



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2006 Newsletter

Spring Practice Period

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sesshin on Sunday, May 7 and last through the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 18. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations "outside the gate."

Nyu Li Ho Sho, Karen Sundheim will be the Shuso, or head student this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. For a detailed practice period schedule and more, see the insert inside this newsletter.

Buddha's Birthday

This year we will celebrate Buddha's birthday on Saturday, April 8. Buddha's Birthday is one of the important dates on the Zen calendar, marking the birth of the Buddha and the fresh possibility of awakening in one's own life.

The Saturday program will start at 9:30 am, but preparations will begin earlier in the morning. Please see the zendo bulletin board for the full schedule and to sign up to help prepare the temple grounds and clean up afterwards. 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.

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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.

BZC Schedule

April

Kanzeon Sitting

Sunday, 4-2

Founders Ceremony

Monday, 4-3 6:20 P.M.

Tuesday, 4-4, 6:40 A.M.

Buddha's Birthday

Saturday, 4-8, 9:30 A.M.

One-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4-9

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4-15, 9:30 A.M.

Kidzendo

Saturday, 4-15

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Friday-Sunday, April 21-23

May

Founders Ceremony

Wednesday, 5-3, 6:40 P.M.

Thursday, 5-4, 6:20 A.M.

One-Day Sitting

Practice Period Begins

Sunday, 5-7

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5-13, 9:30 A.M.

Kidzendo

Saturday, 5-20

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 5-21

PEOPLE

Beaucoups thank yous to our Zendo Manager of almost two years, **Eric Greene**, whose scholarly studies are demanding more and more of his time. We welcome **Andrea Thach** in this position, and look forward to her capable and attentive guidance.

Tamar Enoch will be the new Head Gardener, replacing **Lauren Wholey**. Many gasshos to Lauren for her fine work. Tamar will be giving up the Kitchen Keeper job as soon as a replacement is found.

Welcome new members **Jea Endicott** and **Jim Tomlinson**.

Note: If you have well being messages or short items of interest for the BZC newsletter "PEOPLE" column, please submit them to: ehertzog@lmi.net Deadline is the 20th of the month.

Buddha's Birthday

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An important part of the ceremony is the baby Buddha's bower or arbor, which the sangha decorates every year. The decorating the flower bower will be Saturday morning from 7:30-8:30 am!

Please bring flowers on Friday, April 7--carnations, iris, daisies, ranunculus, sweet william, camelias, and lilies are especially good. Leave them on the Community Room porch before evening zazen, or bring treasures from your garden when you come Saturday morning. For more information, contact BZC Head Chiden, Carol Paul, (510) 596-9048.

Drop-In Tea

Reminder: Drop-in tea is served every Friday afternoon at 5:00 in either the Community Room or the patio depending on the weather. It's casual and all are welcome any time up to zazen at 5:35. Get to know some of those silent bodies sitting so still in the Zendo.

BZC Dharma Groups

BZC sustains several dharma study groups. The idea was started by our beloved late elder Maylie Scott many years ago, to promote a more "horizontal" sharing of practice. These small groups meet regularly to study and discuss the dharma as it manifests in our lives.

Membership requirements vary, and the groups often have an opening for one or two people. The following is a list of the groups and contact information:

Monday Night Group

Looking for new members: Anne Jennings, mimikatz@aol.com

People of Color Dharma Group

(also Monday nights), drop in group: Victor Tsou, vytsou@yahoo.com

Tuesday Night Group

Jim Storey, jamesbstorey@aol.com

Wednesday Daytime Group

Doug Greiner, degreiner@gmail.com

Raul's Weekend Study Group

Open to new members in January

Socially Engaged Buddhism Group

(meets Sunday evening) Ed Herzog, ehertzog@lmi.net

Special Kokyo Training

Very soon, we will begin using our new women's lineage in our liturgy and chanting the names of Chinese and Japanese women who have shaped our practice. All Kokyos are invited to attend a special training either Saturday, April 15 or Saturday, April 29 at 11:30 a.m. to practice the new chant and learn to pronounce the unfamiliar names. The training will take about half an hour. The entire sangha will have an opportunity to practice together Monday morning, May 1.

Directory Changes

Please make the following changes to your 2006 Directories:

Jim Tomlinson
2413 8th Street
Berkeley 94710

Karen Decotis, kdecotis@gmail.com.

Sojun Commentary on Dogen's Genjo Koan

"Here is the place and here the way unfolds. The boundary of realization is not distinct, for the realization comes forth simultaneously with the mastery of Buddha Dharma. Do not suppose that what you realize becomes your knowledge and is grasped by your consciousness. Although actualized immediately, the inconceivable may not be apparent. Its appearance is beyond your knowledge."



