



# Berkeley Zen Center



## January 2007 Newsletter

### Changes in our Zendo

By Andrea Thatch, BZC Zendo Manager

This past year has seen several changes in our zendo such as the disappearance of kerosene lamps and the emergence of beautiful, ever-burning altar candles, the decision to remove incenses and replace them with offerings of small whole flowers, new liturgy with Maylie's Prayer for Peace on Wednesday evenings, and a more comprehensive listing of our women ancestral teachers. Over the holiday break we finished painting the zendo for the first time in almost a decade, a lovely "bone white", thanks to Sojun Roshi, Doug Greiner and Greg Denny.

#### Incense

The decision to remove incense from inside the zendo and other closed areas at BZC came as the result of many conversations over the years. Several people who practice at BZC have developed allergies to kerosene, fragrances, incense, and a variety of petroleum based products, and to other chemicals so much so that even low levels of exposure can cause headaches, breathing difficulties, rashes, mental confusion, and other neurological symptoms which can last for hours after zazen is finished.

Once sensitized, even very low levels can trigger a person's symptoms, and the effects are cumulative over time. After sitting by the altar for over 40 sesshin days, close to the smell of

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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 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

### February

#### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 2-1, 6:20 pm

Friday, 2-2, 6:40 pm

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2-3, 9:30 am

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2-4

#### Three-Day Sitting

Saturday-Monday, 2-17 to 2-19

#### Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2-17

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 2-24

**NOTE:** The BZC Newsletter invites all sangha members to submit short articles, poems, or other items of interest. Send to: [ehertzog@lmi.net](mailto: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](mailto:greg@techsperience.org).



### Childcare Schedule

January 6	Childcare
January 13	Childcare
January 20	Sesshin - no program
January 27	Kidzendo * * *
February 3	Childcare
February 10	Childcare
February 17	Sesshin – no program
February 24	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 pro-

## 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.

## Changes in the Zendo

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incense and kerosene oils, I became one of the people who could not have been able to continue to practice in the zendo if we continued to burn incense and kerosene oil. I, like some of you, grieve the absence of our traditional way of invoking Buddha's presence. I am grateful to Sojun for his deep compassion in making this change, and to those of you whom the loss of incense at service is particularly felt.

### Liturgy

In 2007 there are a few smaller projects in the offering for the zendo: corrected sutra books, doan and kokyo cards, and liturgy books and, this summer, a new roof to replace the one that was atop our temple when we moved here, nearly forty years ago.

As zendo manager, I also want to thank Shelley Brock and Carol Paul for their extraordinary care of the zendo this past year, and Katherine Ogburn, Lynne Hofmann and John Busch for their help with special projects.

### Keeping our Zendo Walls Clean

To keep our newly painted zendo walls clean, we ask that zendo goers sit upright and not place your fingers (prints) on the walls. This will help retain their mirror finish, thus clearly reflecting back to you your true self. Thank you very much.

## 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 and Sojun Mel Weitsman. After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.



## Newsletter Online

The newsletter is always available online on the BZC website. If you'd like to stop receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, you can sign up to receive an email when the latest newsletter has been posted by contacting BZC Office Manager, John Moge.

## 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**

## VOICES

And did you get what  
you wanted from this life, even so?  
I did.

And what did you want?  
To call myself beloved, to feel myself  
beloved on the earth.

--"Late Fragment"

by **Raymond Carver**

(submitted by John and Colleen Busch)

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You don't even need to leave your room,  
just sit at your table and wait.  
Don't even wait, just listen.  
Be quiet, be still, be solitary.  
The world will fully offer itself to you,  
to be unmasked, it has no choice.  
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

--by **Franz Kafka**

(submitted by Ross Blum)

## PEOPLE

A deep bow to Co-Sesshin Director **Bob Rosenbaum**, who is leaving this position. Thank you, Bob, for your warm and wise shepherding of our sesshin practice. **Leslie Bartholic** will continue as Sesshin Director for another year. And gasshos to **Perry Goodwin and Paul Winnacker** – Perry is finishing as Community Room attendant, and Paul is just beginning.

