



Berkeley Zen Center



December 2006 Newsletter

Dear Sangha Members,

I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to all of you for your continuing practice and mutual support. Our grass roots style works because of our willingness to share responsibilities and our financial support. But the most wonderful thing is the presence of each and every one of us. Please rest assured that neither our presence nor our contributions are taken for granted. Each one of us contributes something unique, and each one of us adds a unique flavor to the richness of the sangha.

Next year we will be provided a new opportunity to help transform our national environment and help to bring some degree of peaceful and harmonious solutions to a chaotic world.

I look forward to our renewed and ongoing practice beginning on New Year's Eve and crossing over into the new year, 2007. Everyone is invited to come and celebrate the new year in this wonderful way.

Sojun Abbot BZC



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 December

Suzuki Roshi Memorial

Friday, 12-1, 8:00 pm

Buddha Enlightenment

Saturday, 12-2

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12-9, 9:30 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 12-16

Winter Break

12-18 to 12-31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

12-31

January

Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 1-3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 1-4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1-6, 9:30 am

Kanzeon Sitting

Sunday, 1-7

All Sangha Potluck

Thursday, 1-11

One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 1-20

Kidzendo

Saturday, 1-27

NOTE: The BZC Newsletter invites all sangha members to submit short articles, poems, or other items of interest. Send to: ehertzog@lmi.net. Deadline is the 20th of the month.

Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturdays from 9:15 to 11:15. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; call or email Greg Denny, 595-8162, or greg@techsperience.org.



Childcare Schedule

December 2	Sesshin – no program
December 9	Childcare
December 16	Kidzendo
December 23	Winter Break
December 30	Winter Break
January 6	Childcare
January 13	Childcare
January 20	Sesshin - no program
January 27	Kidzendo

Kidzendo

A talk in the zendo for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday of each month (or the fourth Saturday if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). 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 10 minutes of lecture starting at 10:10. Afterwards, children may join the regular Saturday childcare program if they wish.

Soji

If you come to Saturday morning zazen, and stay for breakfast, you should plan on staying for Soji, the short work period after. Eating and cleaning up go together as two sides of one practice.

And a related Soji request, from Sojun Roshi, on behalf of the weekly jikidos: They request that 2-3 people stay in the zendo during Soji after morning zazen during the week to brush off all the zabutons and fluff all the zafus. This will make the job a bit easier for those who come during the week to clean.



Board of Directors Election

Congratulations to re-elected BZC Board member Marie Hopper, to new Board members Carol Paul and Blake Tolbert, and to our continuing Recording Secretary Ken Knabb.

Continuing on the Board are Doug Greiner, Walter Kieser, and Andrea Thach. Peter Overton will continue as President and Gerry Oliva will continue as Vice-president. John Rubin will continue as Treasurer, and all paid positions: Sojun as Abbot, Alan Senauke as Tanto, and John Moge as Office Manager, were confirmed.

New Year's Eve Sitting and Celebration

Please don't hesitate to come to the New Year's Eve Sitting and Party. You can attend any portion or the entire event. Please come between periods. Here is the schedule:

8:00 Zazen
8:35 Kinhin
8:45 Zazen
9:20 Kinhin
9:30 Zazen
10:05 Tea
(10:13 108 Bells Begin)
10:30 Kinhin
10:40 Zazen
11:20 Kinhin
11:35 Zazen
12:10 Slow chant of Heart Sutra/End, then a celebration in the community room. Watch the bulletin board for details, and to sign up to help make merry with food and clean up.

Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate. Before the winter break (mid-December), please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman. After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

New 2007 Calendar

Included in this newsletter is the BZC Event Calendar for 2007. We want to alert you to a couple items. We have added four all-sangha potlucks in addition to the budget approval potluck-meeting in March and the board election potluck-meeting in September. We experimented with these gatherings last year and have enjoyed a chance to meet and talk together without a specific agenda. These have been coordinated by Ken Knabb if you have questions or suggestions: knabb@bopsecrets.org.

We've also added a second work sesshin during the spring practice period, and the two day sesshin over Labor Day Weekend will be a study sesshin with Sojun Roshi. And please note: for the Rohatsu sesshin next December, we're going to experiment with starting on a Sunday and ending on a Saturday – to enable folks who need to go back to work on Monday to have some time to get ready. The minimum requirement of days may also be revised in light of this. We are interested in member's thoughts about this plan, and about sesshins at BZC in general.

