



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2004 Newsletter

Priest Ordination...

The Buddhas rejoice! Linda Galijan will receive priest ordination or *shukke tokudo* from Sojun Roshi on **Saturday, 17 April 5pm** here at Berkeley Zen Center. The sangha is warmly invited to witness and celebrate this auspicious ordination. A simple reception will follow.



Practice Period...

Our annual practice period will begin **Saturday, 8 May** and last through **Sunday, 20 June**. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding those obligations "outside the gate."

Baika Ensho/Plum Blossom Complete Illumination Andrea Pratt 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.



Mountains & Rivers...

Our next Mountains & Rivers Sesshin will take place at Point Reyes from **24-25 April**. Sojun Roshi will be leading us. It is an inspiring and invigorating combination of morning and evening zazen with moderate hiking in silence during the day. Everyone is encouraged to try it. Information and signup sheet will be posted on the courtyard bulletin board.

Contact Ken Knabb 510.527.0959,
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

April & May Schedule

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 4-3, 9:30am

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 4-3, 5am to 9:10pm

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

Buddha's Birthday
Saturday, 4-10

Priest Ordination
Saturday, 4-17, 5 pm

Mountains and Rivers
Saturday, 4-24 through Sunday, 4-25

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 5-1, 9:30am

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

Practice Period Opening
and One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 5-8, 5:00 am to 9:10pm

New Members' Ceremony...

We will have a **New Members' Entering Ceremony** on Monday Morning 3 May, after service, before Open Discussion. The ceremony will consist of a *jundo*--circumambulation of the zendo--by new members. Any **Member** or **Friend** who has not participated in a new member ceremony is welcome to participate. Those who have joined since the last new member ceremony are encouraged to participate.



Buddha's Birthday....

This year Buddha's Birthday will be celebrated at Berkeley Zen Center on **Saturday, 10 April**. 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. The program begins with *zazen* at 9:30. At 10:10am there will be a Dharma talk for the young and young at heart, followed by the Bathing of the Buddha ceremony, and finally, refreshments! See the BZC website or courtyard bulletin board for details on how to help decorate the flower bower.



Newsletters on our Web Site...

Current and past issues of the BZC newsletter are now available on the web site, on the "schedule/news" page.



Movie Night...

Join us **Friday 9 April 6:45 pm** for a video from the archives of Herzog Productions and several videos about San Francisco Zen Center.

Welcome to new member Ellen Doudna.



Contra Costa Sitting Group...

Mary Mocine is leading a new sitting group in Pleasant Hill. It meets **every Monday evening, 7:15-9:00**, and will include a period of *zazen*, a short service and a discussion. Initially, we will be reading and discussing *Not Always So* by Suzuki Roshi.

The group is meeting at the Reunion Holistic Health Center at 140 Mayhew Way, Suite 202. Please bring a zafu or bench for sitting. There are plenty of chairs. Donations are appreciated.

For more information please contact Mary Mocine: 707.649.2480, marymo@att.net, or Jake Van Akkeren: 925.933.3486 (before 9:00 pm), jvanakkeren@comcast.net



Saturday Ride Share...

Please consider signing up to connect with a driver or rider in your area who wants to arrive at the same time for the Saturday program.

We especially encourage you to call if your situation makes it difficult for you to get to BZC. We would like everyone to have access to practice at BZC if at all possible.

To participate see the sign-up sheet at BZC.

Call either Greg Denny: 510.595.8162 or Clay Taylor: 510.843.1991.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

Continued From Last Month

The purpose of my talk is always to encourage our practice. Last night I gave a talk at the Graduate Theological Union. I appreciated the invitation, but I wondered, "What can I say?" So I spoke about my time with Suzuki Roshi and the way I practiced with him. When I think about that, I always feel grateful for the practice that he offered to us, his students and how, little by little, he encouraged me to let go of the burden of my self so that I could stand up and find my way. And I will always be grateful for the fact that although he taught me many things, he didn't explain everything, and when I came to him with a problem he would usually give it back to me as a kind of koan to work out. He gave me a lot of space and a lot of trust.

The first time I came to sit at the San Francisco Zen Center on Bush Street I had no prior instruction. I just came in and sat down. After a while someone (Suzuki Roshi) came up behind me and adjusted my posture. There was something wonderful about this. I thought, "Here I am by myself, with nothing else to do, just myself and this wall and this cushion. How remarkable! And on purpose!" But what I'm most grateful for actually is the way that my teacher encouraged me to practice really hard. Even though I practiced hard, I regret that I didn't practice hard enough when I was with him.

Usually, when we begin our practice, we're not completely ready. Some part of us is ready, and some part of us is not. I was really ready to practice, but my karma was pretty heavy. So I had trouble with really wanting to practice wholeheartedly and being held back somewhat by the residue of my previous life and my attachments. My teacher understood that and gave me a lot of space to work out the effects of my residual karma. But I knew very well what I wanted, and I said to myself, "This is it. I know this is what I really want to do. If I miss this opportunity it may not come around again soon." Even though I made that determination, still, there was a lot of stuff that I had to deal with. So these two things were going on at the same time. I think this happens with all of us.

