



Berkeley Zen Center



June 2010 Newsletter

LAY ORDINATION

This year's Lay Ordination ceremony— *Zaike Tokudo* — will take place on Saturday, June 19 in the zendo at 3:00 pm. Receiving lay ordination from Sojun Roshi are Dean Bradley, Shelley Brock, Katy Guimond, Ken Powelson, Barry Waldman, and Oliver Zahn. Hozan Alan Senauke will offer ordination to Annette Herskovits, and Sonia Tamez. Lisa Nelbach will receive precepts from Myoan Grace Schireson.

Congratulations in advance to all who have been studying and sewing diligently with our sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and the reception afterwards. Check the zendo bulletin board for details.

Ed. note: See p. 7 for an explication of lay ordination

HALF-DAY SITTING

Sunday, June 6, 2010, 8:00 am – 12:00 noon

BZC offers eight half-day sittings each year. Each includes five periods of zazen, kinhin, and an informal tea. A half-day sitting is a great opportunity to focus on “just zazen,” and is appropriate for beginning as well as experienced sitters. Sojun Roshi asks participants to commit to the four-hour schedule and, in support of everyone's practice, to refrain from using scented products in the zendo. If you have questions, contact Ann Kennedy at 510-649-9432 or kaimon@earthlink.net. BZC asks a \$10 donation for half-day sittings.

FIVE-DAY JUNE SESSHIN

Our spring Practice Period will end with a five-day June sesshin, beginning on Wednesday, June 23 and ending on Sunday, June 27. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the sesshin for as many days as possible, but participants *(Ctd. on p. 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.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

June

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 6/3, 6:20 pm,

Friday, 6/4, 6:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 6/6, 8:00 am-Noon

Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo

Saturday, 6/19, 3:00 pm

Five-day Sesshin

Wednesday - Sunday, 6/23-27

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 6/26, 9:40 am

Shuso Hossen, Practice Period Ends

Sunday, 6/27, 3:30 pm

Informal Zazen

Monday, June 28, morning

July

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 7/5, 6:20 pm,

Tuesday, 7/6, 6:40 am

Work Day

Sunday, 7/11

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 7/18, 8:00 am-Noon

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7/24, 9:40 am

Mountains and Rivers

Thursday-Sunday, 7/29-8/1

(see article, p. 2)

Informal Zazen

Monday, July 5, morning

FOUR-DAY MOUNTAINS & RIVERS SESSHIN

Our next Mountains and Rivers sesshin will take place Thursday through Sunday, July 29-August 1, at Point Reyes. Sojun Roshi will be leading it.

This will be our first four-day M&R. Our three-day ones have proved so popular that many participants have said they wished they were longer. Somewhat counterintuitively, longer M&Rs are actually easier than short ones precisely because they are longer—there's the same amount of backpacking to and from, but more time at the campsite to take it easy and to settle into the practice and into the environment during the middle days. Everyone is encouraged to do the full four days, but provision will also be made for those who may have to miss a day or two or who have some physical difficulty with backpacking. All meals are provided and camping experience is not required.

The signup sheet will be posted on the BZC bulletin board. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, July 24. The fee is \$75. If you have questions, please call Ken Knabb at (510) 527-0959 or e-mail him at knabb@bopsecrets.org

5-DAY JUNE SESSHIN *(Ctd. from p. 1)*

are asked to sit for a minimum of three days, two of which should be consecutive.

Each day's schedule begins at 5:00 am and ends at 9:10 pm with the exception of the last day, Sunday, which ends in mid-afternoon and is followed by Shuso Hossen.

If this is your first sesshin at BZC, it is strongly recommended that you have participated in a full Saturday program, have had oryoki instruction and that you speak with the sesshin director. The fee is \$35 per day and should be paid in advance. Since some people may not be able to pay the full amount, accommodations are readily made by contacting the sesshin director. Leave checks marked "June sesshin" in the kitchen porch donation slot. *(Ctd. p. 4)*

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
July 2010 deadline: Friday, June 18, 8 pm



Family Activities at BZC

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; phone or e-mail 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 program for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday morning of each month (or the fourth if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). We meet at the Senaukes'—1933 Russell—at about 9:40 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene at 1933 Russell for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

Zazen & Discussion for Parents, Childcare Provided

1st Friday Midday—Noon to 1 pm. Check calendar for dates. From noon to 1, childcare is offered in the community room, with zazen followed by discussion in the zendo.

