



Berkeley Zen Center



August 2008 Newsletter

August Work Sesshin

Don't miss our annual August Work Sesshin on Sunday, August 10, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. There will be gardening, deep zendo and kitchen cleaning, special projects - in other words, something for everyone! A delicious lunch will be served, and we will be able to actually TALK to each other! For more information, contact Ken Powelson (Powelson@earthlink.net) Be there!

New Time For Zazen Instruction

Weekly zazen instruction and beginner orientation now takes place from 8:45 to 9:30 am IN THE ZENDO. The Saturday schedule stays the same from 6 am through breakfast, but after that, the schedule is:

- 8:45 to 9:30 Work period for Saturday attendees
- 9:30 to 9:40 Set-up for next period of zazen
- 9:40 to 10:05 Zazen
- 10:05 to 10:15 Kinhin
- 10:15 to 11:15 Lecture

These changes come from an ongoing discussion in our community about how to most effectively provide zazen instruction and welcome people to BZC. Still, we regard these changes as something of an experiment: we plan to try this for six months and see how it works. We welcome your comments and suggestions during this trial period! To provide input, contact Bob Rosenbaum, Ron Nestor, Mary Duryee, or Karen Sundheim..



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

August Campout

Saturday-Sunday, 8-2 & 8-3

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 8-3, 8:00 am-12:00

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 8-4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 8-5, 6:40 am

Work Day Sitting

Sunday, 8-10

Kidzendo

Saturday, 8-16

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8-16, 9:30 am

Two-Day Study Sitting

Saturday-Sunday, 8-30 & 31

September

All Sangha Potluck/Board

Nominations

Saturday, 9-2, 6:30-pm

Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 9-3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 9-4, 6:40 am

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 9-7, 8:00 am-12:00

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 9-13, 9:30 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 9-20

Womens' Sitting

Sunday, 9-21

Date Change

The all-sangha potluck originally scheduled for October 16 has been moved to November 20.

BZC Tilden Park Campout

On the August 2-3 weekend, we'll have our annual BZC Campout for members, families, and friends. The campout will be in Tilden Park, a mere 20-minute drive from BZC, at a beautiful spot close to hiking trails. We'll start in the afternoon on Saturday, eat a potluck dinner and then a campfire, wake up to birds singing, and breakfast is provided. It's over at noon on Sunday. Cost is \$10 - \$20 per person sliding scale. Sign up on the main bulletin board. Campers will receive a map, 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 6:00 pm and indicate this on the sign up sheet. Or come for breakfast - the late great Dolly Gatozzi used to show up at breakfast with a thermos of Peet's coffee (hint, hint).

Coming of Age Dharma Group

If there is enough interest, BZC will offer a Coming of Age dharma study group for youth 10 to 12 years of age, beginning this fall. The group will likely meet once a month over two years, learning meditation and studying Buddhist precepts as they play out in our daily lives; further details will arise out of the needs of the group. Pass the word along to anyone you think might be interested. For more info or to let us know you want to participate, contact Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org) or Susan Marvin (lai_hang@yahoo.com)

Tending Our Altars

Chidens are those who care for the altars, trimming candles and arranging flowers. At BZC we have a rotation of chidens, who each take this on for a week a couple times a year. If you would like to join the rotation and help care for our beautiful altars, contact Anke Perkert (666-8890; anke_per@yahoo.com) to be trained for the next chiden rotation. This is a quiet, lovely way to support our zendo practice.

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

August 2	Childcare and Campout
August 9	Childcare
August 16	Kidzendo
August 23	Childcare
August 30	Childcare
September 6	Childcare
September 13	Childcare
September 20	Kidzendo
September 27	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 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.

Beginners' Sesshin For All

Add this to your 2008 BZC Calendar! We will offer another Beginners' Sesshin this fall on Sunday, October 5, from 9 am to 3:00 pm (this will take the place of the half-day sitting currently scheduled). This sesshin is an opportunity for practitioners new and old to invigorate beginners' mind. Though shorter than usual, the rhythm of sitting and practice will be similar to our regular schedule and will maintain the container of sesshin. The focus will be on the basics of our practice: zazen, kinhin, and bowing.

Notes from a Saturday Talk by Peter Overton, BZC Board President

Today's topic is, broadly speaking, about money, and while I wish to share some specific things about Berkeley Zen Center in this regard, as well as some personal reflections, I am hoping that most of our time together can be spent hearing from each other about how we see this part of our practice.

Suzuki Roshi commented on this topic in a 1970 lecture... "Money is not a symbol, but money expresses the value of things which change. If things are valuable because we can eat them or live on them, the flow of money should not stop. If money stops flowing, that causes a business depression. If money is going slowly all over our society then our society is healthy. So money purifies our world. It is not something dirty. It is very pure. It is a very important thing for us when we take care of it and respect it."