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Belated gasshos to **Mark Ray**, outgoing Head Resident. Mark has left the BZC residency and moved into the Mayeno home in north Berkeley.. We thank him for having served as head resident, overseeing the Saturday dishwashing crew, and serenading us at numerous practice period skit nights! We'll no doubt see him in '07 and he can still be reached at his old phone number at his new locale. Who said things change? **Ross Blum**, who is stepping up for another stint in this position, is closing in on 20 years at BZC.

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In other belatedly reported transitions, BZC resident **Melinda Meyer** has moved out of BZC to pursue her livelihood interests but she remains in Berkeley and no doubt we'll see her again in this dharma realm. Newlyweds **Lauren Wholey** and **Eric Greene** have moved out to establish their life outside the gate. In between academia and career explorations, we hope to see them as well.

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Welcome to new BZC member **Mildred Lowther**, who had been a friend, and to new BZC friend **Rhea Loudon**.

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**Directory reminder:** please make note of all changes for the 2007 directory on the sheets in the Community Room or by contacting Office Manager, **John Moge** (510-649-7724 or jmo-gey@comcast.net).



# The Form of Our Life by Sojun Roshi

## *From a talk to the Chapel Hill Zen Group, 1995*

**A**t the end of a recent sesshin, a student said, "You know, if we didn't have all that formality in the zendo, there wouldn't be anything to this at all. It's like the emperor's clothes." From one point of view that statement looks like a very accurate statement.

Although we talk about the form of Zen, there is no special form. Since Zen is nothing more than



the practice of our life, it follows that whatever forms our life takes can be the forms of practice. Even though that is so, it

doesn't mean that we are always aware of them as such. So our predecessors developed certain recognizable forms like zazen, bowing, and chanting, and holding our hands this way and our bowls this way. And when we enter into these forms, we can recognize practice. We can see it because it has a shape. So we call it formal practice and we can use it day after day and find our way in it. We can touch it, embrace it. But because formal practice presents such a contrast to ordinary worldly life, it's sometimes hard to know how to bring forth the mind of practice within the forms of everyday life. How can we do zazen all day without crossing our legs?

In a lay community we are always concerned with how to initiate practice using the forms that are at hand. How can we use the common forms we encounter in our ordinary lives at work, within our family, and amidst the myriad complications of present day life? Our complete life of practice is to merge the spirit of formal practice with the forms of the dynamically changing world. Once I suggested to a student that she sit zazen in a chair because she was having trouble sitting on the floor. But she didn't want to do it because doing so she would feel compromised. A common complaint is that it's hard to find time for zazen in our busy lives. But if we know how to sit zazen in a chair, we can do it anywhere, especially since we spend so

much time in chairs. Our postures are indicative of our attitudes and states of mind. Standing in line at a Safeway checkstand, grumbling about how slowly the line is moving, I give up, shift my weight evenly to both feet, adjust my posture and, following my breath, return to myself. Sitting in the car waiting for the signal to change, I sit up straight, let go of my grip on the wheel, put my hands in my lap and, taking a few deep breaths, return to zero.



Simple awareness of posture and centering within each activity is a fundamental mindfulness practice. And if actualized in the most common, everyday situations, it can be the basis of a calm foundation of mind. The way we move within time is a kind of dance. We are always keeping time within one rhythm or another.

Music, of course, is exemplary. One reason we love music so much is that it's so complete and it always comes out right. The notes harmonize with one another in time to make a beautiful, complete, ideal statement; not like our daily life where the rhythms are more subtle or hard to find or are constantly being interrupted or changed in ways that aren't so easy to handle. In music, as in our dance of life, if we get ahead of time or behind, we have a problem.

