



Berkeley Zen Center



February 2008 Newsletter

All Sangha Potluck and Budget Meeting

On Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 pm, we will come together as a sangha to hear a report from our Treasurer and discuss and approve the BZC budget for 2008. Bring a dish to share (sign up on the bulletin board for food and clean up).

Workshop With Santikaro: Applications of Mindfulness & Enneagram Type Habits

On Sunday, March 2, 9 am-4 pm, Santikaro will visit BZC again to explore the overlap between Buddhist practice and the Enneagram. This time, we will look into the four Satipatthana and how our type habits influence mindfulness of body (sensations, movements, and breathing), feelings (pleasant, painful, and neutral), and mind (thoughts, emotions, and imaginings). In particular, we will explore the question: "How do we distract?" Santikaro will give instructions from the Buddha-Dhamma and Enneagram perspectives; there should be ample time for discussion and sharing. Lunch will be bag lunch - bring your own, or purchase one from the Thai temple next door or the Berkeley Bowl. Cost is \$50, scholarships are available. **Prerequisite: know your type.** For more information, contact Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or lauries@kushiki.org.



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

February

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2-3

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 2-4, 6:40 pm

Tuesday, 2-5, 6:40 am

Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2-16

Three-Day Sitting

Saturday-Monday, 2-16 to 2-18

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2-23, 9:30 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 2-23

Communication Workshop

Saturday, 2-23, 1-5 pm

March

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 3-3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 3-4, 6:40 am

All Sangha Potluck

Tuesday, 3-4

Beginner's Sitting

Sunday, 3-9

Kidzendo

Saturday, 3-15

One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 3-22

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3-22, 9:30 am

Newsletter Online

The newsletter is available online with full color pictures 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.

PEOPLE

The precipitously announced Zendo Manager transition will actually take place March 1. Continue to contact **Andrea** for zendo manager needs, until **Leslie** and **Catherine** take over at that time.

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More changes: thanks to **Christy Calame** for tending the bathrooms. Taking over for her is **Mark Copithorne**. And thanks to **Colleen Busch** for taking care of the dokusan hut – **Naome Dragstedt** is taking over.

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Welcome new members **Deborah Good** and **Richard Beesen**. Deborah recently moved from Seattle and has been practicing with us since September. Richard was a long time member who had moved away and is now back. He was very instrumental in setting up our website a number of years ago.

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Feeling left out? There's lots to do around here. Let the coordinator, **Laurie Senauke**, know if you'd like a regular volunteer position.

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Dues reminders from the Office Manager **John Mogey**. A number of people seem to have changed their dues commitments. If you are one of them please let me know. Also if your plan is to pay other than monthly please let me know. The best way to contact me is by e-mail: jmogey@comcast.net.



Photo by Ross Blum

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

February 2	Childcare
February 9	Childcare
February 16	Sesshin – no program
February 23	Kidzendo
March 1	Childcare
March 8	Childcare
March 15	Kidzendo
March 22	Sesshin – no program
March 29	Childcare
April 5	Buddha's Birthday
April 12	Childcare
April 19	Kidzendo
April 26	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.



The Most Important Thing

By Sojun Mel Weitsman

The weekend of January 25-27, San Francisco Zen center held the first Tassajara Alumni Reunion for those who attended practice periods for the first 25 years. I have been asked to talk about, what is the most important thing I learned from my teacher, Suzuki Roshi? Therefore I thought I would take this opportunity to express some thoughts here.

Once, when asked, "What is the most important thing?" he said something like, "The most important thing is to keep asking, what is the most important thing." When I think about it, there are a number of fundamental, important things. Suzuki Roshi's actions were based on integrity, humility, honesty, commitment, faith, compassion, kindness, centeredness, resolve, generosity, patience, Samadhi, simplicity, prajna, and non-attachment to opinions or anything else. All of his enlightened actions and thoughts came forth from these qualities, to name but a few.

Without trying to do anything special, just being himself in his own calm, undramatic way, he touched all of those qualities in us, which stimulated our own practice. He said that all he had to give to us was his Zen Spirit. Although it seemed like he was teaching us something, in fact he was simply encouraging us to find our own way, our own practice.

There are several significant turning words that I remember. One time he, for no apparent reason, walked up to me and said, "Just being alive is enough." Then he turned around and walked away. Another time, when asked, "What is nirvana?" he said, "Seeing one thing through to the end." He said many wonderful and significant things to all of his students, which we each treasure, and for me these are most significant.

He pointed to zazen as our true teacher, and with wisdom and compassion, led us through that painful and blissful rite of passage to awaken with all beings.

36th Annual Memorial Service For Suzuki Roshi BZC, December 2, 2007

Dear Shunryu,

The picture people have of you gets distorted with the passage of time. Sometimes I am asked what you were like. One perception is that you were a fierce zen master with a big stick, like Deshan.

I have to tell them that you were more like Joshu with a golden tongue and a short stick. Your compassionate blows expressed your dharma; waking us up and bringing us to life. There was no wasted motion.

Your walk was light, easy and deliberate. Without trying to accomplish anything you accomplished everything, yet it could not happen without you.

In your quiet way you were like the radiant sun shining light in every direction.

Like the moon reflecting in the water.

You knew us better than we knew ourselves. You always looked into our heart and addressed our true nature.

You always treated us with the greatest respect, never as inferiors.

