



Berkeley Zen Center



October 2009 Newsletter

ASPECTS OF PRACTICE 2009

This year's Aspects of Practice begins with sesshin on Saturday, October 10 through a closing sitting and *shuso* ceremony on Sunday, November 8. As always, this is an opportunity for new and old students to study and practice together the basics of zazen, forms, and dharma here at BZC.

Kano Kenshin Catherine Cascade has been invited to serve as *shuso* or head student for this period. As in our spring practice period, Catherine will give talks, have tea with students, and do her best to support your practice. Please support her in turn.

Given our intention with Aspects to return to basics, this year we will study Dogen's "Guideline for Studying the Way/Gakudo Yojin-shu." This is a very accessible text, probably among Dogen's earliest instruction to his students. There will be four classes on this fascicle, and our lectures will touch on it as well. The version we are using is in *Moon in a Dewdrop*. Copies of the text itself will be available, but you might want to have a copy of this invaluable book for yourself.

As the seasons turn, please join us for Aspects and this opportunity to refresh our tireless practice.

- Hozan Alan Senauke

DHARMA GROUP SEEKS MEMBERS

An ongoing Dharma group which meets every other Tuesday morning from 9:30-11 a.m. would welcome new members. At present, we are just beginning to study Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. For information, contact Meghan Collins at msmehancollins@att.net or 510-215-2263.



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.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

October

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 10/3, 9:40 a.m.

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 10/5, 6:20 p.m., Tuesday, 10/6, 6:40 a.m.

Aspects of Practice

Saturday, 10/10 – Sunday, 11/8

See article this page

Kidzendo

Saturday, 10/24--Sejiki

Beginners' Sesshin

Sunday, 10/25

Sejiki Ceremony and Celebration

Saturday, 10/31

November

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 11/3, 6:20 p.m.,

Wednesday, 11/4, 6:40 a.m.

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 11/7, 9:40 a.m.

One-day Sitting, End Aspects of Practice

Sunday, 11/8

Kidzendo

Saturday, 11/21

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 11/22, 8:00 a.m. - Noon

Zendo Holiday--Thanksgiving

Thursday, 11/26

Aspects Of Practice Sesshins

This year's Aspects of Practice period opens with a sesshin on Saturday, October 10, and extends through a closing sitting on Sunday, November 8.

Information about the opening sesshin is detailed in the September, 2009, BZC newsletter. If anyone has questions about it, please contact the opening sesshin director, Tamar, at 510-644-1928, or at tlxnoch@earthlink.net.

The November 8 closing sesshin will start at 5:00 a.m. and continue to midafternoon, followed by the shuso *hossen*, in which shuso (head student) Kano Kenshin Catherine Cascade will have her dharma inquiry, responding to questions from those attending. More information and a signup sheet for the November closing sesshin will be posted on the BZC outside bulletin board on Tuesday, October 20. The signup deadline is Wednesday, November 4. The closing sesshin director is John Rubin. If you have questions about the closing sesshin, please contact John at 510-339-7068 or at john_rubin@comcast.net.

Come Celebrate Sejiki

On October 31, BZC will celebrate Sejiki, one of the most important Buddhist holidays. We commemorate it annually around our Halloween because of its association with karmic spiritual relations.

Sejiki one of the two events we celebrate which is particularly inclusive of our young people. Festivities begin with Hozan Alan Senauke's lecture at 10:15, followed immediately by the ceremony and celebration. Hungry ghosts, devas and all of the sangha spirits are encouraged to wear costumes and to bring noisemakers for invoking the spirits of the dead!

In addition, Sejiki is a universal memorial for the dead. If you would like a name read at the service, please leave it for the manager Catherine Cascade in her box on the community room porch or at catherinecascade@sbcglobal.net.



Saturday Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturday mornings for zazen from 9:30 to 10:15, then families are welcome to listen to the lecture on the sound system in the community room. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; call or email Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or lauries@kushiki.org.

Childcare for 8:45 Zazen Instruction and Beginner Orientation may be offered by special arrangement.

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 in the community room at about 9:45, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene in the community room as usual. From time to time we offer additional activities at kidzendo.