Do you remember the movie – I think it was a Buñuel movie – called "The Andalusian Dog. In it, there's a man in a dimly lighted room who, with all his might, is dragging what appears to be a couple of enormous seals or walruses on his back, across the floor. It seems to be his endless task in a surreal movie. Although this image is an exaggeration, it can sometimes feel that our life, or our practice, is like that. But the effort to practice, even though we have all that baggage, is true effort. We can't wait until we're free in order to practice. And our effort will help to purify our activity if we really have determination. Steady practice can transform our life. In that way, the baggage we have can actually help us.

People who have a lot of suffering due to the effects of past karma usually have a lot of passion. Passion is a two-sided word. It is the devotional energy which leads to suffering, as well as the devotional energy which leads us out of suffering. If you don't have passion, you can't really practice. It's possible to practice without it, but that practice is very cold. Sometimes Zen looks cold, but it is actually half cool and half warm. It's a devotional practice of determination, effort and energy. There is an old saying that you should have a cool head and warm feet. What that means is that we should have a balance of cool and warm, hot and cold. When passion of the heart is balanced with coolness of the head and directed toward seeking the way, then it becomes vital well-balanced activity. That means directing our desire in the correct way so that it becomes right effort that lights up our practice, lights up our life – Enlightenment. The combination of passion, and cool headedness or composure, provides the foundation for the arising of wisdom. I remember one time I was feeling real sorry for myself, and I went to Suzuki Roshi and I said, "You know, I'm really not such a good person. Do you think I can still be a priest?" He said, "Well, if you didn't have this kind of problem, you wouldn't be able to help people. You wouldn't be able to sympathize with their problems. If you were someone who never had problems, you probably would not be a really capable teacher.

In *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Suzuki Roshi says you should give your cow a wide open field to roam in. If you want to control your cow or horse, you should give him or her a wide field, and not try to control, but just watch. If you ignore your horse or your cow, that's not right. You should watch and observe when the right time is to help or to do something. But if you try to control, or always try to manipulate, then that won't work. So give your cow a wide field. That's true. But if you stick to that, it's not true. The other side is that sometimes you have to put your cow in the corral. Sometimes you have to put your cow in the barn. If you want to get milk from the cow you have to put it in the barn. If you want to train the horse, you have to put him in the corral. So there are different ways. Sometimes you have to put your student in the barn or the corral, sometimes you give a wide field and just watch. Both are necessary. So our practice is sometimes very tight, in a corral – sometimes very loose, out in the field, just wandering looking for grass to chew. Under restriction our activity is very concentrated and we have the opportunity to see our self completely in the mirror of no place else to go. Due to our restricted activity we can find our true freedom. Then we can express it in the field. Knowing how to commune with the pillar – that's our practice either way. Whether we're in a tight situation or in a big field, how the old Buddha communes with the pillar is our practice.



Our Approach to Practice Period

During the six weeks of practice period we have the opportunity to renew and concentrate our effort, and re-establish our practice in beginner's mind. The practice period has some minimum requirements, but within these requirements each person can create his or her own schedule. This is the nature of lay practice. Some will be able to do only the minimum, while others, who have the opportunity, will be able to extend or stretch themselves much more.

It should be clearly understood that in no way is any *sangha* member required to participate, nor is there any pressure to do so. You should all feel free to continue to come as usual if you are not part of Practice Period.

When you include your zendo schedule in your calendar it incorporates *zazen* into the rhythm of your life as an intention rather than as a random or arbitrary activity. When we design our schedule for a limited time period, taking into consideration all of the other factors and responsibilities in our life, we have a foundation for practice. It is also necessary to honor our commitments and to be realistic about how we create our schedule.

I like to think of the spirit of practice period as the wish to do it all, and then narrowing it down to what is practical or possible, rather than simply picking or choosing pieces of it based on preference or convenience. This helps to create an edge; something to push against but not enough to be inhibiting. When we all have this attitude it creates a strong *sangha* feeling of mutual support and encouragement.

It is also important to manifest the spirit of *zazen* in our home life and work life as continuous, well-rounded practice; not just something we do on the cushion.

This can also provide a good atmosphere for those who are sitting and are not in a position to practice as fully. What makes the difference are the requirements and commitments. Except for that, we (participants and non-participants) are all practicing together.

Practice period can set the tone for the whole year, which is one of the reasons we changed it back to spring, rather than continuing to have it in the fall.

Sojun

Potbound

Alexandra Yurkovsky

I fold legs beneath
hinged pelvis to form
a seat, & sit,
like a potbound plant.

Thighs like roots, knees
& ankles like roots, feet
& toes like roots,
planted on the cushion.

