



Berkeley Zen Center



August 2010 Newsletter

Okumura Roshi Teaching Retreat

Shohaku Okumura will return for his annual visit and day of teaching at Berkeley Zen Center on Saturday, August 14. The program will run from 6 am until approximately 4:30 pm. The first part of the day will be structured as our usual Saturday program, with a lecture by Okumura Roshi at 10:15 am, followed by a short period of zazen and buffet style lunch with Okumura Roshi in the community room. After a rest period, we will sit another period of zazen and then Okumura Roshi will offer 1½ hours teaching, followed by a final period of zazen. He will continue his Ryokan lectures, and will be speaking on a selection of Ryokan's poems in the section, "Strolling without a Care," in the book "Great Fool." (p. 192-201). (Ctd. on p. 2)

It's summertime!

This year's summer recess will begin after Saturday program on August 21 and end with the resumption of formal zendo activities on Monday morning, August 30. As with winter break, we plan to offer informal zazen Monday through Friday at 5:40 am. and pm., and on Saturday the 28th at 6 a.m. We would like to have volunteers who can open the zendo at those times. A signup will be posted on the patio bulletin board. Please speak to the zendo manager John Moge for questions.

Labor Day Weekend Sesshin

BZC's Labor Day weekend sesshin begins at 5 am on Saturday, September 4 and will end around 5 pm on Sunday, September 5. Along with zazen, service, the fine oryoki dining, and work, we will try something innovative this weekend. The "open period," about 1½ hours each afternoon, will include creative options for ink painting and writing practice as well as open zazen. Materials and very brief instruction will be offered, and we will make every effort to maintain and express the depth of sesshin as we paint, write, or sit. (Ctd. on p. 5)



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

August

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 8/3, 6:20 pm, Wednesday, 8/4, 6:40 am

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)

Sunday, 8/8, 8:00 am-5:10 pm

Okumura Roshi Teaching Retreat

Saturday, 8/14

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 8/15, 8:00 am-Noon

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8/21, 9:40 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 8/21

Summer Recess

Sunday, 8/22 to Sunday, 8/29

September

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 9/2, 6:20 pm, Friday, 9/3, 6:40 am

Labor Day Weekend Sesshin

Saturday, 9/4, 5 am to

Sunday, 9/5, 5 pm

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 9/12, 8:00 am to noon

Kidzendo

Saturday, 9/18

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 9/25, 9:40 am

Women's Sitting

Sunday, 9/26

Zazenkai: A Day of Just Sitting

Sunday, August 8, from 8:00 am to 5:10 pm, BZC priests Catherine Cascade and Andrea Thach will lead a silent one-day sitting. This will be an opportunity to spend a day doing nothing but zazen, kinhin, bowing and eating. We will maintain silence throughout, with the exception of bells to mark meditation periods, and chanting the Refuges aloud at 5:10 pm.

Participants should plan to come for the whole day. A break from 12:20-1:00 will allow time for sack lunches to be eaten in the community room or, if we're enjoying fair weather, outdoors.

There will be a 10-minute period of bowing at your own pace prior to the lunch break, and we will have two periods of fast kinhin. Both of these activities can be adapted to harmonize with individual needs and abilities.

A signup sheet and further information will be posted on the courtyard bulletin board. The fee is \$20.

Please feel free to contact Andrea Thach, andrea.thach@gmail.com, or Catherine Cascade, catherinecascade@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions.

HALF-DAY SITTINGS

Sundays, August 15, and September 12, 2010

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. BZC asks for a \$10 donation for half-day sittings. If you have questions, contact August and September's half-day director Stan Dewey at standewey@comcast.net or 510-528-1989.

Okumura Roshi Retreat, continued

Materials will be available at the retreat.

The morning lecture is open to the public. The afternoon lecture is open to people who come for the Teaching Retreat. There will be a signup sheet so that the cooks might plan for meals. The fee for the day, or part of the day is a sliding scale of \$30-\$50. If you have questions or cannot come to BZC to sign up, please contact the director for the day, Christy Calame at 510-628-0877 x3.

Practice Period 2010 – True Stillness

From Our Shuso:

Dear BZC Sangha,

I want to thank you all for your strong support of me as shuso during the practice period. I am deeply grateful for the attention and care that I received from all of you, which made it possible for me to relax into the role and give as much as I could in return. I have gotten to know all of you in a much deeper way and appreciate everything we do as a sangha. It was a joint effort – I could not have done it without you. Many deep bows,
Seishi Yusho Alexandra Frappier



Benji Paul Ridgway's poem at the shuso ceremony:

Sensational Shuso Sei Shi Yusho

*This week much silent oneness we have shared
Nondual wisdom we've sought high and low.
But if you think the Truth's to you been bared,
There's still 2 things that you have got to know:*

*She's in Samadhi, far from heat or cold
The way there is no mystery to her,
It's why her paint brush strokes flow free and bold,
While tigers 'n rhinos in her lap just purr.*

*To ask directions to the em'rald p'lace,
To which she goes upon her slightest whim,
She is the dragon you will have to face!
So summon all your vigor and your vim,*

*And dare to ask her what you long to know!
Now let us hear Shuso Sei Shi Yusho!*

Finding Presence in Conversation – Self Compassion and Expression

A series of three evening workshop/classes focusing on how to convey one's own meaning and receive others' words in ways that create the quality of connection we aspire to in our sangha, especially when conversation becomes difficult.