Childcare Schedule

Oct. 3	Childcare
Oct. 10	Sesshin – no program
Oct. 17	Childcare
Oct. 24	Childcare
Oct. 31	Kidzendo - Sejiki
Nov. 7	Childcare
Nov. 14	Childcare
Nov. 21	Kidzendo
Nov. 28	Childcare
Dec. 5	Childcare
Dec. 12	Sesshin – no program
Dec. 19	Kidzendo
Dec. 26	Interim – no program

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR BZC NEWSLETTER is the third Friday of the month preceding each issue.
November 2009 deadline: Friday, October 16.

Breath

From a talk by Sojun Roshi

May 19, 2001

Part 3

I'll read you a little bit from the *Sutra On the Full Awareness of Breathing*.

The four last methods [13-16] are pretty much directed toward just letting go of everything. "The fifteenth method helps us free ourselves from the fixed notion of individuality so that we can better realize that we are part of the universe. 'I am breathing in and contemplating liberation, I am breathing out and contemplating liberation.' Here liberation is freedom from the concept of birth and death, owning and lacking, increase and decrease—all concepts which form the basis of desire and attachment, fear and anxiety, hatred and anger. Liberation here means freedom, or nirvana, which is the absence of all boundaries. And the sixteenth method, like the fifteenth, aims at helping us observe in order to shed light on giving up all desire and attachment to fear and anxiety, hatred and anger. Seeing that there is a precious jewel in our pocket we give up every attitude of craving or coveting like one who is deprived. Seeing that we are lions we do not long to nurse from a mother deer. Seeing that we are the sun we give up the candle's habit of fearing the wind will blow us out. Seeing that life has no boundaries we give up all imprisoning divisions. We see ourselves everywhere and we see our life everywhere; that is why we go to help all living phenomena, all living species, with the vow of a bodhisattva, one who has attained great awakening."

The above is Thich Nhat Hanh's commentary. He also says, "Giving up here does not mean abandoning something in order to seek something else. It means giving up every comparison, seeing that there is nothing to be removed, and nothing to be added. And that the boundary between ourself and the other is not real. The practitioner does not give up the human condition in order to become a Buddha. He or she seeks the Buddha; he or she seeks the Buddha in his or her very own human condition, giving up nothing and seeking nothing. That is the meaning of *apranihita*, which means 'aimlessness,' and is also translated as 'wishlessness.' It is the same as 'not seeking,' a concept fully developed in Mahayana Buddhism; give up in order to be everything and to be completely free."

We can see death as losing our life, as *losing* something, or we can see it as *gaining* something, or we can see it as neither losing nor gaining, but simply expanding into the universe, our true body. So paying attention to breath from the hara, throughout every activity, is our practice. Sometimes I ask a student, "Right now, tell me, where is your breath?" Most students will say, "Well, I don't know." But you should know all the time where your breath is, where you are breathing from. There shouldn't be any hesitation. We don't know everything, we have fears and uncertainty and a lot of the time in our life we are puzzled by what confronts us, and our breath becomes shallow. When we accept "I don't know," and put our mind down here, in our hara, our belly, then from here, something will come forth. This is to have faith in our true nature. As a Zen student, you must have faith in your true nature, and it's right there in the letting go. You can let go and have a free fall into Buddha's hand which will always rescue you.

Every year we have a head student, the shuso, and at the end of the practice period, the shuso sits in that seat and faces all the students in a question and answer period called the Shuso Ceremony. The shuso, in order to properly answer all the students' questions, must totally forget everything that he or she knows, and simply put the mind in that place, without knowing anything; and when the question comes, to trust this. If you don't, and you rely too much on your head, you'll be defeated. This is what we call "don't know mind." It's actually the mind that knows everything, but it's not you. That mind knows everything if you just let it speak.

So when we practice with our breath in the hara, we have the right foundation for all our activities, and even though we get lost, there is always a place to come to. This is what Suzuki Roshi meant when he said "Whatever circumstance you are in you should always be the boss." It doesn't mean that you should boss people around, it means that you can respond in an appropriate well-centered manner, or, as we say, "give an appropriate response."

Changing Hands

Thanks to **Eric Kaufman** for serving as Head Dishwasher this year. He is soon passing the dish rags to **Karl Schoenberger**, whose enthusiastic acceptance has inspired us. And Karl passes the care of the book table to **Eric** and **James Redfield**. Thanks to all.