Up from the hinge rises
the spine, snake of energy
that feeds into the brain,
forcing buds that bloom

into silent sentences
whose loose, free petals
of thought, ushered
in & out, by & with,

measured breaths, seem
to pass through my skull
like close-captioning.
In: one- Out: and

In: two- Out: and

In: three-

...until sometimes
count & breath supplant
syntax, like waves overwhelming,

subsuming, flotsam. Like
treading mental water,
buoyantly;
or: I'm a cauldron
on the boil, but never

boiling over.

(An ache in my right knee)

No matter

(Feet & ankles numb; roots dormant)

The white wall in front of and in back of my eyes
appears to oscillate,
translucent with molecules

Now my head

(or: this entire body-brain urn)

feels as empty as a conch shell,

and the ocean

roars clean through

Please Note...

Greg Denny's correct email address is greg@techsperience.org.

The Defibrillator Is Here...

Thanks to the generosity of many *sangha* members, BZC recently purchased the automatic external defibrillator. A class on operating this simple-to-use, life-saving device will be presented on **Saturday, 24 April at noon** in the community room. Those who participated in the basic life support training last month, and all interested members and friends are encouraged to attend. Contact Andrea Thach: 510.420.0902.



Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered on Saturdays from 9:15 am to 11:15 am. The cost is \$5 per family. Note that the childcare schedule is tentative. Childcare is not offered if no one is planning to come, so please call Laurie the Thursday before to let her know if you're hoping to attend. For more information, call Laurie Senauke: 510.845.2215.

April 3	No program
April 10	Buddha's Birthday
April 17	Childcare
April 24	Childcare
May 1	Childcare
May 8	No program
May 15	Childcare
May 22	Childcare
May 29	Childcare

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703

BZC PRACTICE PERIOD APPLICATION

Spring 2004 — May 8 to June 20

Please work from the schedule posted on the bulletin board or in the newsletter. Fill in or circle the choices listed below that describe your commitment, noting the required events. Participate as fully as you can. Return this form to Baika Pratt's mail slot by Monday, May 3. Also, if possible, make a copy for yourself before returning.

IMPORTANT!!! IN ADDITION TO THIS APPLICATION, YOU MUST SIGN UP ON THE ZENDO BULLETIN BOARD FOR CLASS AND FOR ALL SESSHINS.

REQUIREMENTS

- Participants should attend at least three sittings per week at BZC (morning or evening).
- Please attend the opening ceremony on Saturday evening, May 8th at 7:30, unless you have circumstances that make this impossible.
- Please attend all the Saturdays you have marked out. The cooks depend on numbers from this form. You are encouraged to attend them all.
- Participants are expected to have practice discussion with a senior student at least once during the practice period.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

ZAZEN

I will attend AM zazen on these days of the week _____

I will attend PM zazen on these days of the week _____

SATURDAY MORNINGS

I will attend all/part on _____

ONE DAY SITTING

I will/will not attend the sitting on Saturday, May 8

(Please note: You must sign up on the zendo bulletin board for sesshin.)

SESSHIN (June 16-June 20)

I will /will not participate in the 5-day sesshin.

(Please note: You must sign up on the zendo bulletin board. There is a three-day minimum.)

THURSDAY NIGHT CLASS

I will/will not attend the class (May 13 through June 10)

(Please sign up on the zendo bulletin board for class.)

MID-PRACTICE PERIOD DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT

I will/will not attend Tuesday, June 1 at 6:30pm)

SHUSO DHARMA DIALOGUE CEREMONY

I will/will not attend (Sunday, June 20 at 7pm).

TEA WITH THE HEAD STUDENT

I would like to schedule a tea. I prefer to have it (a) in a small group, or (b) as a private walk.

I have the following times available _____

I have considered this commitment carefully and feel it is realistic for me, taking into consideration the other things I need to do in my life.

BZC Spring 2004 Practice Period Schedule

Schedule subject to change, so watch bulletin board for updates

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						May 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Sesshin – Practice Period Opening/ Shuso Entering
9	10 Shuso Talk – 5:40am	11	12	13 Class – Sojun Roshi 7:30pm	14 Bansan Sojun Roshi 5:30pm	15
16	17	18	19	20 Class – Sojun Roshi 7:30pm	21	22 Shuso Talk
23	24	25	26	27 Class – Sojun Roshi 7:30pm	28	29
30	31 Shosan – Sojun Roshi 5:40am	June 1 Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night	2	3 Class – Sojun Roshi 7:30pm	4 Bansan Sojun Roshi 5:30pm	5 Shuso Talk
6 Kanzeon Sitting	7	8	9	10 Class – Sojun Roshi 7:30pm	11	12 Jukai
13	14	15	16 Five Day Sesshin	17 Five Day Sesshin	18 Five Day Sesshin	19 Five Day Sesshin
20 Sesshin – Shuso Hossen/ Practice Period Closing						