One remarkable example of Suzuki Roshi's life was that he never seemed to be in a hurry. No matter how much pressure he was under, I don't remember ever seeing him in a hurry. I don't mean to imply that he was a perfect person. He was always the first to acknowledge his faults, which is one reason why we trusted him. But he had a way of not wasting time. He seemed to be settled in time almost casually, never ahead or behind. In his quiet way, fully filling each moment, he appeared to be tapped into some fundamental rhythm which was independent of circumstances, yet totally one with them.

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# The Form of Our Life by Sojun Roshi

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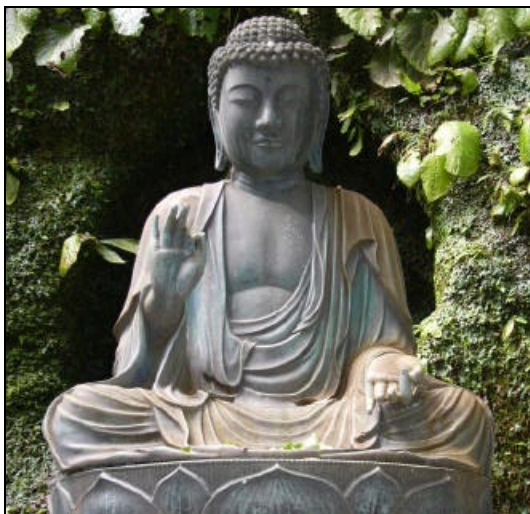
The tempo of monastic practice, with its constantly changing rhythms, is somewhat relentless. Throughout the day one must let go of the present activity and take on the next one. It's not hard if you allow yourself to adjust to the changes. But if you don't, then you become your own obstacle. Monastic practice helps us maintain a life of non-attachment in the present, but



there are not as many variables in that practice as there are in our city life. For instance, how do you keep a calm mind when

there are demands from too many sources at once? How do we keep our composure in the face of the world's atrocities without being overwhelmed?

There can be many ways to deal with these questions, but we should allow ourselves the opportunity to bring forth a response based on a mind of equanimity. Our zendo practice can give us a way of being in touch with our fundamental self, but the practice must find its completion in our everyday activity of "drawing water and carrying wood." Dogen Zenji says that Genjokoan is zazen as it is extended into our life. The opposite is also not only true but necessary. It is our daily life as extended back into zazen. When I make a real continuous effort outside of the zendo, my practice in the zendo becomes stronger and more vital.



*Photo taken in the cemetery at Tokeiji Temple in Kita Kamakura. by Colleen Busch.*

## Prayer For Peace

by Maylie Scott

*(chanted every Wednesday afternoon in the BZC zendo following pm zazen)*

May I be well, loving, and peaceful. May all beings be well, loving, and peaceful.

May I be at ease in my body, feeling the ground beneath my seat and feet, letting my back be long and straight, enjoying breath as it rises and falls and rises.

May I know and be intimate with body mind, whatever its feeling or mood, calm or agitated, tired or energetic, irritated or friendly. Breathing in and out, in and out, aware, moment by moment, of the risings and passings.

May I be attentive and gentle towards my own discomfort and sufferings. May I be attentive and grateful for my own joy and well being.

May I move towards others freely and with openness. May I receive others with sympathy and understanding. May I move towards the suffering of others with peaceful and attentive confidence.

May I recall the bodhisattva of compassion; her 1,000 hands, her instant readiness for action. Each hand with an eye in it--the instinctive knowing what to do.

May I continually cultivate the ground of peace for myself and others and persist, mindful and dedicated to this work, independent of results.

May I know that my peace and the world's peace are not separate; that our peace in the world is a result of our work for justice. May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.



## February Class on Dogen's Bodhisattva's Four Actions

**H**ozan Alan Senauke will teach a four week class on a fascile from Dogen's Shobogenzo, Bodaisatta-Shishobo (The Bodhisattva's Four Embracing Actions). The class will take place on four consecutive Thursday evenings beginning February 15. The following is an excerpted interview between class coordinator Ron Nestor and Alan about the class. A copy of the complete discussion will be available at the patio bulletin board in mid-January.