Ongoing Well-Being List Revealed

Many people wonder about the folks on the well-being list whose names are recited during service twice a week. If you placed someone on this list and would like to share information about that person with the sangha, look for the binder entitled, "The Merit of our Well-being Services is Dedicated to," on the patio bulletin board shelf. Information, a picture, or anything else you would like to share can be left there for all to see.

Monday PM Doan Opening

We will need to fill the doan position on Monday afternoons very soon. If you are interested in becoming a doan, have been sitting at BZC for awhile, and can commit to attending Monday afternoon zazen regularly for the next year, please contact Andrea Thach at 420-0902. Bringing out the voice of the bells in the flow of service is an especially joyful practice.

PEOPLE

The end of the year is a time of transition for several BZC positions. A deep gassho to **Marty Kovach** for his leadership as one of our two Saturday Directors these past couple years. Starting in January, our new co-Saturday director (joining **Linda Hess**) will be **Jake Van Akkeren**. **Teresa Lesko and Rondi Saslow** have been coordinating the half-day sittings; beaucoup bows to them, and to **Sue Oesher** and **Catharine Lucas**, who will be taking over starting in 2007. Also a deep bow to **Mark Ray**, Head Dishwasher for several years, since he proposed this new position to streamline our Saturday work. Taking over for him will be **Marian Yu**.

Thank you to **Nobuo Iwanaga** for taking on a new position as Tender of the Memorial Garden. Nobuo's recent efforts on the BZC grounds have been much appreciated.

Welcome new BZC resident **Jim Tomlinson**, and new members **Christy Calame, Max Erdstein, and Kanako Harada**.

Jikidos Needed

Twice every week, the zendo is given a thorough cleaning by sangha members who sign up for a specific week. It doesn't take long, since the space is already so clean! There's plenty of room on the sign-up sheet (back porch of Community Room). Head Jikido Shelley Brock (sybrock@earthlink.net) will be thrilled to give you a quick training. This is a wonderful way to support our temple and experience the quiet peace of the zendo. You may sign up as an individual or team up, either to work together, or to split the week.

*motes cling to blue
dust broom, then shimmer, shaken over
cool morning grass*

Shelley Brock



Sojun Roshi, from a lecture at Tassajara: Fall, 1988

In the Abhidharma there are the so-called Six Qualitative Factors (of body and mind), which arise in a well-balanced or wholesome state of mind. They arise together and interact with each other.

The Six Factors are: Tranquility, Agility, Pliancy, Workableness, Efficiency, and Uprightness. These qualities are also present in meditation or Zazen. They are always present in a wholesome state of consciousness, no matter



what we are doing. So today, as we are doing Zazen, I would like us to observe these Six Factors.

Tranquility is first on the list, although there is no particular

order. Tranquility is a basis for Samadhi. Consider it as the horizontal aspect, like a calm lake. As everything falls, tranquility receives and supports it. The opposite of Tranquility would be restlessness, agitation, worry.

Uprightness is the last on the list, and it grows out of Tranquility. Just as Tranquility is the horizontal aspect, so Uprightness is the vertical aspect. And the intersection where these two meet is where the other Factors have their play. Uprightness is sincerity, the opposite of hypocrisy, self-righteousness, or confusion of pure activity with another motive. In Zazen our activity is pure when our only motive is to sit. If there is some other motive then it is not really pure activity. To do Zazen with some gaining idea, or with some other motive, is to mix it with personal, self-centered motives. Uprightness is pure sincerity, to do something for its own sake.

Agility, the Second Factor, is the activity which is lightness of body-mind, lightness of consciousness the ability to spring to life. Tranquility lies down, and agility keeps us from falling into a depression or a slothful state of mind. Agility keeps our Zazen light and buoyant, so that it doesn't become heavy, slothful, or sleepy; agility of mind brings us back to the subject. Agility has the qualities of a monkey. However, by itself, Agility becomes monkey mind. It dances around. It needs control. So Tranquility controls Agility, and likewise Agility keeps Tranquility from falling

into oblivion. We walk around with a stick in order to help wake up the agile mind. "BAM!" Please wake up your agile mind. When one person is struck, everyone wakes up for a moment.