Take BZC dharma with you wherever you go!

Last month we uploaded the first of our lectures recorded in MP3 format. Look at the website heading tabs for the "Audio Library." Over the next few months, all of the lectures given since the first of the year will appear, and all future lectures will be available in this way. In order to facilitate the general availability of these lectures, our Audio Archivist will be focusing her time on this aspect of her duties. CD copies of lectures will still be available, but will be done after we are caught up with the backlog of recordings to be put on line. If you need a CD sooner, please indicate this on your request slip, or send **Shelly Brock** an email at sbrock44@gmail.com.

This project is the culmination of years of cataloging work by our first audio archivist **Jean Selkirk**, scores of hours of work and coordination by our I.T. manager **Barry Waldman**, and effort of all the members of a big team, as Barry expresses in his thanks: "Since I became I.T. manager a few months ago, one of my primary goals was to post dharma talks on our website. This couldn't have been done without the patience and dedication of what I am now spontaneously calling our 'I.T. Team.'"

Shelley Brock, our audio archivist, hung in there, enduring all sorts of software- and hardware-related issues and learning curves until we finally got all the pieces to fit together.

Richard Haefele, BZC's very own audio and programming master, trained Shelley, provided invaluable assistance with the audio technology and software, and has developed a database of our talks so we can more easily find past talks based on keywords or subject matter.

Finally, although this is not related specifically to dharma talks, I need to express my appreciation and, in fact, my incredulity as to the amount of time and care our new webmaster, **Deborah Good**, has put into improving our website.

Thank you one and all! And to Hozan for his encouragement and help with sound and early phases of the recording technologic troubleshooting.

- Yakuso Ryushin Andrea Thach



Beginners' Sesshin For Everyone

With Hozan Alan Senauke

Sunday, October 25

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Though Zen practice has no beginning or end, new people sometimes find the forms daunting, and more experienced students can value refreshment and learn about forms in greater detail. This sitting is an opportunity for new and old practitioners to invigorate our beginners' mind. The focus will be on the basics of Suzuki Roshi's practice: zazen, kinhin, and bowing.

The sesshin will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Though shorter than usual, the rhythm of sitting will be similar to our regular schedules, with lecture, a short work period, tea and discussion. Plan to attend the entire day. (Please bring a bag lunch -- we will not be cooking a meal or doing oriyoki.)

For further information, please contact Sesshin Director Karen Sundheim, ksundheim@gmail.com or Hozan Alan Senauke, alans@kushiki.org.

Would you like to shop for a worthwhile and rewarding reason?

We are looking for someone who would like to go on a monthly shopping spree on behalf of the Fourth Friday of the Month Men's Shelter Dinner. Laurie Senauke has stepped in to offer the lead in cooking, but we still need someone who could shop. The men's shelter dinner shopping list is clear and straightforward. And although we might say "No merit," our gratitude to whoever could take this position would be great. Please contact Andrea Thach at andrea.thach@gmail.com or Laurie Senauke at lauries@kushiki.org if you are interested. Thank you.

BOOKS ABOUT SOJUN

If you weren't able to be at Sojun's 80th birthday party in July you may have missed two of the wonderful surprises available: copies of two books specially written to express our appreciation for Sojun Roshi, and to honor him.

BZC is the distributor of the books: *Umbrella Man*, edited by Max Erdstein and Michael Wenger, and *A Path Unfolding*, edited by Susan Moon. *Umbrella Man* is a compilation of recollections of Sojun by his dharma heirs, and *A Path Unfolding* presents Sojun talking about his own life.

Both books can be purchased at the book table on Saturday mornings for \$20 and \$10, respectively. If you live farther away, or are unable to get to BZC on Saturday mornings, you can write or e-mail us for copies. Write to Berkeley Zen Center, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703, or e-mail us at bzc@berkeleyzencenter.org. Please note that sales from both these books will benefit BZC.

NEW MEMBER

Please welcome new member **Diane Schnapp**.

Clear Water Zendo in Vallejo

Invites you to get down with the dharma at our annual fundraiser. Join us for an afternoon filled with jazz, magic, fine food and drink for all ages. There will be a raffle and an auction of services from the sangha.

