



# Berkeley Zen Center



## July 2007 Newsletter

### Sojun Roshi

#### From a talk on May 1, 1992

*Baika: Could you say something about the importance of longer sittings or daylong sittings?*

**S**ojun: The term sesshin means something like, gathering or collecting the mind, or, embracing body and mind. We have one-day sittings, three-day sittings, five-day and seven-day sesshins. These periods of concentrated effort, give us an opportunity to deepen our zazen practice. One period of zazen is wonderful, but it's possible to go deeper. When we sit all day, by the time the day is over, we have reached a certain place where our body and mind are more unified and we are less bothered by distractions. In a longer sesshin, by the third day we have settled, and our composure is firmly established. The fourth day of a seven-day sesshin is the midpoint. By this time, there is a point when we notice that our resistances have mostly faded away, we are not so easily caught by our discriminating preferential desires and we have reached a place of unshakable stability. I can't guarantee that this will happen but we do have that opportunity. By the end of seven days, we are living fully on each moment. This is called Shikantaza; just doing. And even though we may still have difficulty there is a serene joy in the midst of that difficulty. Having let go of our discriminative thinking, we simply return to our original, undivided nature.

*continued on page 2*



#### 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 July

### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 7-1

### Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 7-3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 7-5, 6:40 am

### All Sangha Potluck

Thursday, 7-5

### BZC Campout

Saturday-Sunday, 7-7 to 7-8

### One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 7-14

### Vice Abbot Installation Ceremony

Monday, 7-16, 6:20 am

### Kidzendo

Saturday, 7-21

### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7-28, 9:30 am

### Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Friday-Sunday, 7-27 to 7-29

## August

### Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 8-2, 6:20 pm

Friday, 8-3, 6:40 am

### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 8-5

### Work Sesshin Day

Sunday, 8-12

### Kidzendo

Saturday, 8-18

## August Work Sesshin

Don't miss our annual August Work Sesshin on Sunday, August 12, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. There will be gardening, deep zendo and kitchen cleaning, special projects – in other words, something for everyone! Not only that, a delicious lunch will be served. Lots of fun, lots of merit, what's not to like? Come to all or part; sign up on the bulletin board.

## 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).

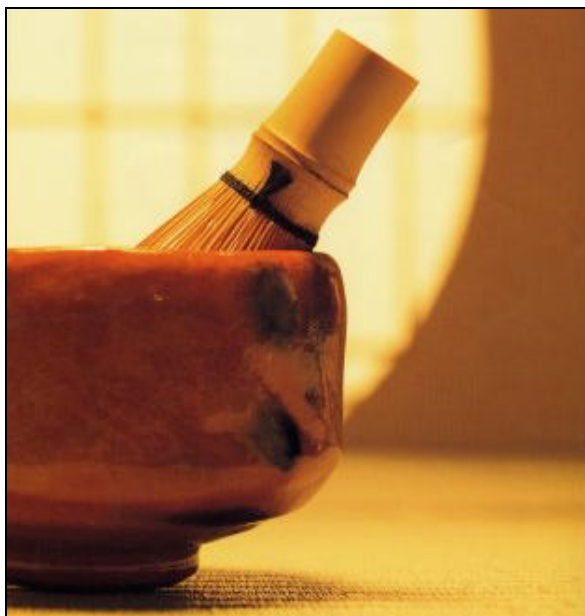


### Childcare Schedule

July 7	Childcare and campout!!
July 14	Sesshin – no program
July 21	Kidzendo
July 28	Childcare
August 4	Childcare
August 11	Childcare
August 18	Kidzendo
August 25	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.



## Sojun Talk

*continued from page 1*

The other side is, that there may be a tape loop going around in your head the whole seven days. But this is a practice of not just the mind but of the body as well, so even though our random thoughts are overflowing, the body and mind are sitting zazen without over reacting to these thoughts or feelings. It's not like our mind will always be settled in seven days or five days or whatever. But even though the mind may not feel completely settled, it tends to be more settled than we think. Sesshin can be likened to a glass of muddy water. You scoop a glassful out of a pond and it's muddy and murky, and when you let it sit, the mud settles down to the bottom, and the water becomes clear. Even after seven days there may be some flotsam and jetsam, but not to worry, because, just like a fish, we can't live without it.



Gravity is constantly pulling us toward the earth. And in order to allow our life to flourish, we have to release our spirit, which is dancing away from gravity. So we're constantly working with this tension between spirit reaching upward and gravity pulling us down. Our whole life is constructed around these two forces of nature. When we sit zazen, this is what we're working with moment by moment. During zazen we center ourselves on the midpoint between birth and death. It is the full function and harmony of body/mind and breath, and we feel fully alive. So how do we do this sitting dance, the dance of dynamic activity within stillness, and stillness within activity? It's there in everything we do.