The actual nature of money is in some ways best described by two words appearing on every piece of currency, "we trust". Maybe this is taking something out of context, but it is true that without a basic level of trust between people, this form of exchange would cease to exist. As you know, the Board has been trying to work out how to find additional funds to fix our buildings and support our teachers. In the last 12 months, many people have contributed both immense time and energy, as well as significant amounts of money, to fix the zendo roof, and to initiate several other maintenance projects. We have also increased support to our Vice Abbot in this budget year. All of this seems to be what we want to do. But now we would really like to understand how everyone is relating to the choices we see before us, and we want to engage in these choices in a way that is consistent with our practice and with a recognition of how we live in an interdependent world.

I would like to pose two questions for your consideration:

1) How is it that something that is intrinsically based on trust can be the source of so much

pain and confusion? and;

2) How is it possible that something which stimulates such pain and suffering can be an opportunity for deeper understanding and connection between us?

I want to be honest and say that I do not have answers to these questions. I struggle with some fundamental confusion around money. Since it is my means of access to the resources on which I depend for survival (food, shelter etc), I can be triggered into doubt, anxiety and fear, thinking that I cannot depend on others, that I must look to my own needs, and so on. This all comes down to a belief in my existence as separate from others.

So in terms of our practice, this is where the rubber meets the road. The basic question for me is how to live a different view of how we are related, one that accepts that all of our deepest needs and wishes matter, and from there work out how we can take on the challenges we face together in ways that express the care and understanding which is alive in our zen practice.

What I have shared here doesn't begin to describe all the ways in which we use "money" to tie ourselves up in knots. But what I would like to hear is each other's reflections on this topic in a way which touches the heart of the matter for each of us. We are working on strategies for gathering needed financial resources, but for now I wish to hear your thoughts regarding the more fundamental questions raised here. Anyway, the solutions are really the easiest part.

A Gift: Repaving the Front Walk

Berkeley Zen Center has been offered a substantial gift from a Sangha Member consisting of repaving the front walk from the sidewalk to the brick patio in front of the zendo with a new brick surface. We are very pleased to receive this generous gift, which will serve as the initial focus of our ongoing capital campaign for 2008. A celebration is planned around the installation of this upgraded walk. Look for details coming soon.

Nyunanshin By Jean Ross

Jean Ross was a student of Suzuki Roshi in the early sixties. This talk was published in the April 1965 SFZC Wind Bell while she was participating in the practice at Eiheiiji Monastery that was founded by Dogen Zenji.

The serious student of Soto Zen Buddhism must display considerable commitment to his Zen Master, to Zazen, and to other Buddhist practices. The degree of commitment may be the student's worst enemy, since attachment or avidity for success (even spiritual success) can create evil. If one is sincere, one has a strong desire to please and an eagerness to provide his devotion. This may lead to self-consciousness and anxiety. A good Buddhist must learn to accept the progress he makes and be satisfied with it. This is not passivity. It is accepting the results, after continuously trying one's best. It is performing small acts of devotion and being pleased with what one has accomplished.

I can remember when I first came to Sokoji, what pleasure it was to watch the movements of Reverend Suzuki Roshi-sama. With what ease he performed his service in the Zendo, and with what care he made us a cup of tea. At Eiheiiji Monastery in Japan I found the Zen Priests had this same quality of fluid movement from one task to another. The simplest act was performed in the spirit of "nyunanshin." This word expresses the quality of understanding, compassion, and tenderness. It includes love but goes beyond it because it is not possessive. Dogen, the founder of the Soto sect of Zen, said it was one of the most important things he learned during his study in China.

I have written and talked about the many difficulties a westerner faces when he studies Zen Buddhism in Japan. The discipline seems harsh and coupled with the intense introspection of Zazen, it causes emotional and physical upsets. Zen Masters represent Life. They confront the student in all types of situations, until he learns to understand himself and learns how best to resolve life's problems. The laws of life do not change to suit the individual, neither does the

Zen Master. However, he does display nyunanshin, and he does show by his own behavior the importance of performing each task as a part of Buddhism.

For several months at Eiheiiji I was privileged to study Sumi painting with Reverend Akabori Roshi-sama, who was considered a very great Zen painter. Watching him make a stroke, I felt that his brush was but an extension of his hand and arm. His art was never torn from him, as I feel it is from some of the modern artists. Instead it welled up, effortlessly, out of creative depths in his being. This was the result of years of devotion to the practice, not only of art, but of Zen Buddhism as well. Although I had never used a brush before, I was not singled out for special attention. Reverend Akabori would demonstrate to each one the mistakes he had made. His sign of approval was a red circle. Only twice did I receive such a mark, but when I did all his other students rejoiced with me.