*Ron: Bodaisatta Shishobo or The Bodhisattva's Four Embracing Actions is a chapter from Dogen's Shobogenzo which you worked with Shohaku Okamura to translate. Why do you think this chapter would be interesting and helpful for us to study?*

Alan: First of all because it contains very concrete practices of how to be a bodhisattva. You know the practice of giving and beneficial speech, beneficial action, and identity action? These point to very particular ways to live in the world, in the wider world. It also strikes me that this is an unusually social teaching for Dogen. It discusses his views on society, which I think is useful for us as lay people who are living and working in the world, and who have to deal with a troubled world with all the large and small conflicts we face.

*Ron: Shishobo is based on earlier Buddhist formulations, both Theravada and Mahayana. How does Dogen shift from the earlier versions?*

Alan: I don't think that the interpretation is that different. It's certainly in character for Dogen in his poetic and non-dual language. The most radical re-interpretation is of the fourth action which he translates as identity action. That's a different twist on it than any of the other versions I've seen. You can see how that would be something like cooperation, but in identity action we share or co-create identity, that's what it means. We co-create the world. So cooperation is a little weak. That's the little piece of it where he actu-

ally goes into I think a more Confucian kind of interpretation about the relationship between society and king or leader and how they have to mutually support or mutually create each other. You could take that as a social metaphor. You can also take it as a metaphor for how one relates to the various elements of one's own body or the sentient beings of our mind. How they have to work together in order to create a harmonious unity.

*Ron: What was it like for you to work with Shohaku Okamura on the translation?*

Alan: It was really fun to work on this as meticulously and slowly as we wanted. Okamura Roshi has been teaching on this in the last couple of years and I get a lot from his commentary.

### **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; or 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 Moge, 649-7724; Zendo Manager Andrea Thach, 420-0902, or John Rubin, 339-7068.

# SAVE THE DATES

## ***One Day Sitting with Okamura Roshi***

On January 20, we will have a special study sesshin with Shohaku Okamura Roshi. The schedule will be 5 am to 9:15 pm, and will include a lecture and afternoon teaching period with Okamura Roshi. He will continue with the teaching he began last year by talking about some of Ryokan's poems in the Great Fool. The fee will be \$40 for members and friends, and \$45 for non-members. Scholarships are available. Please check the bulletin board for the sesshin sign-up and more information. If you have questions, call the sesshin director, Leslie Bartholic, at 925-933-3486, before 9 pm.

## **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](mailto: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.

## **Lotus in the Fire: Turning Toward Sickness, Old Age and Death.**

On Saturday, February 3, from 1:00-3:30 pm in the BZC community room, Jennifer Block from Zen Hospice Center and Tova Green from Green Gulch will join us in discussion of how to make an advanced directive for healthcare. The workshop is free to members and friends and by donation to non-members.

Advanced directives allow a person to make a variety of statements of how they would want to be cared for in the event of serious illness and in the dying process. Jennifer and Tova use the model of the Five Wishes for Health Wishes, a document developed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that has been modified for Zen practitioners.

The concept of palliative care invites discussion about values and quality of life affecting health decisions not just at the end of life but throughout ones' life. It is also a tool for people to have dialogue with their care providers about how they want to make decisions about their care. No one is too young or too healthy to begin this discussion. This information can be helpful to support family and friends facing serious illness and who need to make their own decisions.

You can preview the Five Wishes at [www.agingwithdignity.org/5wishes.html](http://www.agingwithdignity.org/5wishes.html). There will be copies of the modified version available at the workshop. If you have questions or would like to talk more about advanced directives, contact Andrea Thach at 420-0902 or [andrea.thach@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.thach@gmail.com)

## **Board of Directors Meeting**

The next BZC Board of Directors meeting is Sunday, January 28, 9:00 am, in the community room. All sangha members are invited to attend.



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