



Berkeley Zen Center



April 2011 Newsletter

ZAZENKAI: A DAY OF JUST SITTING

Sunday, April 3, 8:00 am-5:10 pm

This will be a rare 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. Please contact Andrea Thach, andrea.thach@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

Work Day

Sunday, April 10, 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Work Day is an opportunity to take part in the many projects that pop up around BZC. It's a time when any skills you have to offer can be used to benefit our place of practice, adding to its beauty and energy.

Please join us for a half-day or full day of work. Lunch and afternoon refreshments will be provided. A sign-up sheet will be available on the bulletin board at the end of March.

SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD

A message from Sojun Roshi:

I am happy to announce our Spring Practice Period, which will begin with a one-day sesshin on Saturday May 7 and end on Sunday, June 19, the last day of sesshin, with the shuso Dharma-Question Ceremony. Shinko Seiwa Leslie Bartholic-Deep Lake/Clear Peace—will be the shuso this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all.. *Note: A more detailed article including specific Practice Period events and dates will appear in the May issue of the newsletter. This April issue includes the Practice Period calendar insert.*



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

April

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/2

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Retreat)

Sunday, 4/3, 8:00 am-5:10 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday 4/4 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 4/5 6:40 am

Work Day

Sunday, 4/10

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/16, 9:40 am

Leadership Fundraising Party

Saturday, 4/16, 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Mountains and Rivers

Thursday, 4/28 – Sunday, 5/1

May

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 5/1, 8:00 am-noon

New Member Entering Ceremony

Monday, 5/2, 6:20 am

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 5/3, 6:20 pm, Wednesday, 5/4, 6:40 am

Practice Period Opens—One-day Sitting

Saturday, 5/7 (details this page)

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5/14, 9:40 am

Kidzendo, Saturday, 5/21

Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night

Saturday, May 28

APRIL 16TH PARTY TO KICK OFF 2011 LEADERSHIP FUNDRAISING!

Berkeley Zen Center will kick off its Leadership Fund drive with a party on Saturday, April 16, from 11:00-1:00. BZC is fortunate to have two wonderful teachers, Abbot Sojun Mel Weitsman and Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke. The purpose of the Leadership Fund is to raise money specifically targeted to their support. Come celebrate our teachers and help raise some money through a silent auction and a raffle, and enjoy great food, drinks, and music. Even our teachers will get into the act. Sojun Roshi and Hozan Sensei will go head to head in a public “drama combat.” **Mark the date in your calendar right now, 11:00 am—1:00 pm, Saturday, April 16. We look forward to seeing you there. And see the complete list of Silent Auction items on p. 5!**

THE LEADERSHIP FUND

On Saturday, April 16, we will have a party to launch fundraising for our Leadership Fund. What is the Leadership Fund, and why do we need to raise money for it?

The Leadership Fund is basically a savings account to help us take care of our teachers. We are blessed to have Sojun Roshi and Hozan Alan Senauke at the present time and hopefully well into the future. The continuity of our practice is based on their continuing practice, availability, and example. The BZC board is keenly aware of the importance of providing our teachers with adequate compensation consistent with their positions and responsibilities and comparable to other clergy with similar responsibilities. At the same time, the board is committed to planning for future needs that may arise should there be changes in our current leadership. While no changes are anticipated in the near future, in the longer term, retirement costs and the potential need for additional support will add to our operating expenses.

While substantial funding has been secured for the Leadership Fund in recent years from sangha member donations, it is likely that current funding will not meet our teacher compensation needs in future years. The Finance Committee has made some short- and long-term projections and determined that an annual fundraising goal of \$12,000 over the next five years would provide us with a modest reserve for adequately meeting the salary and retirement needs of our teachers. At the March 1 all-sangha potluck, the sangha approved the \$12,000 fundraising goal for this year. Raising this money now will help us to ensure the stability of our practice at Berkeley Zen Center and to respond to the inevitability of change.



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

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.