One day Reverend Tatsugami, Eno-Roshi at Eiheiiji, invited eight of us to his temple for a bamboo sprout digging party. His temple lies in the midst of a bamboo grove. Wisteria grows over his gate, and there is a small vegetable garden. When I first saw the sprouts all I could think of was pineapples, because they look like pineapple tops poking out of the ground. The ability to dig successfully lay in scooping a pit around the sprout and then lifting it out unbroken with one blow of the spade. We worked most of the sunny afternoon digging and carrying the sprouts to the truck which had brought us to the temple. Along about 4 pm we gathered around a low rectangular table to partake of a most delicious meal which included many delicacies and some of the fresh sprouts. The Eno-Roshi is a most stern disciplinarian at Eiheiiji, now I saw him as a congenial host. He was an embodiment of the sayings - when one performs ritual one performs ritual, when one works, one works, when one eats, one eats. In every situation he performed as a complete human being.

In mid-October of 1962 it was arranged for me

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Nyunanshin By Jean Ross

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to visit Reverend Fujimoto Roshi-sama, whose temple lies between Osaka and Kyoto. After a night's train ride I arrived early the next morning. Reverend Inoue, a follower of Reverend Fujimoto, met my train. He was a serious but pleasant young priest, to whom I responded immediately. We went directly to Reverend Fujimoto's temple. Reverend Fujimoto turned out to be a slender stern-faced man who belied his facial expression, or so I thought, with a child-like simplicity. I felt completely at ease and talked freely for several hours that first afternoon.

The next day the three of us drove deeply into the mountains to Reverend Inoue's temple. It was nestled in the hills and was surrounded by a lovely white wall. I had my own room overlooking the rice fields. It was harvest time and I awoke each morning to a rustling sound - the cutting of the rice. We stayed there 10 days and most of the emphasis was placed on Zazen. For the first time I began to realize the significance of studying with Reverend Fujimoto, and I began to realize his tremendous power. At times I could not determine whether it was he who was breathing with me, or I who was breathing with him.

Discussion periods followed the Zazen, and I found myself becoming mute. It reached a point where I couldn't converse normally or even ask questions. Finally Reverend Fujimoto withdrew from me. He never showed his face, and one day he abruptly left the temple. Reverend Inoue did not comment on his departure, and he did not act as though there were anything strange about it. It puzzled me greatly. After two days Reverend Inoue informed me that I should write a paper on the state of my Zazen mind, and that I should have it ready for Reverend Fujimoto's arrival the following morning. Although I was stunned by the task, I complied. After the two Priests read it we had a long talk. Reverend Fujimoto said I must abandon all thoughts of an individual self. My mind henceforth must be free and unattached to

anything or anybody. Above all I must realize that the center of the universe, at any given moment, is everywhere.

I visited Reverend Fujimoto Roshi-sama on two other occasions. His last words to me were, "Thank you for showing me your Buddha nature." Even after two years I can think of no adequate reply to this remark from one of Soto Zen Buddhism's greatest Zen masters.

So let each of us proceed slowly, feeling satisfied with each small task that we perform well. It will be a dubious compliment if someone looks at one of us and says - he is enlightened. The true compliment will not have to be spoken, if in the presence of one of us another human being feels an emanation of nyunanshin and realizes he has made contact with an open channel through which enlightenment can flow.

For Seisen Ikushin Gerry Oliva

Distracted by a world of suffering,
the doctor drives a dented car,
becomes a Zen student swerving on the interstate
to contemplate a koan:
All the earth is medicine.
Where do you find yourself?

If what ails can cure
and what cures can ail,
cure and ailment one and the same
in the many-roomed mystery house of the self,
what remedy can there be?

Beneath the bustle of the marketplace
a warm spring flows,
pure, nourishing.
Can you hear it?
Now hear the shuso!

--Myoka Eido

Poems from the spring practice period shuso teas have been compiled into a PDF for participants. Visit <http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org/shuso/poems2008>. Or <http://berkeleyzencenter.org/shuso/poems2008.pdf>

Class in Mindfulness

Alexandra Frappier and Catherine Cascade, priests at BZC, will teach a four week class on mindfulness, Saturday afternoons from 12:00 to 1:30, from September 13 to October 4. Those attending are welcome to bring bag lunches and hang out together before the class. Cost is \$20 for the series. As usual, there will be a sign up several weeks before as well as handouts.

Interview with Class Coordinator Ron Nestor.

Ron: Good morning. This will be the first time each of you has taught at BZC and also the first Saturday class. Can you describe how you see your own everyday practice of mindfulness?

Catherine: Well, it starts in the zendo every morning of with zazen. The work I do as a hospice chaplain requires mindfulness practice as fundamental to that work. I must be acutely mindful of another person and my own responses so I can be fully present and know what to do. In Maylie's prayer for peace she talks about the instinctive knowing what to do. For me that arises out of mindfulness, without going into judgements that I know more than I do.