**Saturday October 17
3 to 6 p.m.**

*Tickets \$15.00 adults, \$5.00 children.
For more information, call (707) 649-2480
or see www.vallejozencenter.org.*

*Please join us if you can.
607 Branciforte St.
Vallejo, CA 94590*

COUNCIL ON MONEY TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 6

There's an old R&B lyric: "*The best things in life are free, but you can give them to the birds and bees. I need some money...*" Money is maybe the last frontier of practice, beyond food, sex, and power. We need to be able to discuss this more freely—how we think about money in relation to our selves and our practice place, and how we are doing right now in the continuing economic crisis.

Over the last year, we have been experimenting with council practice at BZC. Council is a tool for communication, investigation, and community building. In meditation we bear witness to thoughts and feelings as they come and go in mind. In council we bear witness to each other's thoughts and feelings, as well as our own. During council we have a collective experience with its shadows and clarity. In meditation there is always the opportunity for insight into true reality. Council offers a similar opportunity.

BZC friends are invited to meet in council on Tuesday, October 6 from 7 to 8:30p.m. to share our feelings and experience. Hozan Alan Senauke will give basic instruction in council, a practice that is widespread in Buddhist communities across the country.

SAVE THE DATE

Please plan to join us the the quarterly tradition of zafu and zabuton airing on Saturday, November 14, after the morning program. If it rains that day we will aim for Saturday, November 21. Look for details on the bulletin board, or here, next month.

A BZC Premiere! Come on Friday evening, November 13 to see our own **Gemma Cubero's** newly released documentary *Ella es el Matador (She is the Matador)*, about the first woman matador in Spain. Details next month.

SEWING BUDDHA'S ROBE

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in the middle of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

Before the winter break (mid-December), please speak with Sojun Roshi or Hozan Sensei. After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

DID YOU SEE THAT?! NEW WEBSITE FOR PHOTOS OF BZC EVENTS

For many years, **Dean Bradley** has been making photographic memories of BZC events, and now she has created a website link so that they are accessible to all sangha members.

Check out <http://berkeleyzencenter.shutterfly.com/> to see pictures from Sojun's 80th, and the most recent shuso and lay ordination ceremonies. On this site, you can easily order your own prints, or add comments. She will be adding more albums of future events. And if there is an image you would like deleted, just let her know at dean@deanbradleycomputers.com or zdbradley@gmail.com.

Please send your thanks to her, and any other thoughts or concerns to Alan Senauke at @alans@kushiki.org or Andrea Thach at andrea.thach@gmail.com.



NEW KOAN COLLECTION ROCKS ZEN WORLD

Editor's Note:

In the bottom of a pickle jar, in a cobwebbed corner of the kitchen of the Old Plum Temple, the manuscript of an unheard-of koan collection was recently unearthed by the tenzo's assistant as she was doing the annual deep cleaning. The *Nomankan* (here translated as "No Man's Gate") is the first new collection to be seen in centuries, and challenges the Big Three canon of the *Mumonkan*, the *Blue Cliff Records* and the *Book of Serenity*. While drawing on sources common to these collections, it introduces an entirely new set of Dharma figures, suggesting an alternative lineage within the Zen tradition that scholars surmise has been suppressed through sectarian rivalries. Apparently the disciples of the iconoclastic Zen Master Noman secreted it from one pickle jar to another, literally a transmission outside the scriptures, its strange odyssey having ended at last at Old Plum Temple. Needless to say, the jury is out as to whether we have an authentic document or a hoax. Meanwhile a team of translators, drawn from the East Asian studies department of the University of California at Berkeley and the Berkeley Buddhist Priory, have just completed translating the first case of the collection, with the remainder following in time - given that its publication survives hostile adversaries. Readers of the BZC newsletter are privileged to be the first to see the translation in print, and are invited to weigh in on the controversy regarding its authenticity. — Patrick McMahan

From THE NOMANKAN

Case 1: Soso-jun's "Have a Cup of Tea"

THE CASE

Zen Master Soso-jun and a monk were having tea. The monk said to the Master, "The Sixth Patriarch spoke of a special transmission outside the scriptures, not dependent upon words or concepts. Why then do we read and recite the scriptures?" Soso-jun lifted his cup and said, "Understanding the language of the cup, you hear what it is saying." "What if I don't understand its language?" the monk asked. Soso-jun tipped the pot. "Have a cup of tea," he said. Later, the monk asked Soso-jun's successor, Hoho-zan, what the Master had meant by, "Have a cup of tea." Hoho-zan poured him a cup.