Even though we don't know everything and don't even realize what we do know, our practice is complete when we sit with a pure and non-discriminating mind. We may not even know the complete meaning of our practice. Dogen then gives an example: Zen master



Baoche of Mount Mayu was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, "Master, the nature of wind is permanent, and there is no place it does not reach. Why then do you fan yourself? "Wind" here means Buddha nature. What the monk is saying is that if Buddha nature is all-pervasive and there is no place where it is not, why are you fanning yourself?"

It is a good question. This was Dogen's question when, as a young monk, he went to China. Dogen said to himself, "If everyone has Buddha nature, if Buddha nature pervades the universe, why do we have to practice?" Why do we have to exert effort to manifest it? So, he went to China with this question: Baoche replied, "Although you understand that the nature of wind is permanent, you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere." "What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?", the monk asked again. The master just kept fanning himself. The monk bowed deeply. What is the nature of "permanence?" The master's fanning means that even though Buddha nature pervades the universe, in order to experience it we have to activate enlightenment or realization through practice. Even though the nature of everything is Buddha, and Buddha nature is the essence of all existence, in order to realize it, we have to be a vessel for it.

For example, although you have a car parked in front of your house, it is not completely functional as a car until you turn the key in the ignition and step on the gas. Dogen's understanding is that practice and realization are not two. Practice is not apart from enlightenment, and enlightenment is not separate from practice. That is why he says some may realize it and some may not. Even though realization is intrinsic, it isn't necessarily experienced as realization. But if you practice, realization is there. Then he continues: "The monk bowed deeply. The actualization of the Buddha Dharma, the vital path of its correct transmission is like this. If you say that you do not need to fan yourself because the nature of wind is permanent, and you're going to have wind without fanning, you will understand neither permanence, nor the nature of wind. In other words, you won't understand Buddha nature, and you will also not understand your own activity, even though we think we understand our activity. The nature of wind is permanent. Because of that, the wind of the Buddha's house brings forth the gold of the earth, and makes fragrant the cream of the long river."

There are many important points here, but I think the main point is how to bring life to life in each moment, and in this way, to extend zazen into our daily life by finding our dharma position on every moment within what Suzuki Roshi called Big Mind. It means no self-centered activity. Just basically not to be selfish. That is very simple. As soon as we revert to self-centered activity we lose our way and our place. But as long as we continue this non-self-centered activity and simply practice for the

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Meditation on Grasping and Clinging

Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva addressed the assembled beings with deep compassion: Birth and death are relentless and you are right to tremble as you behold them, for all things are void of self-nature and
Your alkaline diet will not save you.
Your workout routine will not save you.
The Beatles will not come back to save you
Organic produce will not save you
Your vows will not save you
mutual funds will not save you
Poetry will not save you
Zazen will not save you
Tree-planting will not save you
Washboard abs will not save you
a clean car will not save you
psychedelics will not save you
Your teacher will not save you
Big Mind will not save you
Your family will not save you
Neither wit nor charm will save you
Rare gold coins will not save you
Jesus will definitely not save you
Virtue will not save you
Solar panels will not save you
Fame and fortune will not save you

Your super-comfortable Sharper Image styro-foam pellet zafu will not save you
Not even Constance's love will save you
Hearing aids will not save you
Expatriation will not save you,
Degrees and credentials will not save you
Hope will not save you,
Extended orgasms will not save you,
The Great Mother's arms will not save you
No amount of vitamins and supplements will save you
Art will not save you
Meditations on grasping and clinging will not save you
Giddy episodes of gratitude will not save you
Anti-oxidants will not save you
Your grandchildren will not save you
Your reputation will not save you
The people's eventual uprising will not save you

Extraterrestrial entities will not save you no matter how high their vibrational level
Beauty will not save you
Modesty will not save you
Invisibility will not save you
Hilarity will not save you
Clever turns of phrase will not save you
The esteem of your colleagues will not save you
Green tea and flax oil will not save you
Being debt-free will not save you.
Hope for one more sunrise will not save you.

Many of the assembled beings on that day, hearing those words, and taking them to heart immediately attained complete, unsurpassed, perfect life-as-it-is, trembling and all!

Barton Stone



Sojun Commentary on Dogen's Genjo Koan *continued from page 3*

sake of practice, the way and the place will open up wherever we are. There is no special thing that we have to do, but everything we do has a special quality. Sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, just ordinary activity becomes the Way.