The way we lift our arm, the way we eat our food, the way we think, the way we relate. Sesshin gives us this unique opportunity, and is an integral part of our practice. We are always intimidated by it, especially when we first begin to practice. When someone asks me how to approach it, I often say to not think about it at all. When the time arrives just take that step, be totally present, and don't think ahead for seven days. Hung-chih's verse says it well: "When by the side of the ancient ferry  
The breeze and moonlight are cool and pure  
The dark vessel turns into a glowing world."

# PEOPLE

## Joyous Travels, Jack

We mourn and honor BZC Friend **Jack Van Allen**, who passed away peacefully on Tuesday, June 19, after living skillfully with MS for several years. BZC members visited Jack in his final days – Sojun Roshi, Alan and Laurie Senauke, and Mary Mocine. Mary was there when Jack died, and helped Jack's wife, Ellen, wash the body and array it in the garments of a traveling monk. Alan performed the cremation ceremony the following Friday, and a memorial service was also held at BZC.

Jack was lay ordained by Sojun Roshi in 1984, receiving the name Hozo Sanyo Hidden Treasure, Mountain Form. He was a bit of a gadabout in Bay Area Buddhism, studying with several different teachers over the years. This spring, as his health was failing, he was re-ordained by Genpo Merzel Roshi in a joyful and well-attended ceremony in Salt Lake City.

Jack started sitting at Sokoji Temple in 1967 and his wedding to Ellen in 1968 was officiated by Suzuki Roshi. He was involved in the psychedelic San Francisco scene, and Suzuki Roshi mentioned at the wedding that it was very possible to attain enlightenment if you give up drugs!

Jack was a wonderful sculptor and jeweler; he designed and produced many of the small Jizo statues and other icons you find around BZC and the wider Buddhist arena, as well as a variety of wedding rings, belt buckles and jewelry adorning many beings in this Saha world.

Jack is survived by his wife Ellen, his children Michael and Lea, and four grandchildren - Michael's Haley (8) and Kelsey (6) and Lea's Devin (2) and Elizabeth (6 mo.), as well as a half-sister, Dotty Frinfrock, whose existence Jack just discovered in recent years. You can learn more about Jack at David Chadwick's website: [http://www.cuke.com/sangha\\_news/jackvanallen-memorial.html](http://www.cuke.com/sangha_news/jackvanallen-memorial.html)



The above seals were carved by Jack Van Allen for Alan Senauke.  
**Top--Hozan. Bottom--Kushiki**

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Heartfelt thanks to many, many sangha members who put their shoulders to the wheel at our Work Day on May 20, and especially to our fearless crew leaders **Mary Duryee, Ron Nestor, Greg Denny, Tamar Enoch, and Peter Carpentieri**. Much oiling, gardening, and cleaning were done. And sincere apologies to those who were driven away from zazen by the lingering fumes of linseed oil!

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Nine bows to **Linda Hess** for her stint as Saturday Director; we appreciate her solid long-time practice. Taking over for her is retiring Head Chiden, **Carol Paul**. Welcome Carol!

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Another nine bows to **Charlie Wilson** for tending to the dokusan hut this last year. Taking over for him is **Colleen Busch**.

# SAVE THE DATES

## **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 is held at Gillespie Youth Camp in Tilden Park, a mere 20 minute drive from BZC, and is a beautiful spot close to hiking trails. We'll start at 4 pm 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 on Sunday. \$10 - \$20 per person sliding scale.

Sign up on the main bulletin board. People who sign up will receive a map, a parking permit, and the all important secret combination number. To borrow camping equipment or more info, talk to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie Hopper (deagin@california.com). If you're not a camper, join us for the potluck dinner, around 6 pm and indicate this on the sign up sheet.

## **Women's Council To Meet**

The BZC Women's Council will have its quarterly meeting on Sunday, July 15 from 12:30-2:30 pm at the home of Sue Oehser. The meeting will include a vegetarian potluck lunch, and plenty of time to socialize and discuss important issues about our Sangha Practice.

At our last meeting in early March most of the women present felt that building relationships with our Sangha sisters was the highest priority. It was also important to find time to discuss particular issues we face as Buddhist practitioners at home and in the world, as well as participating in formal and often intensive practice as part of the Berkeley Zen Center Sangha. We saw ourselves practicing as mothers, daughters, partners, workers, laypersons, priests, caretakers, students, artists and more. This meeting is open to all BZC women and we encourage you to join us in this evolving discussion. Please contact Karen Sundheim for more information: ksundheim@gmail.com

## **Summer Sutra Study**

Laurie Senauke will teach a four-week sutra class beginning Thursday, July 12, 7:15-8:45 each Thursday evening. Cost is \$5.00 per class; come to one or all. Each evening, we'll recite and discuss an entire sutra.