April 2	BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY
April 9	Childcare
April 15	Potluck, sitting, and discussion
April 16	KIDZENDO
April 23	Childcare
April 30	Childcare
May 7	Sesshin – no program
May 14	Childcare
May 21	KIDZENDO
May 28	Childcare

HALF-DAY SITTING

Sunday, May 1, 8:00 am-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. BZC asks for a \$10 donation for half-day sittings. If you have questions, contact Nina Sprecher, the May half-day director, at 510-848-3585 or ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net.



Dogen's Genjokoan

A talk by Sojun Roshi

given to the Chapel Hill Zen Center, November, 1993

Part II.

When we sit, we are often concerned about the waves in our mind. When I began practicing zazen, all the time I was sitting, my mind was wondering, “Is it worth it?” This is the most common comment on zazen, other than, “My legs hurt.” “My mind is always racing. I’m making up lists while I’m sitting, and thinking about this and that, and I can’t help it. Maybe I shouldn’t sit zazen.” The main thing is not to worry about the waves. The waves will always be there. The nature of the ocean is to have waves. If you think that you can always keep the waves still, then you have a big problem. Sometimes in Buddhist books we read, “Stop the movement of the mind”—even Dogen says that—“Stop the movement of the mind”—which is very idealistic. That’s right, “Stop the movement of the mind.” But stopping the movement of the mind does not mean that you don’t have thoughts. Thoughts come up by themselves. It is simply the nature of the mind to create thoughts. We call it bubbling. Thoughts are bubbling up. Some teachers call it “mind excretions.” The mind is relieving itself. When there is nothing to think about, the mind relieves itself of its accumulation of mental gases. So don’t worry about it. Let the mind do its thing. Don’t try to suppress thoughts.

As thoughts continue to bubble up in the mind, our consciousness tends to get caught up in the thoughts, and it is led astray by the thoughts. So when you recognize that, just let go of the thought. You can say, “Oh, excuse me, I have to go now,” and you just come back. Come back to posture, come back to breathing, over and over again. Just let go and come back. This way, you keep directing desire toward maintaining the body’s posture and breathing, over and over again. As soon as we realize that we are building something on the foundation of a dream, or creating a fantasy on the foundation of some wandering thought, then we let go and come back. Sometimes we build a wonderful sandcastle, and it’s fascinating, and we don’t want to let go of it. Well, that’s okay. Everybody does that. But you should still make the effort. We think we are supposed to have a perfect zazen with no thoughts, sitting up straight, not falling asleep, no pain. This is not the goal of zazen. The goal of zazen is, when you wander off, to come back. If you are continually falling off, you are continually coming back, over and over, a thousand times. So it is intention that matters the most. “I really want to do this. I really make an effort to do this.” It is in this effort that your realization lies—not in your idea of perfection. When your effort is wholehearted, realization is there, and that’s perfect. Perfect isn’t necessarily what we think it is, and enlightenment doesn’t match our idea. This is sometimes called the practice of recollection.

Dogen says, “Flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds spring up with our aversion.” In zazen, we are continually confronted with aversion and attachment. We want something nice—we all want something pleasant, something that feels good, a wonderful state of mind. Sometimes when we have a wonderful state of mind with no pain, we think, “This is it! This is great! This is all worth it! This is why I’m here.” But as soon as we grasp onto that

thought, it starts to change. It's changing anyway, whether we think that or not. We hold something and then it starts to crumble—starts to change. Then we say, "But wait a minute! Don't go away!" And it continues to change, then it starts to get painful and we are not happy—we want to hold onto that state of mind. But as soon as we hold onto it, we start to suffer. Try to be aware when you have a good feeling like that and just enjoy it. When it starts to change, just let it go. We have to accept change right away. If you are going to sit sesshin, you have to accept the changes immediately, without hanging onto the past moment's feeling—just accept everything as it changes, as it is. When you do that, you can sit comfortably and imperturbably, because you are open to everything. This is called samadhi.