He who without the Muses' madness in his soul
Comes knocking at the door of poetry
Thinking that art alone will make him fit
To be called a poet
Will find that he is found wanting
And that the verse he writes
in his sober senses
Is beaten hollow by the poetry of madmen

Plato, Phaedrus

All Sangha Gathering

There will be an All Sangha Gathering Thursday, May 4, at 6:30 pm in the Community Room. Many people have expressed interest in having more sangha get together. While BZC has occasional general meetings, these are usually focused on specific purpose. As a result, many other matters may never be discussed

Chidening at BZC

By Barbara Strauss

You can always tell that my turn to chiden has come--the ashes in no way resemble the skating pond that they ought to; but it is my delight to be able to make an offering of the flowers. I want to express my gratitude, wide and deep, to everyone at BZC for simply 'being there' in every sense of the word. And especially in regard to interacting with the flowers--people made it clear that there was a place for me at BZC from the beginning.

Moving here in '03, I was overwhelmed and delighted by the superabundance of practice groups. Where I 'come from' we had one teacher for a metropolitan area of 250,000. Naples, Florida is better known for its golf and charity balls than spiritual seekers, but it was there that I discovered Beginner's Mind. I don't know if you can imagine how I felt when I saw that within blocks of my new home, there was an altar for Suzuki Roshi, with the portrait I carried for years hanging above it. This for me really concretized the personal connection I felt from the very first exposure I had to teachings--a manifestation for me of what one of Soen's disciples called a 'dharma arrangement'.

I know all of us have these touchstone experiences, signal moments that reassure us about our practice paths..Best of all, I learned that I could sometimes continue to do flowers for the altar as I had done for my sangha in Florida.

What I would most like to convey is how vital a role those who enjoy the altar flowers play. Thich Nhat Hanh gave a very moving dharma talk on flower arranging. He pointed out it was a perfect illustration of non-duality: the dis-

except within small groups such as the Board or the Practice Committee.

This gathering will be more open-ended. If you have some concern regarding our practice, what is working, what isn't working, what direction BZC is going in, or what direction you would like to see it go in, this would be a good time to tell us about it. But it would also be a fine time for lighter or more miscellaneous items-- announcements, news about sangha members, or perhaps sharing a poem, a song, or a joke.

Following a potluck dinner, we will gather in a circle and go once around, each person briefly (one or two minutes) saying whatever he or she wants to say. After everyone has spoken, the format will shift to a general discussion where people can respond to any of the issues that have been raised.

It should be both fun and provocative, and in the process we may get to know each other a little better. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Ken Knabb -- knabb@bopsecrets.org / 527-0959.



Kanzeon Sitting

The next Kanzeon sitting is Sunday, April 2, 8:45 am to 4 pm. This sitting is especially designed for those who have some difficulty with the typical sesshin schedule, but it is open to anyone. The periods of zazen are shorter so it is also an opportunity to experiment with a more challenging posture. Attend for all or part of the day. If you have particular concerns, needs, or ideas, or if this will be your first day-long sitting, please contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, lauries@kushiki.org. Lunch will be bag lunch--bring your own, or purchase one from the Thai temple next door or the Berkeley Bowl. Cost for the day is \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. Signup sheet on bulletin board as usual.

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BZC Treasurers Report

By BZC Treasurer John Rubin

The All-Sangha annual budget meeting was held March 7. Thirty BZC members attended the potluck dinner and budget hearing led by BZC Treasurer John Rubin. 2005 financial highlights include 1) the BZC balance sheet remains strong with no debt; 2) income exceeded expense by over \$26,000; 3) 2005 income was \$12,000 more than in 2004, mainly due to higher dues and donations; 4) 2005 expenses were \$22,000 lower than 2004, largely because of unusually low repair & maintenance activity, few equipment purchases, and one-time adjustments in Abbot benefits and property taxes, and 5) for the first time, the "Fund for the Future" is now over \$100,000.

Budget balanced

The 2006 budget is balanced with both estimated income and expense totalling \$155,000. Many of the big income items (Dues, Rent, and San Francisco Zen Center) should be about equal to their 2005 totals. We're expecting a small decline in donations, which were heavier than normal last year, and a continuing decline in Sesshin income (a four-year trend). President Peter Overton said the BZC Board will be studying the attendance situation for Sesshins and may soon do a survey of the membership to seek ideas and comments about it. Expenses

Chidening at BZC

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tion between the observer and the arranger is a false one. Without the appreciative observer, the arrangement does not exist; neither component exists separately, and moreover there is no 'rank' in participation. So heartfelt thanks for giving of yourselves to make the circuit complete, and for the opportunity to belong.