Pliancy is the Third Factor, and is the ability to stretch and let go—the ability to open up and to take any shape. The opposite is stiffness, a stiff neck, rigidity, prejudice, clinging. Pliancy is also called soft mind, that which accepts what is present. Pliancy will assume the shape of things as they are. Like water, it can take the shape of any vessel.

Pliancy is the ability to relax, to let go.



Workableness is the quality that can take all the elements, all the opposites, and make them work together, like a piece of clay. You work the clay. If it's too stiff, you add some water. If it's too mushy you add more powder, more substance, until you reach the right consistency. Gold is sometimes described in this fashion. Too hard, and it cannot be worked, so you heat it up; too liquid, and you cool it off, until it reaches just the right temperature. This quality is like temper. A sword has a temper. Any metal has a temper in which it will hold its shape. When it is too stiff it breaks easily. When it is too soft it will not hold a shape. So Workableness is how we bring soft and hard, hot and cold, together to make them work. This fact cannot be emphasized enough in Zazen. We are always working with soft and hard, energy and relaxation, effort and letting go. All these are problems of workableness, which we must think about constantly. This is our work in Zazen. Our workableness is our Zazen. We keep the body/mind in the right temper, neither too stiff nor too loose.

Efficiency is the ability to do something with confidence. You know how to sit Zazen; you know what the rules are. If you hold your back straight, hold your mudra correctly, then the rest of your body will fall into place. You know how to do it. If not, then you must make the effort to learn. Actually, we don't know how to do Zazen.

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Sojun Roshi, from a lecture at Tassajara: Fall, 1988

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We're always learning to do Zazen. Every time we sit Zazen we have to teach ourselves again. If you think, "I know how to sit Zazen", you're making a big mistake. If you just sit down and start thinking your thoughts, this is not Zazen.

Zazen is when you sit down and teach yourself how, every single time. You never learn it enough and you never know what it is. It's always different. I am interested in your



giving yourself instruction every time you sit down to do Zazen. In efficiency, as in proficiency, there is a feeling of confidence that you can do it. Even though your Zazen is not perfect, you feel you've established an affinity with it. The problems don't get bigger than your abilities.

Proficiency leads to spontaneity. All together, they lead to balance and harmony. Whether or not we are aware of them, these factors are constantly working together. If you analyze them you'll see that they are always there, especially in Zazen. If we are conscious of them, then we can make an effort to emphasize certain factors, which help to balance out other factors. No one factor is more important than any other. But all must be taken into account together.

Tranquility is horizontal like the ground, a foundation lying flat. Uprightness is vertical like the trunk of the tree. Agility is like the birds and animals playing in the branches. Pliancy is like the grass moving with the wind. Workableness is like the leaves swaying easily in the wind. Workableness involves the harmonious relationship of all the factors and qualities. Efficiency gives rise to confidence through our effort, and fosters faith in ourself and our Buddha nature, and in our activity. All thoughts, feelings, emotions, and hindrances settle on the ground of Tranquility, and rise up again as nourishment through the tree of Uprightness, over and over again.

In Zazen we have hundreds of bones and body parts. We align these individual parts all together in one position and call it Zazen.

However, at the same time, each one is independent. Your finger bones, hands, fore-arms, vertebrae, leg bones, feet, and head are all independent. Yet all these individual pieces add up to one activity. So it takes a bit of work to keep all this together.



The trunk of the tree is our backbone, which we must keep straight. The whole time during Zazen, we concentrate on keeping our back straight. If we do nothing else in Zazen we should at least do that. I recognize that people have problems with the back, and sometimes my back hurts. Making the effort to hold the back straight, and calming the mind: these two must work together. Too much effort will tire you, and will make your back sore. Too little effort and you will tire easily, as you have no foundation. Your back will grow sore from a lack of effort. Balance between strong effort and letting go has to be there all the time.

In Zazen, although we make the effort to remain upright, we must also make the conscious effort to let go at the same time. This is effortless effort. It's like making some wonderful dish in the kitchen. You feel good about it, but not so overjoyed that you make a fool of yourself. Or, you make some big mistake and you know how to accept it without being depressed or blaming others.

In Zazen we exert constant tranquil effort, effort in lightness, agility, pliancy, workableness, efficiency, and uprightness, with confidence and faith in our own Buddha nature. No motive other than to sit. There is no tomorrow, no yesterday.





