editor will be Jed Appelman. Karen Storey will take over the position of bathroom attendant from Jed. Many gasshos to these folks and to all those who give so much toward maintaining our sangha.



Benji... Please know that assisting our Shuso Laurie Senauke for this practice period is Rondi Saslow. As Benji, or attendant, Rondi is available for any questions sangha members may have for Laurie about Shuso teas, Shuso walks or anything else. So if you do have a question for our Shuso, please contact Rondi. She can be reached at 658-6829.



BZC Work Day... Please put **Saturday, August 16th** on your calendar. The zendo will be closed and there will be no regular program. Instead, we'll be oiling the zendo. If you're interested in helping, please look for the sign-up that will be on the BZC bulletin board sometime in August.

Gasshos... An exiting ceremony was held for long-time BZC resident Mark Boydston on May 13th. During his residency, Mark completed countless repairs at BZC and, in addition, held the positions of Saturday Director and Head Resident for periods of time. Mark is moving to North Berkeley but will no doubt remain within the dharma realm. Thanks for your practice, Mark, and see you at the zendo.

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 7	No program
June 14	Childcare
June 21	No program
June 28	No program
July 5	No program
July 12	Childcare
July 19	Childcare
July 26	Childcare
August 2	Childcare
August 9	Childcare
August 16	Childcare
August 23	Childcare
August 30	No program



More Gasshos... During the first four months of 2003, the following people contributed additional sums to BZC above any regular commitment (this includes sustaining members):

Frank Anderton
Richard Beeson III
Judy Bertelsen
Ross Blum
Shane Burns
Catherine Cascade
Barbara Christina
Marjorie Cox
Mary Duyvendale
Linda Eby
Joseph Gioia
William Gordon
Doug & Penny Greiner
Richard Haefele
Moffett Hall
Robert Hayes
Annette Herskovits
Edwin Herzog
Amy Hutto
Anne Jennings
Betty Jung
Ann Kennedy
Tom Klaber
Ann Livingstone

Roberta Llewellyn
Catharine Lucas
John Mason
Ruth Matsumoto
Donald R Moyer
Nora Mukai-Rosenbaum
Ann Overton
Peter & Susan Overton
George Pangilla
Carol Jean Paul
John & Louise Rasmussen
Mark Ray
Claire & John Rubin
Mary Shisler
Sanghapala Sitters
Stephanie Solar
St. Mary's College
Terry Stein
Karen Sundheim
Andrea Thach
Jacob Van Akkeren
Maggie Vashel



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.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

On the Metta Sutra, Part Two

(Continued from last month)

Sojun: The Metta Sutra continues: "Let one not be submerged by the things of the world." Another translation says, "Contented, easily supported, with few duties, with senses calm, discrete, not imprudent." "Not greedily attached to families". This was obviously worded by a recluse. The translation we use says "Let one not be submerged by the things of the world." The world is full of suffering and it's also full of temptation and things that stimulate our desire. Being submerged could mean by the suffering of the world, or by the temptations of the world. It could mean by the illusions that we have about it. We can keep striving to get something that we think will bring us happiness.

Student: What about compassion towards people's suffering and not being submerged by it?

Sojun: How we suffer with people without being submerged by it is a very important point. The person who helps has to be standing in a place with a firm footing. If you reach down, to help someone up, you have to be careful that you don't get pulled down, and then you're both down there. But you have to be a very capable person to do that.

Student: How do you do that?

Sojun: How does the doctor operate on people without getting sick? How does a psychiatrist talk to people without losing sleep? There has to be a certain amount of detachment. This requires skillful means; to balance your sympathies in your work of helping people, with at the same time not getting submerged yourself. It's hard to help people if you can't be independent of their problems.

Student: Should you be more selfish.