3rd Friday Evening—6:15 pm to 8:00 pm. Check calendar for dates. A potluck dinner for parents and children in the community room, followed by a brief period of zazen and a discussion about family practice in the zendo. Childcare provided in the community room. For questions about our Friday programs, contact Marie Hopper, (510) 559-8831.

June 4	Midday sitting and discussion
June 5	Childcare
June 12	Childcare
June 18	Potluck, sitting, and discussion
June 19	Childcare
June 26	Sesshin—no program
July 2	Midday sitting and discussion
July 3	Childcare
July 10	Childcare
July 16	Potluck, sitting, and discussion
July 17	KIDZENDO
July 24	Childcare
July 31	Childcare
August 6	Midday sitting and discussion
August 7	Childcare
August 14	Study day
August 20	BZC closed—summer recess
August 21	BZC closed—summer recess
August 28	BZC closed—summer recess



Letting Go

from a lecture by Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi

January 10, 2009

(Continued from May, 2010)

Next, “To let go is not to care for but to care about.” I think both are important. To care for is important, and to care about is also important. But I think you can care for people independent of your relationship to them. True care is like caring about. But you can do something. Maybe you are a nurse or a doctor and you see these patients and primarily you care about their welfare. I think this is to rise above personality and to treat everyone with dignity, free of preference.

Next, “To let go is not to fix, but to be supportive.” How often we want to fix something. How do you really help somebody? That’s been a big question for all of us. How do you really help somebody? One extreme answer is that it is hard to really help anybody. But you can support everyone. Indiscriminate compassion is to simply support everyone. We support our group, our friends, our family, or our lovers. But how wide is our support? How far reaching is our support? Metta is like wide reaching support for everyone.

Do we support our enemies or do we slay them? That’s an interesting question. It is often easier to slay them, which brings us into the realm of the Middle East. Instead of working things out it’s just righteous reaction, emotional reaction, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blow for blow.

As the world shrinks, the eyes of the world focus on this one spot. Some blame one side and some blame the other side. And it’s so tangled and so impossible. Someone has to start repenting, apologizing, expressing remorse. It’s the only way that anything will happen. Someone has to be the first to back down. But then you become afraid of losing your honor. How do you back down or give up without losing your honor? How can that happen? Suzuki Roshi said that to be truly weak is to be strong.

All these people are sacrificing their lives for whatever they believe their cause is. All those have to be honored who sacrificed. And so it goes. The conditions get worse and worse. I don’t believe it can happen until people let go of everything and start anew. They’ve lost their footing altogether. They have strayed from the essence of mind. And they can’t include each other in their big mind. So they care for their families and their country, but their caring is not universal.

So, next is, “To let go is not to judge but to allow another to be a human being.” We have to recognize that everybody is not just like me, and yet everyone is, actually, just like me.

I remember Suzuki Roshi talking about Japan and America. He said Japanese people think American people are different and American people think Japanese people are different, but actually we are all the same. There are differences, but we are all the same.

So how do we include everyone in our big mind? How do we allow others to be themselves without being judgmental?

We don’t try to make everybody be the same, even though, when we come to the zendo, we all sit in the same way, and in monastic life we all wear the same clothes and it looks like we are making everybody be the same. But within that conformity everyone stands out as different. And you see the differences and accept the differences we all have. When I am open it helps people be who they are, and I can understand them better. Otherwise we just cut people off and we live in our little channel.

The next one is “To let go is to fear less and to love more.” The last eight years our society has been coerced into fearing more and loving less. And we have to open that up so that we fear less and love more.

If you hit a hornet’s nest with a stick you have to expect that the residents are going to come out to sting you. And as we keep enraging the hornets, putting them back in there is really hard.

Next is, “To let go is not to regret the past but to grow from there for the future.” True repentance is to acknowledge, turn around, and go straight without turning back. *(Ctd. on p. 4)*

(Ctd. from p. 3) There was a woman walking with a large jug of water on her head, and the jar fell back off her head and smashed on the ground and she just kept walking ahead and didn't look back.

I will tell you a little story. Some years ago, maybe forty-five, we were in Hawaii. We went to the beach. It was very isolated. There was a restroom. It was getting late, and there was nobody around, no telephones, no cars, nothing, and I went into the restroom. Somehow the lid for the toilet dropped. It dropped. I dropped it. (Laughter) And it fell into the toilet and broke it. Then the water just kept shooting out, and it was flooding everything, and there was no way to turn it off, and there was nobody to call. And there I was. This is a great example of admitting to being totally helpless. And so we got in the car and ran away.