When you are not open to everything, you suffer. Dogen said, "Flowers fall with our attachment." We want something so bad, and yet the flower falls, and weeds spring up. It is difficult. It is hard to be open to what you would ordinarily be averse to. It is counterintuitive. When we have pain or discomfort, we usually want to change it. As Suzuki Roshi said, "We are continually changing our equipment, moving around, trying to get comfortable." As soon as we get comfortable, it changes, and it becomes uncomfortable. This is how things are. The way to be comfortable, to have true comfort, is not through trying to control the world around us, but to adjust ourselves, to open ourselves from the inside. When we open ourselves from the inside, absolute and relative are transcended, subject and object are no longer a duality, and we can accept various states of body-mind without being a victim. When aversion arises, take a stand and face it, open yourself to it, be one with it. The usual reaction is to run the other way.

Opening ourselves to what is painful is how we deal with the pain in our legs and with the pain in our mind. Actually, if we stop saying, "good feelings" and "bad feelings," it's much easier. There are no good feelings and bad feelings, there are just feelings. There is no good state of mind or bad state of mind, there is "just this" state of mind. This state of mind is continually changing. There is no special state of mind that is the Zen state of mind to preserve. In zazen, if you are open and alert, quick to accept what arises, you still have pain, you still have difficulty; but it's different—this pain and difficulty are not the same as suffering. Freedom from suffering doesn't mean to get rid of all pain. In Buddhist teaching, sometimes the phrase, "free from all suffering" is used. But it doesn't mean free from all pain, because pain is a part of life. Through our pain we understand life. There is no way that we can understand life without pain. So we need to come to terms with it and accept it as a part of life, but we don't have to be a victim. This is to have freedom.

Within zazen, within the restriction of the posture, how do we find our freedom, how can we be at ease with it? As soon as we start to waver, we waver more and more, and pretty soon we lose it. So when we sit, settled in our body and mind, sitting very still, but not rigidly, there is no need to fidget as if you were defending yourself. Just sit with good posture, good structure, very open and at ease. All the bones are aligned without being attached to each other. When we sit with single-minded effort, all the bones will line up in a harmonious way. So that's why good posture is important. Don't leave anything out. Zazen is body, mind, and breath in the dynamic, harmonious activity of sitting still while completely open and at ease.



List of items for the Silent Auction at April 16th Leadership Fundraising Party

Item #	Description
1	Tahoe Cabin. Three nights at the Log Lodge, a National Register of Historic places landmark on the serene west shore of Lake Tahoe—winner to pay tax and cleaning fee.
2	Dinner for ten cooked by Laurie and Alan Senauke—winners negotiate date and menu with cooks and find location.
3	Two tickets to the May 7 performance of Bach's <i>Magnificat</i> and Lotti's <i>Mass</i> for three choirs performed by the American Bach Soloists at the First Congregational Church in Berkeley.
4	Scroll by Kaz Tanahashi, Mindfulness calligraphy.
5	Join Sojun and his dog Chulo for a Canine Walk on April 23, at 1 pm until the dogs call it a day at South Park Drive in Tilden, Point Isabel, or Berkeley Marina. Come with or without a dog. Arrf. For five top bidders. Oral history video by Ed Herzog. Have you or a loved one ever wanted to tell their history to preserve it for future generations? Here's your chance! ~ For a \$500 minimum bid, award-winning documentarian Ed Herzog will film your oral history. ~ For a \$1,000 minimum bid he will also edit the interview, and add your precious photographs and music.
7	Painting by Jennifer Copeland - "Snow Scene", 2010, 31" X 21", magic marker, acrylic paint, and china marker on rice paper, mounted on Arches watercolor paper.
8	One pound of Peet's coffee (your choice) per month for a year. Does not include the ultra-expensive coffees.
9	Coffee and tea tasting with our favorite Buddhist Barista, Ross Blum, at the Vine Street store on a Saturday from 2-3. For top eight bidders.
10	Aromatherapy facial at Face Value in Albany.
11	"Liberation Through Handwriting" instruction and practice for a small group, with Ed Brown at John and Colleen Busch's house.
12	A signed broadside of Jane Hirshfield's poem "Tree," mounted in a unique handmade wood frame. The frame has the artist's story of its making on the back.
13	One half-session massage (25 min) at Kabuki Springs & Spa in SF, with access to the baths.
14	Hand-sewn sutra cloth by Jean Selkirk.
15	Beautiful handmade happi coat (size, women's small).
16	Photographer Ko Blix will take your portrait and supply a 10"x14" framed print.