Using as a touchstone some of the kind words of our ancestors, we'll explore practical methods of manifesting presence when we speak and/or listen to each other, as well as to ourselves. We'll do simple role plays and practice empathic listening with the aim of increasing our capacity to return to presence when dealing with anger or intensity. Some orientation will be offered around how to distinguish our habitual speech and listening, and how to work with the stories we generate etc.

It is my hope that a practical approach to studying ourselves in this way will shed light on our practice of the Bodhisattva Precepts. A handout will be provided which excerpts various sources including Thich Nhat Hanh, Dogen, Marshall Rosenberg (on Non-Violent Communication - NVC), and others.

The classes will be held on three Thursday evenings (9/9, 9/16, 9/23) from 7:30 to 9:00 pm in the community room. Depending on interest, further meetings on an ongoing basis are possible. Led by Peter Overton ~ peterovrtn@gmail.com.



SEPTEMBER OPEN HOUSE!

Be sure to mark your calendar for an open house and party at Berkeley Zen Center, Saturday, September 11, 11:00 am-1:00 pm. Why an open house? The Board would like to thank you for funding several recent building projects, and to let you have a behind-the-scenes look at some of the work now completed. We'd also like to highlight what work needs to be done in the near future and within the next five years or so. This is our grand kick-off to raise funds for these building projects. Most of all, we want to celebrate our practice place together with food, drinks, music, and a raffle. Let's party!



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.

August 6	Midday sitting and discussion
August 7	Childcare
August 14	Study day—CAMPOUT CANCELED
August 20	Potluck, sitting, and discussion
August 21	KIDZENDO
August 28	BZC closed—summer recess
September 3	Midday sitting and discussion
September 4	Sesshin – no program
September 11	Childcare
September 17	Potluck, sitting, and discussion
September 18	KIDZENDO
September 25	Childcare

Family Practice Email group

Interested in Family Practice activities? To join our email group, send an email to Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org or Marie at deagin@sfo.com.

BZC CAMPOUT CANCELLED

Due to complications around scheduling, the 2010 BZC Campout has been cancelled. Look for the return of this fun event in summer 2011!

Mindfulness Must Be Engaged

Hozan Alan Senauke

I had a broadside hanging over my desk at Buddhist Peace Fellowship in the early 1990s. It was a teaching by Thich Nhat Hanh titled "Mindfulness Must Be Engaged." Mindfulness is the key to our body, the key to our lives. But how is it engaged? Is this engagement part of our true understanding or is it something extra that is added on?

The Buddha's teaching on mindfulness invites us to be mindful of the body in the body, feelings in the feelings, breath in the breath. This means becoming aware of actions and things from within themselves. Aware that one is never truly apart from one's body, breath, feelings. In just this way we are engaged with the world, never apart from it. An old Zen saying goes, "There is nowhere in the world to spit."

Explore this in meditation. Sit comfortably in an upright posture. Close your eyes and rest your hands lightly in your lap. Take a deep breath in through your nose and mouth. Let the air fill your body, moving down from your chest, expanding your lungs, until the breath reaches your *hara* or abdomen. Now breathe out slowly and steadily through your mouth, following the contraction of your belly and the air as it moves through your mouth and back out into the wide world. Again, breathe in deeply, then slowly breathe out. When you reach the end of this exhalation, push a little more air out of your lungs, then breathe in once more. This kind of breathing brings a refreshing change.

You can try this whenever you sit down to meditate, settling your mind and body from the start. Try it at work or before a meeting. It is a simple way to ground your thoughts and feelings in breath. If you have some trouble on the out breath, just begin again, without any judgment. Soon you will be able to feel some mastery over your thoughts and over the muscles that control your breath.

Feel the air as it flows in and out of your body. Each breath brings life. When the motion of breath stops, life stops. And yet the air is everywhere, completely connected like a single seamless fabric spread across the world. The air we breathe is the same air breathed by a homeless man with a begging bowl on a downtown corner. It is the air that a mother and daughter are breathing as they sit in the hospital emergency room at waiting to see a doctor.

Across the bay at San Quentin prison, 4000 men live behind steel bars. The air they breathe smells of sea and fog. I would be surprised if there is any among us whose life is not connected to a man or woman behind bars — a friend, or relative, someone we write to or visit. Only circumstances and karma find some of us here and others under lock and key. At root, our lives, our breath is the same.

