



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2007 Newsletter

Spring Practice Period Begins

Our annual spring practice period begins with a one-day sesshin on Saturday, May 12 and lasts through the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 24. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations "outside the gate".

Meikyo Onza Bob Rosenbaum (Clear Mirror Peaceful Sitting) will be the Shuso, or head student this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. Kogen Yudo John Moge (Constant Presence Courageous Path) will be serving as Benji. The theme for this practice period and the subject for Sojun Roshi's five-week class will be "Exploring the Meaning of Buddhist Faith" – The main text will be "Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment" by Sung Bae Park. Availability of this text will be revealed at the first class if not before.

Practice Period Events

Shuso Entering/PP Opening Ceremony,
May 12, about 11 am
Shuso talks: May 14 and 26, June 1 and 9
Classes: Thursday evenings, May 17-June 14
Bansan: May 18
Work Day Sitting: May 20
Dinner and Skit night, June 2, 6:00 pm
Shosan: June 8 and 18
Lay Ordination: June 16
Five-day Sesshin: June 20-24
Shuso Hossen, June 24



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

May

All Sangha Potluck
Thursday, 5-3

Founder's Ceremony
Thursday, 5-3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 5-4, 6:40 am

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

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 5-6

New Member Entering Ceremony
Monday, 5-7

**One-Day Sitting/
Open Practice Period**

Saturday, 5-12

Work Day Sitting
Sunday, 5-20

Kidzendo
Saturday, 5-26

June

Practice Period Dinner
Saturday, 6-2

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6-2 and 6-30, 9:30 am

Founder's Ceremony
Monday, 6-4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 6-5, 6:40 am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 6-10

Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo
Saturday, 6-16

Kidzendo
Saturday, 6-16

**Five-Day Sitting
End Practice Period**

Weds-Sunday, 6-20 to 6-24

Shuso Hossen
Sunday, 6-24

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

May 5	Childcare
May 12	Sesshin – no program
May 19	Childcare
May 26	Kidzendo with Susho, note date change * * *
June 2	Childcare
June 9	Childcare
June 16	Kidzendo
June 23	Sesshin – no program
June 30	Childcare

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.

Notes from the Office Manager

There is still a problem of people forgetting to pay for sesshins. As you pack up your bowls, rakasus, and work clothes, remember to pack up a check too.



Women's Retreat Features Buddhist Scholar

The Second Annual Women's Retreat will be held August 2-7 at Empty Nest Zendo in North Fork, CA. This year's program will feature several independent female Zen Dharma heirs in collaborative teachings with honored Buddhist scholar and translator Miriam Levering.

Attendees will enjoy the friendship of other women practitioners, practice zazen, receive Zen trainings from several women Zen Dharma heirs, and hear teachings on female Zen ancestors in an intimate setting that will make time for swimming and relaxing. Kenpo Darlene Cohen, Sensei, has promised to lead a meditation during synchronized swimming ala Esther Williams!

Professor Miriam Levering, a pioneer in the study and translation of female Chinese ancestors, will be joining the retreat. A professor at the University of Tennessee, Miriam Levering has spoken at many Zen centers and Dharma conferences. She is currently working on newly translated Zen teaching poems of important women Chinese Zen Masters. During the retreat she will be receiving the precepts from Myoan Grace Schireson and a rakusu sewn in gratitude by the women of BZC. For more information on Professor Levering see <http://web.utk.edu/~religion/people/levering.html>

Other Zen Dharma Teachers present at the retreat include Angie Boissevain, Kobun Chino Dharma heir and accomplished poet; Darlene Cohen, Suzuki Roshi Dharma heir and recognized leader in body-friendly zazen; Grace Schireson, Suzuki Roshi Dharma heir and female Zen ancestors researcher; and Mary Mocine, Suzuki Roshi Dharma heir and teacher for the Vallejo Zen Center.

There will also be hiking, swimming, barbecues and time to relax. Accommodation is camping style, shared or private rooms, depending on preference and availability. Spouses are invited as required for childcare and as space allows. Retreat fees - \$40/day. Accommodations - \$30/night room, \$10/night tent space. For more information or to register, contact Retreat Director Baika Andrea Pratt: baika2@gmail.com.