5-DAY JUNE SESSHIN (Ctd. from p. 2)

During sesshin, please do not wear scented body care products or clothes that have been laundered with scented products in the zendo. Leave cell phones, watches, pagers, and other electronic devices at home. Bring separate clothing for zazen and work periods. If you plan to stay overnight at BZC, contact the shika, Bruce Coughran, at 310-430-9744 or brucecoughran@yahoo.com.

To participate, please complete the following by Saturday noon, June 19: write your name and telephone number on the sign-up sheet, and complete a sesshin information form and a sesshin registration form (located on the bulletin board shelf) and place these forms in the sesshin director's box (located on the community room porch). If you have questions about the sesshin or your particular situation or schedule, contact the sesshin director, Jake Van Akkeren, at jvanakkeren@comcast.net or at 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 pm).

SUMMER SUTRA STUDY:

Four Mondays, Four Pali Suttas

Beginning **Monday, July 5** and continuing for four weeks, we will recite and discuss sutras from the original teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, given 2500 years ago and transmitted orally for several generations before writing was available. They are of a very different flavor than our Zen teachings, but the connections are clear.

The class will be led by Laurie Senauke, and will meet in the Community Room from 7:15 to 8:30 pm on July 5, 12, 19, and 26. Unlike most of our classes, you can come to all or some of the sessions, to accommodate your summer recreation plans. The cost is \$5.00 per class.

SUMMER RECESS

BZC will be closed for summer recess from August 15 through August 29.

SAVE THE DATE

Open House at BZC! Saturday, September 11, from 11:00 am -1:00 pm. More details to appear in the July newsletter.

NEW RESIDENT

Please welcome Bruce Coughran into the BZC residency. He'll be sharing the 1929a apartment with Ken Powelson. We can count on him fulfilling the responsibilities of temple life as he can count on us as an employee of the 2010 Census. So sit down and be counted!

New Members

Please welcome new members **Stephen Ellwood, Katy Guimond, and Roswitha Mueller.**

Changing Hands

We welcome **Mary Duryee** as the new co-sesshin director this month. She joins **Jake Van Akkeren**. And, belatedly, the sangha extends a deep gassho of appreciation to **Tamar Enoch** for her sincere and kind care of us during her tenure in the co-sesshin director position.

With our thanks for her enthusiastic effort, **Dawn Farber** is stepping down from the bathroom attendant position and back into her busy work life. She will be passing the paper towels, cleaning supplies and all to **Maria Winston.**

For these past two years, **Wanda Henning** has quietly tended the Jizo Memorial Garden, her hidden practice bringing fresh color and care to arrangements on the memorial stones there. We send our gasshos of thanks to her in South Africa. And we welcome **Jeanne Courtney** into the position.

And finally, we happily welcome our new bookstore attendants, **Michael McVey** and **William Gordon.**

SOUNDING BOARD

This is the first in a regular series of reports from the BZC Board.

At our April Board meeting we reviewed and discussed the treasurer's quarterly report. We were pleased to see that dues payments were at the expected level. We set our annual budget expenses with an assumption that members and friends will pay the set dues amount or let us know if this is not possible. When there is a shortfall it results in having to find other sources of income or borrow from our Leadership Fund. The Board discussed how best to organize and track dues payments from BZC members and friends. We've realized that we sometimes don't have a clear idea of what each member or friend intends to pay on a monthly or quarterly basis. The next question is, when we do have a clear idea of a member's commitment, what if payments suddenly stop without an explanation? Should we inquire, and if so, how? We don't want folks to feel pursued; on the other hand we need to take care of BZC's financial health and stability in a responsible way. Lack of contact also raises concerns about the well-being of members. Are they ill? Have they moved away? Are they experiencing financial or other difficulties, or have they decided no longer to be in a member or friend category at BZC? In years past, we used to contact members with an inquiring note if dues payments stopped without an explanation, but this practice has fallen away a good deal in recent years. After more discussion, the Board's feeling was to communicate with sangha members about their dues intentions, and follow up if payments are missing. In the spirit of sharing our mutual practice, it is important that our attitude be respectful, open minded, and grateful.

We welcome your responses and suggestions about these concerns. Notes can be left in President Gerry Oliva's or Treasurer David Weinberg's boxes on the community room porch. You may also e-mail them using the BZC member directory.



