



Berkeley Zen Center



August 2003 Newsletter

Congratulations... to the following students who received the precepts in June:

Kellie Hobbs – *Gyo Sho Shin Shi*, Dawn Bell
Deep Stillness

Kalle Nemvalts – *Jaku San Sei Shi*, Silent
Mountains Sincere Aspiration

Mark Ray – *Ju Shin Nin Do*, Flexible Mind
Patient Way

Liam Morrissey – *Hokashi Koshin*, Dharma
Oak Sharing Heart (Student of Mary
Mocine)

Sherry Smith-Williams – *Shin Shin Sho Sei*,
Faith Mind Bright Spirit

Laurie Senauke – *Ekai Uji*, Cherishing
Ocean Being Time, received a new rakusu
from Sojun to recognize her service as
Shuso.

Karen DeCotis – *Sekishun Kunshi*, Red
Spring Insight Aspiration, received a green
rakusu to recognize her as a lay teacher.



BZC Work Day...

Saturday, August 16. Optional breakfast served at 8:00, work begins at 9:00 am, and continues, with a lunch break (bring your own) until 4:00 pm. 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.

August & September Schedule

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin
Friday, 8-1 through Sunday, 8-3

Founder's Ceremony
Monday 8-4, 6:20 pm
Tuesday, 8-5, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 8-9, 9:30am

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 8-9, 5am to 5:30pm

Sewing Assistance
Sunday, 8-10, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Work Day: Oiling the Zendo
(Zendo Closed)
Saturday, 8-16 8:30 am

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 8-23, noon to 4 pm

Sewing Assistance
Sunday, 8-24, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Three-Day Sitting
Friday, 8-30 5 am to Sunday, 9-1, 5:30 pm

Founder's Ceremony
Wednesday 8-3, 6:20 pm
Thursday, 8-4, 6:40 am

Board Nominations
Tuesday, 9-9, 6:30 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 9-13, 9:30am

Half-Day Sitting
Saturday, 9-14, 8 am to noon

Dharma Events...

The Dharma of Martin Luther King, Jr. with Hozan Alan Senauke

San Francisco Zen Center
Saturday, August 16, 1:30 - 5 p.m. and Sunday,
August 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (with breaks)

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship Presents: Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, "The Gandhi of Sri Lanka", and Joanna Macy

Hillside Community Church
August 1st and 2nd.

Pema Chodron, "Practicing Buddhism in Times of War"

San Francisco Unitarian Church (Franklin at Geary).
Wednesday, August 13, 2003, 7:30 PM



The BZC Board...

It's not too early to think about BZC Board elections. The election of Board members will be held in October. **The All-Sangha Board nominating meeting** will be held **September 9**. If you are interested in running, have questions about the process, or about the Board and what it does, or have ideas, you may talk to any board member (listed in the BZC directory) or current President Anne Jennings.



FLOWER POWER...


Catharine Lucas will offer a class in flower arrangement on **Saturday, September 6, 12:30 - 3:00 pm** in the Community Room. Bring a handful of blossoms with some leaves - vases and water provided!
Catharine, retiring Head Chiden, will offer a brief demonstration with a few practical

tips and coaching as you practice flower arranging without anxiety.



Directory Change...

The work number for **Andrea Thach** is 510-615-4870. The staff will page her if she is not on site..



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.

August 2	Childcare
August 9	Childcare
August 16	Childcare
August 23	Childcare
August 30	No program
September 6	No program
September 13	Childcare
September 20	Childcare
September 27	Childcare

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

On the Metta Sutra, Part Four

(Continued from last month)

The next line is: "May all beings be happy." This is the wish. To me, this is the heart of the sutra. The rest is like a commentary. It's like the *gatha* at the end of the Heart Sutra where it says "*gate, gate, paragate...*" The sutra is explanatory, while the *mantra* or *gatha* is expressive. "May all beings be happy, may they be joyous, may they live in safety." If we keep that as the bottom of our practice, and I think we do, then we are always wishing that for everyone and for ourselves as well. It's like a guiding principle.

It's hard to convey happiness when we are overwhelmed by anger. Suzuki Roshi often said, "Zen masters get very angry." In one sense he was criticizing them, and in another sense he was saying that there is another side to their anger. He said, "I get angry at you sometimes, but it doesn't mean that I'm angry." In other words, he could use anger, like he would use anything else, but he was not caught or possessed by anger. There is a difference between using anger and being caught by anger, or being used by anger. When we give in to anger, we are used by anger. We're used by our emotions. We can put our strong emotions under the controlling factor of reason. Anger is something wonderful, it's like sex. You can get off on it. You get a rush, and a thrill, and you're completely gone. It can be addictive, like a drug.