Mind Refresher Cakes

Sojun Talk, BZC, June 21, 1989

The following story revolves around Dao-wu, Lung-tan, a sagely woman whose name we don't know, and Deshan. These are their Chinese names. This story took place in China during the tang dynasty. The Japanese



pronunciations are: Dogo for Dao-wu, Ryutan for Lung-tan, and Tokosan for Deshan. The older translations used the

Japanese pronunciations, but in the last few years, the translators have been using Chinese pronunciations, so it can be confusing and difficult to keep the names straight. I want to first tell a story about Dao-wu and his student Lung-tan, and then about Lung-tan and his student Deshan.

Dao-wu was a master during the ninth century in China. He had a student, Lung-tan as young boy, and recognized something extraordinary about him, perhaps his seriousness and his affinity for the dharma. Dao-wu took an interest in him, and invited his family to live in a house that belonged to the monastery. The family was poor, and making little cakes for a living was the family business. These little cakes were called "mind refreshers," as they may still be today.

So out of gratitude for what Dao-wu did for the family, and for his interest in Lung-tan, his mother, would send over 10 little cakes with Lung-tan every day for Dao-wu. When Dao-wu received the cakes, he would bow and thank him and give one back, saying, "This is for your posterity." One day Lung-tan said to himself, "I wonder if there is some hidden meaning when Dao-wu gives me back one little cake every day and says, 'This is for your posterity.' I think I'll ask him about it."

So he asked Dao-wu about it, and Dao-wu said, "Is there anything wrong with me giving back to you that which is originally yours?" At that point, Lung-tan had a very nice understanding. He understood his teacher's intention. So he became Dao-wu's disciple and when old enough, became a monk. In China in those

days, it was not uncommon for young boys to become novices—they couldn't be ordained until they were 18 or 20, but they could live in the temple and practice, and then when they got older they'd become ordained. As a matter of fact, Dao-wu, when he was 14, wanted to become a monk, which his parents didn't want him to do, and so he stopped eating until they let him go.



One day Lung-tan thought to himself, "I've been studying with Dao-wu for quite a long time, but he's never really taught me anything. It's strange. I think I'll ask him about it." So he went to Dao-wu, and said, "I've been here in the monastery for a pretty long time, but I've never received any teaching from you." Dao-wu looked very surprised and said, "I've been giving you the fundamental teaching ceaselessly ever since you arrived." Lung-tan said, "On what points have you been teaching me?" Dao-wu said "When you serve me tea, don't I gratefully accept it and drink it? When you serve me food, don't I take it carefully from your hands and eat it? And when you bow to me, don't I lower my head and bow in response to you? On what points have I failed to show you the essence of mind?" At that point Lung-tan had a very deep realization about his own mind and his teacher's mind, and the fundamental way.

Later, when Lung-tan grew up and became a teacher in his own right, he had his own monastery, and became rather well known. As a matter of fact, he was known as "Well-known Lung-tan." There was a Vinaya monk named Deshan who was very learned in the Diamond Sutra. He was not a Zen monk, and, as a matter of fact, he had a big resentment against Zen teachers, because the Zen teachers were teaching sudden enlightenment, and the fact that one could have realization in one lifetime, whereas the old way of thinking was that it took many lifetimes of bone crushing effort to become enlightened. What were these Zen monks doing,

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Mind Refresher Cakes

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talking about going beyond the sutras and directly seeing into one's own nature and purposely misleading people? He was a powerful and dynamic kind of person, who lectured on the Diamond Sutra. But his understanding was all academic. So one day Deshan packed up all his



commentaries on the Diamond Sutra, put them on his back, and set out to challenge the Zen world.

One day he stopped on the road at a little bakery. And inside the little bakery was this sagely woman. He saw that she had these little mind refresher cakes for sale. He thought, "Well, that's what I want. How much are they?" She looked him over and said, "What is that you're carrying on your back?" And he said, "These are my commentaries and the commentaries of famous commentators, on the Diamond

Sutra. I'm a famous lecturer on the Diamond Sutra myself," implying that if she wanted a lecture on the Diamond Sutra he could certainly give her one. She said, "Oh, that's very interesting. I'll tell you what—I want to ask you a question, and if you can answer my question, I will give you some mind refreshers. Otherwise, you can pay for them."

He said, "Fine. Ask me," and she said, "Well, in my understanding of the Diamond Sutra—" he didn't expect that—"it says, 'Past mind, future mind, and present mind cannot be grasped.' With what mind will you eat these mind refreshers?" He was completely stumped. He had come up against a wall. She pulled the rug right out from under him. He was embarrassed and dejected. (It occurred to me that maybe this was Lung-tan's mother. It seems to fit together. Lung-tan's mother living at the base of the mountain, and her son was living at the top of the mountain. It was still the family business.)