Just being yourself, you provided the inspiration and confidence that allowed us to believe that we could plant this seed on a rock and watch it take hold and flower.

Someone asked if I ever miss you.

I didn't know what to say.

It is said that you can't practice with a dead teacher. But, your truth is always with us as our touchstone, and I meet you face to face every day.

As it is said:

The blue mountain is the parent of the white cloud
The white cloud is the child of the blue mountain
All day long they depend on each other
Without being dependent on each other
The blue mountain is always the blue mountain
The white cloud is always the white cloud
Your disciple,

Hakuryu Sojun

The Character of Soup and the Soup of Character: Offering hindrances to evoke Bodhisattva spirit

by Raul Moncayo, Senior Student (continued)

The ordinary work of the Tenzo in a Zen center, within the dharma circle of practice, is different from the work of an ordinary cook or kitchen helper in the secular world. Within the secular world subject and object are seen as two rather than "not-two," and the object is only an object for small mind or self.

Dogen tells us to use the property and possessions of the community as carefully as we



would our own eyes. We treat objects as subjects and subjects as containing all objects and subjects. We do not make distinctions

between higher or lower rank people, people who have just begun practicing and those who have practiced for a long time, between priests and lay people. Between the tenzo and the kitchen assistants.

Sometimes the tenzo is a senior student; sometimes the tenzo assistant is the senior student. If the tenzo is the senior student, knowing what he/she may know, the tenzo sets the tone in the kitchen by involving the entire kitchen crew in cooking an enlightening meal for everybody. This involves organizing the work in the kitchen, assigning tasks as well as asking others about their opinion about the food, and not solely relying on his or her own understanding, however developed this may be. Conversely, if the senior student is the attendant to the tenzo, the senior student works diligently with the tenzo without any thoughts about his/her position or thinking about how the tenzo is doing things wrong or needs to be corrected, or attempting to show off his/her knowledge and experience when this is not being asked for or welcomed.



Uchiyama Roshi, in his commentary on the Tenzo Kyokun, complains about civil servants in Japan who treat the public as an object and are only interested in their ranks, perks, salary, and retirement. Bureaucrats or "egocrats" treat the public, or the community as an object for their convenience. Egocratic officials treat subordinates with contempt, preferring only to be the boss and issue orders. He contrasts this to his own begging practice where whatever he receives is based on the merits and virtues of his practice.

In the larger culture we grow up to believe that to be competent we have to be competitive. Competitiveness is put to work at the service of competence. However, Zen practice is not like this. In Zen practice our competence is precisely to do something effectively and kindly, without competitiveness or without a gaining idea. In competitiveness someone always wins and someone always loses but in Zen practice when we lose our separate small self we gain the Big self of all dharmas, and when we gain a small self we lose our true self in the process.

SAVE THE DATE

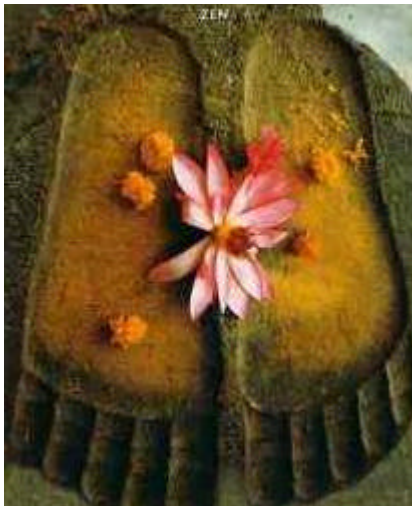
Communication Workshop

In response to many requests that we support development of more effective speech, Berkeley Zen Center will sponsor an introductory workshop in Non-Violent Communication (NVC) on **Saturday, February 23, 1:00-5:00 pm.**

This approach, developed by Marshall Rosenberg, focuses on how, in the present moment, we can hear and respond to others compassionately and honestly. The workshop will be led by John Kinyon, a certified NVC trainer, and co-founder of Bay NVC. All Berkeley Zen Center members and friends are invited. We have purchased several books and CD's for the library, as well as some other hand-out materials to provide an introduction to the basic concepts of NVC. You may also visit www.baynvc.org or www.cnvc.org for more background and information. If you wish to speak directly with someone about this, you may contact Peter Overton or Paul Ridgeway. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the bulletin board.

Beginner's Sesshin

On Sunday, March 9, from 9 am to 5 pm, BZC is offering a beginner's sesshin. This is a great introduction to sesshin practice and also suitable for old-timers. Details will be forthcoming. Sign up on the bulletin board.. Bob Rosenbaum will lead the sesshin; you may contact him for more information: brosenbaum1@mac.com



New Temple Cleaning (jikido) Procedure Continues!

All who come to sit morning zazen from Tuesday to Friday have the option to participate in our new jikido procedure. We have found over the last couple months that if four people come to the back of the zendo directly after service, we can complete a substantial amount of cleaning while still finishing up by 7 a.m.

Thanks to all who have participated in this new system so far, and a hearty invitation is extended to all morning sitters to consider participating in our joyous cleaning practice one morning per week. If you would like to participate in the cleaning of the zendo outside of weekday mornings, please write Jim Tomlinson at Tomlinson.jim@gmail.com for jikido project ideas.

VOICES

Wild Geese

by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your
body

love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Submitted by Ann Livingstone.



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