If we know how to use anger, we can use it to make a point. At the same time, we must keep the well-being of the other in mind. You can express anger with compassion. When you are doing that, you are, at the same time, protecting the other person. The principle of Aikido is to allow the opponent's anger, or emotion, or aggressiveness, to throw them off-balance, and to make sure they don't get hurt in the process. Not to hurt them, but to protect them. I think there is a lot to be learned from that. You don't see your opponent as an enemy. Even when people are aggressive, your stance is to put forth protection and compassion, and not get pulled off your center.

When you react to someone else's anger, then you fall into that place. You're no longer yourself. So how do you stand your ground in practice? What are you grounded in? If you are grounded in *metta*, then what happens when someone provokes you? Do you change your ground? If you don't change your ground, then you have to find a way while maintaining your equanimity. That is when it becomes interesting.

Student: If you try to maintain a stance of not getting involved in the other person's anger, sometimes they feel rejected or judged. I have a tendency to stand back from emotions, and if I allow myself to meet the person, with some responsive anger as well,

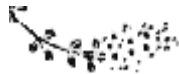
somehow in that meeting it seems to move things a little more clearly to meet them with a certain amount of energy, and then there is more clarity about what their feelings are about.

Sojun: There is a difference between reacting and responding. In reacting we put each other on the defensive and exacerbate the problem. Response, on the other hand, allows us to step back and meet the person in a reasonable way without being turned emotionally. This way you can open up a space for both you and the other person. There are different ways of doing things, and there's no fixed method. It depends on having the right attitude and some intuition. You have to feel it out. The more you practice with it, the easier it is to respond. People sometimes ask, "How do I control my anger?" The best thing you can do is to make controlling your anger a practice. It's easy for me to say "Do this or that," but it may not help. It helps when you practice it continuously. Then, when a situation comes up, you respond appropriately because that's where you're coming from. But just to have an idea about it may or may not work.

In the Buddhist tradition, if you practice lovingkindness continuously, then it can be an antidote to anger because the lovingkindness is so strong that it is a basis. The base is still there even if you become angry. A husband and wife can become angry at each other, but if underneath they love each other, then the anger comes and goes. It's part of life. Everybody gets angry. But if the love isn't there, the anger can destroy everything. Lovingkindness-*metta* is the foundation of happiness.

(The third of several Parts.)

Tassajara, Spring 1995



On Being the Jikido

By Yakuso Ryushin Andrea Thach

Editor's Note: Andrea recently turned over her responsibilities as Head Jikido to Clay Taylor, after more than 15 months in this position. Thanks to both of them for their care of our zendo...

Inspired by an article that the recent zendo manager at City Center wrote about her time in that practice position, these are reflections from the year I was Head Jikido.

It is its own incarnation of Buddha's body: our zendo, this physical container of practice. The zendo's worn, warm beauty was the first welcome for me here. The opportunity to spend quiet hours with its beautiful wood was an easy entry way into the sangha.

In 9th century Japan, the earliest references to the term, *jikido*, were to the place where meals were taken, and later for the one who cared for the monks' clothes. More recently, the jikido became the one who carried the *kyaisaku*, or who was the timekeeper for zazen periods. Currently, at our mother temple's monastery, Tassajara, jikido duties include rising at 2:30 am to light the 40 lanterns and sound the echo *han* (wooden block) to call everyone to zazen, and strike the time drum before the robe chant. Here (and at other centers now), we use the term for the one who maintains cleanliness and orderliness of the temple. Each role defines caring for an aspect of our practice.

When I first became Head Jikido, I took the wear and mars of its surfaces as signs of an unfortunate neglect of this beautiful space. With zealous effort to correct the trail of mishaps, I left my own. In still moments, as I slowed down, the wood's own expression was audible, and it became a teacher. Separating dust and old sesame seed remains from the floorboard cracks, curiosity arose. As new parents listen to their infant's cries to understand what is needed, as one explores a new love's body with tenderness and wonder, I learned how to respond from the wood. The new *tatamis* and wider meal boards served a purpose, but when we considered replacing the tired old straw mat (*goza*) at the altar, something more than its immediate appearance was apparent. It's worn footprints mark the steps of every incense offering, every talk, every service, given by some who will not make those offerings again. The trace of the many benefactors reside in this moment, too. Scratches and nicks might reflect hurried, inattentive moments, but even if so they are moments of humanness, too. *Sesshins*, skits, the many events, the comings and goings, the patina of our every step that create this our practice now, the story is there in the wood.