PEOPLE

Resident comings & goings and new beginnings for 1933A Russell Street. **Bhante Suhita Dharma**, who has been residing with us these past few months, has moved out to continue his important work bringing the dharma to the incarcerated. We wish him well and encourage anyone desiring to help with this work to contact him at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship office.

Please welcome new residents **Ellen Doudna and Catherine Cascade**. Ellen has practiced over the years at BZC, Green Gulch and Tassajara and returns to Russell Street. Catherine joins our residency having entered practice at Shasta Abbey and more recently was one of the pillars of the Arcata Zen Group. Alan ordained her as a priest in 2004.

BZC welcomes the following new members: **Sonia Gaemi, Karl Schoenberger, and Ellen Webb**.

We have a new grand webmaster, long time BZC member and web afficianado **Ko Blix**.

Please note, **Sojun** has a new web address: sojunmel@gmail.com

So she said to him, "Well, what are you doing, anyway? Where are you going?" He said, "I was looking for a Zen master so I could challenge him." She said, "Well, there is one, Lung-tan, who lives up on top of that mountain about five leagues from here. Why don't you go see him?" He said, "All right."

So he put his pack on his back and went up to see Lung-tan. "Lung-tan"—the characters for the name mean "Dragon Pond" like a deep pool, a very deep clear pool. Dragons are associated with water. Tigers live in the mountains or the forest. There is a saying "The tiger in the forest and the dragon in the water," this is their home.

So when Deshan met Lung-tan, he saw a very ordinary ordinary-looking man. He didn't have any special visibly masterful characteristics, perhaps he could be a peasant. Deshan was not very impressed and said, "This is the famous Lung-tan? I don't see any dragon pond." Lung-tan said, "What you see directly is Lung-tan." This was a bit of a hint: "What you see directly is Lung-tan." Because his mind was not free he wasn't able to see directly.

(to be continued)

SAVE THE DATES

Precious Gems: Summer Sutra Study

Beginning Thursday, July 12 and continuing for 4 consecutive weeks, we will offer a class of sutra study. At each class we'll recite and discuss an entire short sutra from the Pali Cannon, the original teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. Some of the themes will be karma, emptiness, and parables. Come to one meeting of the class or all to accommodate your summer vacation plans. Class will be led by Laurie Senauke; contact her with questions (lauries@kushiki.org); the fee is \$5 per class.

NOTE: Class begins at 7:15 pm.

All-Sangha Gathering

There will be an All-Sangha Gathering Thursday, May 3, at 6:30 pm in the community room. Following a potluck dinner, we gather in a circle and go once around, each person in turn briefly (one or two minutes) saying whatever he or she wants to say about BZC practice or anything else. The format then shifts to a general discussion where people can respond to any of the issues that have been raised.

Everyone is encouraged to attend. The food is tasty, the socializing fun, and the discussions lively and provocative. If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Ken Knabb -- knabb@bopsecrets.org / 527-0959.



August Women's Retreat

BZC member Elizabeth Flora joins with her dharma sisters chanting at the Women's Retreat last year at the Empty Nest Zendo in North Fork, CA. (more on Women's Retreat page 2).

BZC Campout Revived

On the weekend of July 7 and 8, we will have our first BZC campout for members, families, and friends in many years. The campout will be held at Gillespie Youth Camp in Tilden Park, a mere 20 minute drive from BZC, and a beautiful spot close to hiking trails. We usually start in the afternoon on Saturday, have a potluck dinner and then a campfire, wake up to birds singing, and a breakfast is provided. It's all over at noon. Folks can come just for the evening or just for the morning. Look for more details as we approach the dates. For more info, talk to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie Hopper (deagin@california.com).

May Work Day

Please plan to attend the "Work Day Sitting" on May 20, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Our practice place always needs care and attention, and many tasks are not suitable for sesshin work periods and Saturday mornings. This time we will be oiling the outside of the zendo, a task not suitable for sesshin work period. The bliss of the Sangha Jewel comes forth when we share our labor; many hands make light work, and lunch is provided. Come to all or part. See you there!

YIKES!

Please note – the calendar for ceremonies and events that is printed on the back of the 2007 directory is actually last year's. There are correct calendar cards on the bulletin board shelf. You may also refer to the calendars that were included in the December 2006 newsletter. The sesshin schedule printed on the back of the directory is correct.



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