Cultivating the wild ivy

Holding a stinging bee inside the sleeve
trees full of leaves shake the wind
only the eyes move.

Seasons pass,
snow on a black stone.

Aspirations become geometries that become
a hand that turns the page of a book
which the eyes write in their passing.
Millimeters below the scratch of the skin
the sting is asking, What makes you?
Where does the pain go? How much
can you endure?

The envelope of tears holds up pretty well on the waves
as the shimmering bay takes it up on her tongue
for delivery to her mother.

*Earth Day 2010
Berkeley Marina*

Tegra Fisk

APRIL WORK DAY

About 25 of us got together for BZC's spring work day Sunday, April 18. The day was warm and sunny, the participants too, as we took care of things inside and outside. The zendo was thoroughly cleaned, with zafus and zabutons brought out to air in the sun on the Russell Street lawn, a field trip for the inanimate. Our big ongoing exterior painting project on the community room building continued, along with work on 1933. Weeds fell with our aversion as Nancy's garden crew was firm but compassionate. In the kitchen, Gary and Meghan made us a simple and very tasty lunch and kept us going with bottomless coffee and tea thermoses, also working, with help, to deep-clean the kitchen. Sewing repair, miscellaneous smaller projects, and Walter's enlightened rewiring of our renovated garage shop happened too. In his office, Sojun Roshi, grinding and mixing his own ink, did calligraphy on the rakasus of our upcoming lay ordinates. Diane Schnapp, our work leader, with her kind and helpful nature, herded cats with ease and kept us all on point. Thank you all!



Weeds spring up



Ladder day saint



Gary's deli



Sew?

Lay Ordination (J. Zaike Tokudo): The Ceremony of Receiving the Precepts for Those Who Remain at Home

Shōgen Zenji “Jukai” states, “All Buddhas and Ancestors taught that receiving the precepts is the first step in the Way.” Dōgen Zenji also tells us that upon receiving the Buddha’s precepts we immediately enter the position of all Buddhas. How so? Because these wonderful precepts arise from the purity of self-nature and reveal the Buddha-nature—our true nature.

The ceremony of receiving the precepts as lay followers is called *zaike tokudo* or lay ordination. According to definition, “ordain” means to invest with the functions of an office or position. In understanding Buddhist ordination, we should know that the functions we are invested with are those of a Buddha. This is exactly the meaning of “upon receiving the precepts we immediately enter the position of all Buddhas.” To have *zaike tokudo* is to acknowledge our true nature and confirm our intent to realize it fully.

The ceremony itself consists of several significant elements to which we should give thought. First, there is the invocation in which the officiant priest invites all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to be present as witnesses. The officiant acts as their representative, but we should know that actually the Buddhas are our *Acariya* or preceptor, therefore, we receive the precepts directly from all Buddhas.

Secondly, all who wish to receive Buddha’s precepts must first purify themselves through confession and repentance in which one acknowledges past and present wrongdoing and delusion. We do this by chanting the verse of “Formless Repentance” and personally looking into our own hearts.

Having purified ourselves, we may receive the Bodhisattva precepts—that is, the Three Refuges (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Prohibitory Precepts—a total of 16. The *Nirvana Sutra* states, “Although all living beings are replete with the Buddha Nature, they must uphold the precepts as the cause before they can perceive it.” Therefore, let us give thought to the meaning of “keeping the precepts is exactly Buddhahood.” Until we fully understand our true nature and penetrate it thoroughly, we may understand the precepts as guidelines for daily living and a framework for Buddhist practice.

Lastly, in acknowledgment of our receiving the precepts and joining the family of Buddha, we are given a *rakusu* (small Buddhist robe which one sews according to the traditional way) and a *kechimyaku* or lineage paper upon which our Buddhist name (given on this occasion by the teacher) is written along with the names of all ancestors in the lineage from Shakyamuni Buddha to our present teacher. The red line that connects your name and all others written therein illustrates the truth that the precepts are indeed the lifeblood of all Buddhas.

Receiving the precepts is an important part of Buddhist practice available to anyone regardless of mental or physical ability. It is the way by which we manifest the truth of our own Buddhahood here in the world, right now.

~ Taizan Maezumi Roshi

(used with permission of Zen Center of Los Angeles)



Old Pond

Old pond —
the big frog who’s
the boss.

*Haiga painting and haiku
by Kazumi Cranney*

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703