Ideas as these are "just mind", but reflect the tension in our lay practice in the West—of tradition and reform, like chanting our ancestor's lineage. And so old meal boards become a new jikido box. Light sanding and new tung oil renew and protect while preserving the effects of the years.

The mind of a new jikido travels in an hour of cleaning. "Am I cleaning well enough?" "Can't they find anyone better than me?" "Is this *all* that I can do here?" "Why am I just cleaning? Can't I volunteer for anything more meaningful?" "I could be doing this at home." "Oh, that place I missed there, and there!" "Will anyone notice, my mistakes?" "Will anyone see how hard I worked?" And turning he bows to leave, he finds the calmness and order created there have settled him, too. Just enough. It is complete. Does anyone notice? Perhaps, in some way, there is an imperceptible shift. As Sojun says, the orderliness of our temple (home, desk...) supports our mindfulness in body/mind. Mop, floor, hand, spray—what body? What mind? Its been a joy!

Thanks to Karen Sundheim for help with the research, to the many jikidos this past year for their generous heart/mind in caring for our temple, and to Doug Greiner.

Dharma Group News...

We are starting a new dharma group at BZC for people of color. Long time BZC member Robin Gregory will facilitate the group and the focus will be studying the dharma together. An initial meeting will be in September; date and time to be announced. For more info call Robin, 839-2344, or Laurie Senauke, 845-2215.

BZC's dharma groups were initiated in 1996 for BZC members, to encourage our spirit of *kalyana mittata* or spiritual friendship. Although a senior student serves as "convener" for the group, the focus is on ongoing study and mutual support as peers. Some groups have continued since the beginning; others have been started in the intervening years. Two of the current groups are seeking new members.

The Sunday socially engaged dharma group meets every third Sunday at BZC, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. If you're interested call Ed Herzog, 666-3696, eherzog@seiu250.org.

The Tuesday group meets every third week at 7:30 pm at members' homes. For more info, contact Jim Storey, 434-9455 or Jamesbstorey@aol.com.

For questions about these groups or the dharma groups in general, you can also contact Laurie, 845-2215 or lauries@kushiki.org.



The Faithful Fools

By Keith Walker

The Faithful Fools was founded five years ago in San Francisco's Tenderloin district by two extraordinary women, Kay Jorgenson and Carmen Barsody. I discovered them through an article describing their street retreats; where people from all walks of life are invited to bear witness to the poverty and deprivation that exists on the streets.

After attending my first street retreat, I became a frequent volunteer with the Fools. Eventually I was asked to accompany people on their rounds of the various agencies that form such a large part of the homeless person's life. I went to appointments with parole officers, to the hospital and methadone clinics. I stood in long lines for nearly every human need, needs that we often take for granted.

One morning, frustrated by the complexities of the bureaucracy, I brought a zafu with me and sat with the wonderful noise and confusion flowing from the street. Kay and Carmen also meditate, so very naturally the circle grew. A schedule of regular zazen was created and we now sit four days a week together with people from all walks of life. Passersby attracted by the poster in our window join us, as do people from the shelters, and volunteers with the Fools. If you find yourself in the City, you are also invited to sit with us.

If you would like to learn more about street retreats, zazen schedule, or other activities of the Fools, you can reach us online at 415.474.0508 or faithfulfools.org. Or contact Keith at 510.420.0716.

Further Announcements...

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



Sewing Assistance...

These times are for repairs and sewing of either previously begun or second *rakusus*.

Sunday August 10 1-5 pm

Sunday August 24 1-5 pm

Saturday September 13 1-5 pm

Sunday September 28 1-5 pm

Classes for starting first *rakusus* will begin as usual in January. Please call Jean Selkirk before your first visit. Check the bulletin board for dates.



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.

The Newsletter Editor apologizes for his error in typing Rondi's poem in the July Newsletter. Here is the correct version:

Benji's Poem...

For Ekai Uji Laurie Senauke

At Shogaku Temple
In an uneasy season
The Sangha gathers.
Listen as Yunyan sweeps the ground
The breath breathes

In the head seat, Ekai Uji
"Cherishing Ocean Being Time"
Finds "the one who is not busy."

Now we, in turns, speak
One breath breathing
And pause to hear the Shuso

Shinko Ando Rondi Saslow

June 22, 2003



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