Stockton Election Sesshin

Engaged Buddhist election sesshin participants, following a long day of walking precincts in Stockton, get ready to sit down to a hearty evening meal sent to them and prepared by BZC member Marie Hopper. (Photo by Ko Blix)

Dokusan and Psychotherapy

Dokusan and practice discussion are opportunities to discuss your practice with a teacher or experienced senior student, whose role is to encourage you in your practice and help you find your Way.

Buddha taught a way of release from suffering. It is natural, as part of Buddhist practice, for practitioners to discuss their emotional suffering during dokusan/practice discussion. However, the role of the Buddhist teacher is different from that of the psychotherapist, and dokusan/practice discussion is not psychotherapy.

The psychotherapist focuses on the psychological and behavioral conflicts of the person. Buddhist teachers, in contrast, teach the Dharma. While Buddhist teachers try to practice skillful means compassionately, they are not necessarily trained psychotherapists and, even if they are, will not necessarily act as psychotherapists would.

If you are feeling emotionally vulnerable at a dokusan/practice discussion, it is helpful to say this directly; if you are in a particularly fragile or pained emotional state, you should consider obtaining psychological help in addition to, or sometimes even instead of, dokusan/practice discussion.

Planned Giving Brochure Now Out

Many thanks to BZC member Michael Adcock, for his artistic eye and expertise in designing our "planned giving" brochure which lays out options for planned giving to Berkeley Zen Center. As we enter a different chapter in its growth and financial need of BZC, there are ways we can ensure the ongoing health and well being of our teachers, Sangha, and structures. Some of the options available to donors include the following:

- *Make a tax-deductible gift of property, securities, retirement plans or annual donations;
- *Create an endowment or cash grant from a foundation;
- *Make a bequest;
- *Name BZC as a beneficiary for your retirement fund or life insurance policy;
- *Establish trusts or annuities.

Some of the upcoming projects which need support are a new roof for the zendo, digitalization of all lectures, solar conversion, and an endowment fund to support our abbot and teachers in the future. If you didn't receive it in a recent mailing, please call Office Manager John Mogyey at 649-7724, Zendo Manager Andrea Thach at 420-0902, or John Rubin at 339-7068.

Notes from the Office Manager

New contact information will now not be listed in the newsletter unless specifically requested. The newsletter is put on the BZC website and is indexed by search engines. Therefore you should be aware that any contact information in the newsletter is out there for all. Please check the printout of contact information in the kitchen. Please make any changes you want on the printout for the 2007 directory.

When writing checks to BZC please fill out the memo section. Often I have to try to reach people or guess to know what the check is for. And lastly regarding checks, if you are attending sesshin, please add a reminder in your to do list to bring a check, just as you remember to bring your bowls and robe. There was an especially large number of people who forgot checks for the November 18 sitting.

SAVE THE DATES

Kanzeon Sitting

The next Kanzeon sitting will be on Sunday, January 7, 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 a good 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 you 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. Sign up on the bulletin board as usual.

Japan Trip Presentation

On Saturday, January 6, following her Dharma talk in the zendo, Grace Shireson will host a presentation, potluck get together, and video showing in the community room on the subject of her recently completed Japan tour group. All interested sangha members and participants in the trip to Japan are invited to attend.



The Japan tour group visit one of many Soto and Rinzai temples in Japan. (Photo by Colleen Busch)

Path of the Bodhisattva

All BZC sanha members are invited to attend the next Path of the Bodhisattva event to be held December 14, 6:30 p.m., in the BZC community room. It will feature a report to the sangha from participants in the recent Election Sesshin held in Stockton. They will discuss their experiences and the joys and pitfalls of participating in election politics from the perspective of an engaged Buddhist. The evening also features a slide show presentation of photographs of the sesshin by sangha member Ko Blix.

Potluck with Mary Mocine

Our own Mary Mocine just completed her Dendokyoshi training and Haito recognition ceremonies in Japan. We're hosting an informal potluck with her during our winter interim, to hear about her adventures on Tuesday, December 19 at 5:30 pm.

Board of Directors Meeting

The next BZC Board of Directors meeting is Sunday, December 10, 9:00 am, in the community room. All sangha members are invited to attend.

February Class

Alan Senauke will teach a four week class on a fascile from Dogen's Shobogenzo, Bodhisatta-Shishobo (The Bodhisattva's Four Embracing Actions). The class will take place on four consecutive Thursday evenings beginning February 15. Details will be in next month's newsletter.



**Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA. 94703**