ONE-TIME CLASS DATE CHANGE

Sojun Roshi's April class will be the second Thursday of this month, April 14 (rather than the last Thursday of the month) due to BZC schedule complexities.

CPR) & AED TRAINING

Saturday, April 23, noon in the zendo

Again this year, BZC is offering CPR/AED training for our "first responders" and to the sangha as a whole. First responders are folks, like some of our residents, who are likely to be at most BZC events. Our goal is to have five-six first responders trained in CPR/AED. We are also offering this training as a service to individual sangha members who do not plan to be first responders. The class will be approximately two hours long. Cost of the training is \$40 per person. Note that if this fee is a financial burden for a first responder, it can be waived.

Sign up on the patio bulletin board. For more information, please contact Peter Pfaelzer, BZC Health & Safety Coordinator, (510) 290-4753 or pfpfaelzer@gmail.com.

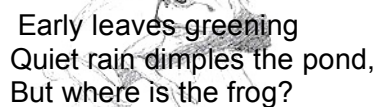
FOUR-DAY MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS SESSHIN

Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place Thursday through Sunday, April 28-May 1, at Point Reyes. Sojun Roshi will be leading it.

The sesshin will begin with an orientation meeting Wednesday evening, April 27, in the community room. Thursday morning we will carpool to Point Reyes, then hike from the Palomarin trailhead to Wildcat Camp (5.5 miles), moving at a moderate pace with frequent rest stops and lunch along the way. We will get back to Berkeley around 5:00 pm Sunday. All meals are provided and camping experience is not required. 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. Note that if too few people are able to attend all four days, we will revert to a three-day schedule (Friday through Sunday).

The signup sheet will be posted on the BZC bulletin board. Signup deadline is Saturday, April 23. The fee is \$75. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at (510) 527-0959 or email him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

A Spring Haiku



Early leaves greening
Quiet rain dimples the pond,
But where is the frog?

~ Meghan Collins

BZC DOCUMENTARY FILM COPIES

Copies of the just-completed one-hour documentary, *Old Plum Mountain: Berkeley Zen Center, Life Inside the Gate*, will be ready to purchase in a couple of weeks and can be ordered from filmmaker Ed Herzog. Cost is \$20.00 plus shipping and handling, if necessary. Contact Ed at edherzog@comcast.net to order copies.

BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS BEGINS

Although it's only April, the BZC board is already beginning its search for prospective candidates for our member-at-large election next fall. Formal nominations will occur at the All-Sangha meeting on Tuesday, September 13. In preparing to recruit candidates we are identifying a variety of skills that support our work, including but not limited to: communication, organization, information technology, money management, fundraising, engineering, building maintenance and nonprofit law. Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings as well as to serve on one or more working committees—finance, project management, development, and ethics and reconciliation (EAR). At our September meeting all BZC members are welcome to nominate members-at-large for the Board. This early announcement is meant to provide Sangha members plenty of time to think about potential candidates and to contact those people concerning their willingness to be nominated.

We wholeheartedly welcome your participation in the nomination process!

NEWSLETTER: PLEASE PROTECT OUR MEMBERS' PRIVACY

Over time it has become clear that there are some sangha members who do not want their names mentioned in the newsletter, or, more specifically, in the version that appears on the (publicly accessible) internet version, and there have been instances in which sangha members were distressed to find that their names had appeared there.

We request that, before you submit an item to the newsletter, you check with all those whose names you may mention in your item to be sure they're comfortable with the appearance of their names, not only in our limited-distribution hardcopy newsletter, but also on the more widely distributed internet version. Please verify this with them *before* you submit your article to the newsletter.