Alexandra: When I get up in the morning I scan my body to decide whether or not I can get on the road to get to the zen center. In dealing with my ongoing neurological problems (parkinsons/dystonia, etc.) I have discovered I can no longer assume I can just get up any day at 5 am and be safe to drive. After commuting by bus to San Francisco and slowly walking to work, I say good morning to the guards downstairs, pay attention to who they are, and then pay attention to everyone who's around me in the elevator. Sitting at my desk, I stop, breathe, stretch in my chair, and smile at the girl next to me. We have a few words and I remember that mindfulness practice leads to a deeper place. I let myself sink and contemplate what's arising in my body while I'm waiting for my computer to boot up (laughter)... which takes quite awhile. Later, I take a break and go to the work out room for a stretching routine with breathing. I try to deepen my breath and carry that expansion back to my desk. It calms my mind and

body in a suprising way. I have difficulty resting and I find that mindfulness can bring equanimity even to someone like me.

Ron: Even someone like me too.

Catherine: And me.

Ron: What do you both think is the primary reason we're not mindful (other than being human)?

Catherine: Many many distractions, the drama, the craving, the reaching, and getting caught up in things that seem like they're going to be satisfying and aren't. They have sort of a drug like quality that makes us forget. I was very interested in Nyoaponika's book where he talks about the derivation of the word sati as in satipatthana, sati meaning mindfulness. The root meaning has to do with memory, remembering, and our ignorance comes from forgetting. That forgetting happens when we get really captivated about what we can do with our physical and mental equipment.

Alexandra: Distraction, being goal oriented to the point where we forget what we're doing in the moment. I can go crazy on a deadline. All of a sudden I've thrown away everything, all practice, all thought, because I have to make that deadline. You can see me tearing down the hall trying to get there.

Ron: Happens to me every day at work.

Alexandra: Yeah, why is that?

Ron: Anxiety.

Catherine: Trungpa called that the second foundation of mindfulness, the one usually called feeling or sensation. He calls it mindfulness of life. He say's it's a raw anxiety as the basic life/survival feeling that comes with having a body that can experience pain and death.

Ron: Are you going to discuss his understanding during the class?

Catherine: Yeah, we thought we could compare his approach to the traditional.

Ron: Thank you both - I hope it goes well.



SAVE THE DATES

Huston Smith at BZC

On Saturday afternoon, September 13, from 2 to 4:30, we are having a very special event with a very special guest: pre-eminent religious studies scholar Huston Smith

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huston_Smith). Now retired, Smith will join us for a showing of the film, "A ZEN LIFE - D.T. Suzuki," a 77-minute documentary about Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966), one of the key influences introducing Zen Buddhism to the West. After the film we will have tea and discussion with Dr. Smith. Gary Snyder calls D.T. Suzuki "probably the most culturally significant Japanese person in international terms, in all of history."

The film contains exclusive interviews of many people, respected in their own right, who knew D.T. Suzuki, including Smith, Snyder, Mihoko Okamura, Elsie Mitchell, Robert Aitken, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and rare footage of Thomas Merton, John Cage, Erich Fromm, and Suzuki himself. The DVD contains an additional 10-minutes from a hitherto unknown interview of Daisetz Suzuki by Smith. For more information, contact Laurie Senauke, lauries@kushiki.org). There is a \$5 donation; sign up on the bulletin board.

VOICES

When you let go of your old perceptions, you give people a chance to change. When you do not let go, you are participating in the continuation of their faults.



Conversation with Author Barry Magid

Ending the Pursuit of Happiness: a conversation exploring psychologically-minded Zen with Barry Magid

Is it possible – or even wise – to draw a line between the "spiritual" and "psychological" issues that Zen students practice to face (or avoid)? How might psychological insight inform Zen practice?

Please join us on Sunday, August 24 at 10 am-12 noon when BZC hosts Barry Magid for a morning of dialogue on how American Zen is evolving to integrate psychological insight and meet the needs of psychologically-minded

Western practitioners.

Magid is a dharma heir of Joko Beck, a lay Zen teacher, and a practicing psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in

New York city. He is the author of "Ordinary Mind: Exploring the Common Ground of Zen and Psychoanalysis" and "Ending the Pursuit of Happiness". He also leads the Ordinary Mind Zendo on the Upper West Side in New York.

We plan a lively, informal discussion in which Magid can present his vision of a psychologically-informed and emotionally-intelligent Zen practice. Through dialogue with sangha members interested in this flavor of Zen, including those in the therapeutic and helping professions, we hope to discover how Zen infused with a psycho-therapeutic orientation might work to address our deepest spiritual questions as well as the typical "psychological" and emotional issues that often bring us to Zen practice.

Sunday August 24

10 am - noon

\$15 donation

Coffee, bagels and schmear provided!

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