Sojun: No. It's not being selfish. Only you can truly help yourself. But as a teacher, I can help you to help yourself. If I try to help you too much, then we both lose it. There's just so much

I can do to help a person. And after that I have to know when to let go. If I didn't do that, I wouldn't get any sleep. I can be totally engaged with someone in the dokusan room, and when our meeting is over I turn to the next thing. It's not like I abandon that person at all. I simply help the student to see their direction and then let go and trust that the encouragement that I have offered is constant and that a level of trust is established, and that I will not abandon that person. I remember a teacher saying, "I'm responsible for all my students." But I don't feel that way because I am careful not to tell a student what to do. Each one of us is ultimately responsible for our self. Zen practice is to find our way, through our own effort, with the support of the teacher and the sangha. And what I try to do is help everyone to bring forth their own effort. If I don't allow that, it is a disservice. I don't have any particular method, but my attitude is to encourage everyone. I always encourage as much as I can.

Student: How do you detach and go on to the next thing, when you are getting something out of your compassion for their pain?

Sojun: It's complex, because the relationship between someone who helps, like that of a teacher with a student, has to go both ways. The teacher receives nourishment from that relationship. But if the teacher isn't freely giving, then there may arise the feeling of being depleted. Sometimes I hear someone say, "I don't have anything left to give." The teacher is a conduit for energy. When we are totally open and giving, energy is freely and limitlessly flowing. If we think that there is a limited amount of energy and it's being used up, then you feel tired and depleted. People sometimes ask me, "How can you do so many dokusans all day long?" It's because energy is freely flowing back and forth. When there is no ego obstructing the flow, there's just energy. I almost always feel energized after a day of dokusan. So, giving freely without expecting anything is the key. Just give and forget.

Student: It reminds me of something someone said about hospice work, where this becomes really obvious. You burn out within three months unless you figure out what's going on-- how to stay close to someone in their suffering

but not to pick up their suffering. And it also becomes very obvious in a one-to-one relationship. If you have a very close relationship with a lover, and they have a problem, the tendency is for you to pick up their problem, to solve their problem, or to carry their suffering. It doesn't work. They resent it, and it makes the whole mess worse. What I discovered is that it was very difficult for me to stay close to another person's suffering because I began to feel my own pain.

Sojun: Hospice work is very engaging. How to sit with someone who is dying, and what to do there? How do you just be there with them? You're simply sharing your life with them, and they are sharing this part of their life with you. And you are helping them to move into that space. Some people try to keep them on this side, which can create a problem, because you don't want to see them go, and you try to keep them here as much as possible. But if you can let go of that and help them move into letting go and settle into breathing samadhi and a calm mind, it allows the dying person to feel content to accept what's happening, and flow with it. And you can let them go. Often it is we who have the problem. The dying may have the problem of not too much time, but then it is those who are still here who are left with the problem of grief and loneliness.

Student: Is there such a thing as not grieving and being okay with that?

Sojun: Someone may say, "What's the matter with you? You're not grieving enough." Well, you can put on a little act. People used to hire professional mourners. In many countries the accepted way is to hire people to do the mourning. They wail for a week or two and that's their job, while you go about your business. Of course there is grief. You can be at peace and still have grief. Rather, that within your grief you have reached the place of peace within your suffering. It's impossible to live in this world without suffering. Nirvana is to be found within the world of suffering.

Student: I found myself not wanting to participate in the drama. This person was really caught up in it. I've been there. I could see this.

Fine—"I love you, but, see you later. I just don't want to participate in this drama."

Sojun: People have various ways of dramatizing. We may have different feelings than they do. On the other hand, you may have to examine whether or not you're just cutting off your feelings. What I'm saying is that you can help a person, and you can both be at peace because you have this place where you meet, which is wonderful and still, and you can experience the grief within that peace, that still place. It has a whole different meaning when it's encompassed within this peacefulness. You can still have the grief, and it's a wonderful way to accept the grief in a settled way, not frantic, not anxious, not guilty.

Student: You talk about controlling it and not feeling?

Sojun: You feel grief, but at the same time you can have some containment for composure.

Student: So is not crying controlling yourself?

Sojun: When you cry, just cry thoroughly and completely. I'm not telling you how to do this. But there is a point where we need to stop crying and go about the business of living.

Student: What about anger?

Sojun: If there is anger, you can ask for forgiveness. Usually when someone is dying you don't want to carry all this stuff. If you are angry at this person, you can ask them to forgive you and you can forgive them. Forgiveness is so important. It allows both parties to go their separate ways a little less burdened.

(The second of several Parts.)

Tassajara,

Spring 1995

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703