NOMAN'S COMMENTARY

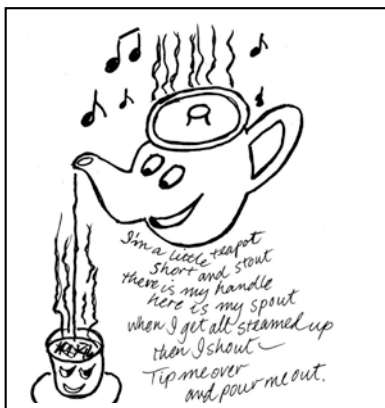
Out of their generosity the ancestors have since ancient times served Mu tea to all who would drink. Ch'an Master Chao-chou asked a monk newly arrived at Ts'ung-shen, "Have you been here before?" "Yes, I have" the monk replied. Chao-chou said, "Have a cup of tea." Later, Chao-chou asked another monk if he, too, had been to Ts'ung-shen before. "No, never," the monk replied. "Then have a cup of tea," Chao-chou said. When a third monk asked Chao-chou why he had responded the same way to the two different answers, Chao-chou called out his name. "Yes, Master," the monk answered. Chao-chou said, "Have a cup of tea. From his pot, Baisao, the Old Tea Seller¹, poured the sun and moon and stars. From his cup, Marcel Proust², the Old Poet, drank streams and villages and flowers. Look! Look! What's in your own cup?"

TEISHO ON THE COMMENTARY

When the teacup tips, the cup speaks and the drinker listens. When the drinker drinks, the drinker speaks and the teacup listens. When a dog licks the hand, the dog speaks and listens through its tongue. When the hand pets the dog, the dog speaks and listens through its skin. All things are always in conversation with all things. Even a three-year old child understands this.

NO-MAN'S VERSE

I'm a little teapot, short and stout
Tip me over and pour me out.
When I get excited, hear me shout
Tip me over and pour me out.



¹From *Baisao Gego*, trans. Norman Waddell, Counterpoint Press

²Mention of a modern European novelist marks the transition of Noman's lineage from East to West, a rare innovation on the India/China/Japan tradition.

Thus I have heard.... at a Monday morning open discussion:

Once a month, on the first Monday at 6:30 a.m., we have open discussion, a chance to raise a question in discussion with sangha friends. Everyone is invited to join this dharma buzz on the First Monday.

Last month, Laurie spoke about transforming the “shoulds” in our heads into “coulds”, and a lively conversation ensued, part of which is below :

“It seems that our conversation reflected two different senses of the word *should* and the word *could*. The first *should*, as Sojun said, involves a relationship of ego, projection, judgment, and an ideal standard that can never be fulfilled in reality but which dominates our activity nonetheless. This is a *should* that is *outside* of us.

“There is also another *should*: a *should* which clears a space within which a form can arise, within which something *can* happen.

“The first *could* goes something like, I *could* get up and go to zazen, or I *could* stay in bed. This is a kind of freedom—but not a freedom with a form, not a freedom in activity—its a freedom to do nothing in particular, which is sometimes misinterpreted as the idea of being able to do anything. Often, perhaps because the first *should* is so weighty, this first *could* is a response to it.

“But there is also a second *could*: the arising of a form within the space of the second *should*, the activity that happens there. I noticed this difference when I was at the Samurai show in San Francisco this weekend. There were a lot of absolutely perfect, gleaming swords and armor which seemed to be a highly refined product of the first *should*. But there were also cups and bowls with these beautiful organic forms, spontaneously arising, including these perfect imperfections, which allowed them to be something other than the first *should*. These, to me, were the second *could*.”

Comments by James Redfield



TWO SEDOKA

*Imperceptibly
as the colors of the sun
shift downward from flax to peach,
summer changed to fall.
Now, sitting here together,
let us share the burning leaves.*

*A lifelong night owl
With effort, becomes a lark.
I rise for morning zazen.
Up at dawn, who knew?
These days, I am finding I
Awaken with everyone.*

– Kate Gilpin

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703