Sutras vary widely in style and content. There are detailed conceptual frameworks, and also similes, parables and even the supernatural. The Buddha's response varies according to circumstances. Often he responds to questions people bring, and at the end of the sutra, the person has woken up; in that way they resonate with koans and Zen literature, more than we usually think. Even though they seem dualistic – he speaks constantly about wholesome and unwholesome thoughts, words and actions—the more we study, the more we realize that underlying these teachings is a very non-dual mind.

### **Class Schedule**

July 12 – The Shorter Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint (MN 27)

July 19 – Two short sutras on karma: SN 36.21 & SN 42.8

July 26 – The Anthill (MN 23)

August 2 – To be announced

## **BZC 40th B'Day**

Mark your calendars now for BZC's 40th Anniversary gala event on Saturday evening, October 6. This momentous occasion will be held at the Greek Orthodox Church in Oakland. The celebration will include live music, reminiscent remarks from friends and members, fine dining, and a silent auction. This is a wonderful opportunity to socialize with both new and former BZC friends and members. Over the past 40 years, BZC has grown and evolved into a place to receive the Dharma and to bring forth practice in our everyday lives. This will be a special evening to stop and reflect upon all that has transpired over these many years. Event details will follow in subsequent newsletters. Don't forget, mark your calendars now!



Following Zaike Tokudo last month, our new ordinees gather with their teachers: Hozan Alan Senauke, Vice-Abbot; Bud Bliss, Jim Tomlinson, Courtney Gonzalez, Jean Selkirk, sewing teacher; Sojun Mel Weitsman, Abbot; Kanako Harada, Jesy Goldhammer, and Max Erdstein.

## forms

**Zabuton**--when positioning your zabuton for service please do so with your hands, not your feet.

**Sutra Book**--please lay your sutra book on your zabuton, not on the floor.

**Walking (the walk) Practice**--the journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step! When walking please be aware of what's under your feet. In preparing for service in the zendo, please don't walk on other people's zabutons but on the exposed wood in between. You might envision that wood as "stepping stones" on a garden path. In an effort to walk silently, meet the floor by avoiding your heels. This will also slow you down and aid in your assuming the atmosphere of the space.

Please refrain from walking on the meal boards. The meal board is the plank directly between you and the zafu you bow to when taking a seat for zazen. Thanks. *(Submitted by Ross Blum)*

### Special Group Sewing Project

If you are interested in helping to sew the ceremonial, nine-panel okesa for Mary Mocine's teacher inviting ceremony at Clear Water Zendo in Vallejo, there will be a sign-up sheet on the porch bulletin board by mid-July.

You do not need to have sewn before to participate-instruction will be available.

## Lay Ordination

On Saturday, June 16 six members of the BZC sangha received lay ordination (Zaike Tokudo). This ceremony takes place once a year and is an important and significant ceremony for each participant, as well as for the whole sangha. We have the feeling that we are all participating, witnessing as the ordinees receive Buddha's Precepts, and welcoming the ordinees into the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha. Congratulations to all!

### Sojun Roshi's Students

Bud Bliss, Jundo Ankyo, Pure-hearted Way Blissful Dwelling;

Courtney Gonzalez, Kisen Shoka, Shining Spring Life-force Blossom;

Jim Tomlinson, Onki Neusan, Calm Energy Mindful Practice;

Max Erdstein, Hen Wa Josan, Universal Harmony Stable Mountain;

Kanako Harada, Gentoku Kago, Field (of) Virtue Divine Protection.

### Hozan Alan Senauke's Student

Jesy Goldhammer, Soka Myogen, Azure River Wondrous/Subtle Source

## Caring for Buddha's Robe

If you need assistance (or simply time and space) with rakusu/okesa/robe repairs, replacement, or finishing already started rakusu, the following dates are on the calendar. Each session is from 1-5 pm. Please contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk (510-655-0820), before you attend the first time. Any changes to the schedule will be made on the bulletin board.

Material fees only apply for envelopes or new (second or replacement) rakusu, and the usual class fee applies for new rakusu, which must be started by the end of August.

Starting first rakusu for Lay Ordination will begin in January as usual. If you are considering this, please speak with your teacher and then also speak with the sewing teacher before the winter break begins.

### Sewing Schedule

August 11 and 26; September 15 and 30; October 13 and 28; and November 10 and 18.

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