Under the cherry-blossoms

None are

Utter strangers.

-Issa

Florabundantly, Barbara



are going to be higher this year, with the biggest swing factor likely to be a doubling in repair & maintenance cost from \$8,000 in 2005 to \$15,000+ in 2006. Doug Greiner presented a list of pending R&D work. The big items are \$6,000 for work on the garden shed and the Senauke's porch and back steps, and \$3,000 for kitchen and plumbing repairs in the building where Tamar and Melinda are residents. Utility expenses will be higher due to increased gas and electricity costs. Property taxes will also rise because of a needed makeup payment. The much-needed new BZC office means more equipment expense in 2006.

Balance sheet

The BZC balance sheet total is \$531,000, with zero debt. The \$100,000 "Fund for the Future" money continues to be invested in very low-risk fixed income accounts (money market funds at Calvert and Schwab, and Vanguard's GNMA fund). BZC doesn't have any money in the stock market.

The old and new BZC office managers (Laurie Senauke and John Mogeny) were both recognized and thanked for their good work in paying the bills and keeping our financial records current, accurate, and complete. The meeting adjourned with approval of the 2006 budget by the Sangha members who were present.

Farming is the ancient way

Singing with coyote

Singing against nuclear war

I'll never be tired of life

Nanao Sakaki

Childcare Help Wanted

BZC offers childcare for a portion of the Saturday program - from 9:15 to 11:15. We are looking for leads on a new Saturday childcare provider. Typically, childcare is free play, but once a month we offer "Kidzendo", a more structured program, which includes the children attending part of the lecture and other activities.



The new provider could choose whether or not they wanted to facilitate the Kidzendo. The childcare person receives \$20 per week. We look for a non-sangha member to provide childcare, since this person cannot attend the Saturday 9:30 zazen or lecture. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org, 845-2215).



NOTE: The BZC Newsletter invites sangha members to submit short articles, poems, or cartoons. Send to: eherzog@lmi.net. Deadline is the 20th of the month.

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.

April 1	Childcare
April 8	BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY
April 15	Kidzendo
April 22	Childcare
April 29	Childcare
May 6	Childcare
May 13	Childcare
May 20	Kidzendo
May 27	Childcare

KIDZENDO

A talk in the zendo for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday of each month. We meet upstairs at the Senauke's household (1933 Russell) for a briefing on forms at about 9:45, then sojourn down to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:10. Afterwards, children may join the regular Saturday childcare program if they wish.

Gassho to Sojun

Plain, simple
whole grain bread-
Nothing fancy,
nothing on it,
nourishes best.

Magic Mountain

Crouched vast and black
against night's edge,
Mount Tam
calls forth
her dragon children.

Talus

Anger's a gray boulder
in the heart

Erik Ferry

SAVE THE DATE

3-Day Mts & Rivers Sesshin

Our next Mountains & Rivers Sesshin will take place Friday through Sunday, April 21-23, at Point Reyes. Sojun Roshi will be leading it.

Due to popular demand, all M&R sesshins are now three days long. The format is similar to the two-day ones we've been doing for many years—hiking in silence during the day, zazen under the stars in the evening and early morning. The extra day helps us settle in with the environment and enables us to rest up during the second day.

Everyone is encouraged to do the full three days, but provision will also be made for people who can take part only in the Saturday-Sunday portion. All meals are provided and camping experience is not required.

Information and signup sheet are posted on the BZC bulletin board. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb (527-0959) or email him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Photography Exhibit

The San Francisco Zen Center Gallery will be the location of a photography exhibit, entitled "Seeing Through", by BZC member and Turning Wheel Editor Susan Moon. Opening reception is Friday, April 7, 5:30 to 8:00 pm. The exhibit runs from April 7-April 20. SF Zen Center is located at 300 Page Street (at Laguna) in San Francisco.

Women's Retreat Weekend at Empty Nest Zendo

All BZC women and their children are invited to attend a retreat offering zazen, training and discussion of women finding their Way, with time to refresh through swimming, hiking and yoga. The retreat will be led by Baika Andrea Pratt and Myoan Grace Schireson.

It will be held Friday July 21-Sunday July 23. You may attend all or part and stay in a tent or guest room. Regular sesshin fees and scholarships apply. Carpooling encouraged. To sign-up or for more information contact Baika at baika2@gmail.com 925-287-9860 or Grace at grace@emptynestzendo.org



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