Thank you for helping us protect the privacy of our sangha members. - *The editor*

ZEN WOMEN'S RETREAT IN JULY

The sixth annual Zen Women's Retreat is scheduled for July 7-10, 2011 at Empty Nest Zendo, North Fork, CA, in the Sierra Nevada foothills between Fresno and Yosemite National Park. Many members of BZC have attended past retreats and found them renewing and inspirational. This year's teachers will be Enji Angie Boissevain, Shosan Vicki Austin, and Myoan Grace Schireson. Myokaku Jane Schneider (artist/co-founder of Beginner's Mind Zen Center) will offer calligraphy instruction. As in previous years, the retreat will offer teaching of body-friendly meditation practices to develop concentration and facilitate healing, discussion of issues facing women in Buddhist practice, and creative writing exercises to bring forth women's distinctive spiritual qualities. This year's retreat will also focus specifically on these open questions regarding Zen Practice: How can women inspire each other? How do we learn to express our wisdom? What is women's way to deeper embodiment (body integration) of Zen?

The location is secluded, serene, with mountain views. There is time in the schedule for swimming, enjoying the views and gardens, walks in the hills, building new friendships and renewing old ones. This retreat has become increasingly popular, and space is limited. It would be a good idea to sign up well in advance. A flier is posted on the BZC Zen-related bulletin board outside the community room. To register, or for more information, please email baika2@gmail.com, or call 510-407-7910. Information is also online at www.emptynestzendo.org.

OFFICE MANAGER REQUESTS

1. The Office Manager has an email address: bzcoffice manager@gmail.com. Please use this when contacting the OM on BZC business.
2. When making payments by check, ALWAYS specify what you are paying for in the note section of your check, even if you're sure we know. If noting dues, specify the time period the payment is for. It is fine to combine different payments on one check, but be sure to detail clearly in the note section. ~ Thank You!

OUR JAPANESE FRIENDS

In Japan there is no degree of separation, the country is so small, and people relate in a familial way. Indeed, the earthquake has affected us all only a degree away. Sendai, the town most immediately affected, is the training and twenty-year home of the Zen teacher with whom Catherine Cascade and John Mogeey sit on Tuesdays and Saturdays now. Our sangha member Peter Parise lives in Chiba, just to the south of Sendai, where the dramatic pictures of the natural gas fires were taken. Tenku Ruff, who has sat sesshin with us, trained in a temple that is only kilometers from the 6.2 quake that hit

the same day in Nagano. Other friends live in Fukushima and have been evacuated with the nuclear danger. In addition, we are friends with a Hiroshima survivor. Imagine the pain of another nuclear disaster in Japan.

A Japanese friend said, "Right now, we Japanese are one person" Many of us feel this disaster intimately.

So, for those who may wish and are able to be of material support, one possible organization to donate to is the Sotoshu. As a friend who has lived in Japan many years reminded me, for the Japanese, ceremony is very important, and being able to provide the pastoral care and funerals for so many thousands now will be difficult but especially important. Please see the appeal below from the North American Bishop of the Sotoshu, Daigaku Rumme.

~ Andrea Thach

AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Dear Dharma Friends,

As you already know, a massive earthquake has hit the Tohoku district of northeastern Japan. That earthquake generated a large tsunami which has caused untold damage to many towns in the area. The situation is tragic. According to news reports, thousands have lost their lives and the number is still increasing. A number of Sotoshu temples in the area were also destroyed.

There has been an outpouring of grief and sympathy for those who are suffering there. Many people have contacted us at the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office asking how they can contribute money for disaster relief to help in the recovery. We will collect relief funds at our office and take them to Sotoshu. If you and your temple or center wish to help with this, please send a check to our office payable to "Association of Soto Zen Buddhists" by April 10th, 2011. Please write on the check that it is specifically for "Japan Earthquake Relief."

Thank you for your consideration.

Gassho,

Rev. Daigaku Rumme,

Director, Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office

123 S. Hewitt St.

Los Angeles, CA 90012



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