The same air sustains Burmese refugees along the Thai border, people whose lives are just as precious to the world as our lives. I have seen these people, shared words and meals with them. Their children are as full of fun and promise as our children, but their futures are shadowed by war and disease.

Thousands of miles from here, the rain forests of Brazil are lungs for the whole planet, taking in carbon dioxide, exhaling oxygen all beings need for life. Those Amazon Basin forests are disappearing at the rate of 20 square miles per day. We are dependent on the trees of Amazonia. Even now it is generating the air we need.

I have read that each breath we take contains atoms breathed by Christ or Buddha, by Caesar or Hitler. Maybe this is apocryphal science. But the energy we transmute through body into action is forever conserved. Form is endlessly changing, and we confirm it in our own experience. Nothing is lost.

Mindfulness *must* be engaged because it *is* engaged. We can enjoy our breathing because countless beings are breathing and being with us. We suffer because countless beings suffer and we are not apart from them. Mindfulness is the complete awareness of interdependence. Awareness comes with responsibility — the ability to respond. In this moment of silence just let us enjoy our breathing.

This piece is edited from an essay in Hozan Alan Senauke's new book, [The Bodhisattva's Embrace: Dispatches from Engaged Buddhism's Front Lines](#). It will be published later this month, available from Amazon.com and at www.clearviewproject.org.

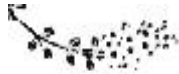
Changing Hands

A deep bow of thanks to out-going **Co-Tenzo Naome Dragstedt**. We especially appreciate Naome's generous, joyous cooking and her administrative fortitude and willingness. She is off now for several months of travel; bon voyage, Naome! Gary Artim will continue in the saddle as lone *Tenzo*.

Andrew Corson will be shifting away from the community room and moving to join **William Gordon** as co-bookstore manager. Welcome **Mike McVey**, our new community room attendant.

Ann Livingston will be tending to our community room altar now.

Juggling Hands: Thank you once again to **Laurie Senauke** for producing and directing this edition of our newsletter, filling in for **Kate Gilpin**.



A second chance to spend time with Okumura Roshi - Fundraiser for Sanshin and the Dogen Institute

On Sunday, August 15, join some of us for a rare chance to talk dharma with Okumura Roshi and Tenshin Reb Anderson as they discuss Okumura Roshi's newly published commentary on the Genjokoan. From 2-4:30 at Norma Fogelberg's home in San Francisco, we'll enjoy light snacks and beverages while talking informally and also hearing the points of view on Dogen's seminal work of two contemporary masterful practitioners. All participants will receive a copy of [Realizing Genjokoan](#), by Okumura Roshi. A donation of \$150 is requested and is fully tax deductible. See our bulletin board for more information, or speak with Sanshin Board member Andrea Thach. Please RSVP by August 7, 2010 to norma@normafogelberg.com. Thank you for your support of Okumura Roshi's work in translation and teaching.

Labor Day Weekend Sesshin, continued

A signup sheet and further details will be posted on the main bulletin board. Participation in the full schedule on both days is expected. If you have questions please contact the *sesshin* director, Mary Duryee at maduryee@earthlink.net or call 528-8223.



SOUNDING BOARD

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

Communication is a vexing issue in any organization. The BZC Board is committed to improving communication with and among members, and we periodically try new ways to exchange information at BZC. One example is this monthly piece – “Sounding Board”.

Mary Duryee suggested that good communications within an organization often relies on at least three different modes for any given communication. We have our monthly newsletter, and we have a Yahoo Group or list serve, bzpcp@yahoo.com, intended mainly, but not exclusively, for those in practice positions. We also make announcements at regular BZC activities.

This month, we will initiate a six-month experiment with a new mode of communication, the Board Table. The Board Table is modeled on the wonderful communication that occurs at tea and at the book table on Saturdays. A card table will be located on the lawn near the *zendo* on Saturdays during tea, staffed by a Board member.

Operating similarly to the “office water cooler” folks may discuss policy and other matters of interest to the Board and members. A Board member will be at the table each week. In addition, the table will feature items of interest such as Board Minutes, BZC Bylaws, Budget, and information on fund raising efforts, our Welcome Brochure, etc. Your comments and concerns will be communicated directly to the Board by our representative. We will also have a “suggestion box” to collect concerns and inquiries. We may post suggestions/questions (with your permission) and the Board response.

We are hopeful that the table will provide an opportunity for more interactive, personal and open communication. Come by and give it a try.

SAVE THE DATE!

Long time BZC member and lay teacher Susan Moon will be at BZC on **September 18**. She'll give the lecture in the morning and offer a workshop in the afternoon, 1 pm to 3 pm. As you may know, Sue's latest book, *This is Getting Old: Zen Thought on Aging with Humor and Dignity*, was recently published. Details follow in the September newsletter.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Third Friday of the month before each issue.

September 2010 deadline:

Friday, August 20, 8 pm

**Berkeley Zen Center
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