



# Berkeley Zen Center



March 2012 Newsletter

## LAY ENTRUSTMENT CEREMONY

On Monday, March 5, Ron Nestor, So On So Do (Kind, Plain, Simple, Ancestral Way) will receive Lay Entrustment from Sojun Roshi in a ceremony held in the zendo at 5:40 am. All members are invited. An informal reception will follow.

## ALL SANGHA POTLUCK & BUDGET MEETING

**Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 pm**

All members are warmly invited to share potluck offerings of great food, as well as discussion and approval of the 2012 BZC budget. The budget is the treasurer's best effort to project the financial goals and realities for BZC in this new year. Your presence at this meeting makes a difference. Watch the bulletin board for more details.

## HALF-DAY SITTING

**Sunday, March 4, 8:00 am–noon**

BZC offers eight half-day sittings each year. Each includes five periods of zazen, kinhin (walking meditation) 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 Zen students. 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 the March half-day director Nina Sprecher at [ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net) or 510-848-3585.



### 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

### March

#### Founder’s Ceremony

Thursday, 3/1, 6:20 pm

Friday, 3/2 6:40 am

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 3/4, 8:00 am–noon

#### All-Sangha Potluck—Budget Meeting

Tuesday, 3/6, 6:30 pm

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3/10, 9:40 am

#### One-day Sitting

Saturday, 3/17

#### Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)

Sunday, March 25, 8:00 am–5:10 pm

### April

#### Buddha’s Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/7

#### One-day Sitting

Sunday, 4/15, 5:00 am–5:00 pm

#### Founder’s Ceremony

Monday 4/3 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 4/4 6:40 am

#### Work Day

Sunday, 4/22

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/14 9:40 am

#### Mountains and Rivers

Thursday, 4/26 – Sunday, 4/29

## FAMILY SITTING

### New for 2012! Save the Date!

IT-TAKES-A-SANGHA: Announcing a new concept for BZC, a one-day FAMILY SITTING, to be held October 7, for families and friends of families—a day when partners won't have to choose which one sits zazen while the other sits the children; single parents won't have to skip sesshin for lack of childcare; and best of all, children of all ages will get to experience Zen Center as a special place to be and to belong.

All are invited to join this sitting in support of family practice. Sitting and working together, our grandparent generation and the “aunts and uncles” of the sangha will connect with parents we've missed and get acquainted with the next generation.

The 9:00 am-4:00 pm schedule will allow full- or half-day sign-ups, with thirty-minute sittings (including ten minutes of zazen in one period for interested older children), plus kinhin, lecture, lunch, work period (involving children), and tea with discussion. Childcare for appropriate age groups will include activities led by sangha members, yet to be identified! Planners Marie Hopper, Laurie Senauke, and Catharine Lucas are looking for volunteers to lead art, music, story-telling, or movement activities.

We are still in the planning stages and eager for your input. E-mail questions, suggestions, or offers of help to Marie Hopper at [marie\\_hopper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

## FINDING PRESENCE IN CONVERSATION

On three upcoming Thursday evenings, March 15, April 5, and May 17, this class will meet in the community room from 7:30–9:00 pm. The focus of this inquiry into communication is whatever is present for any one of us when we meet. I hope we will continue to explore ways to find greater freedom in making ourselves known and in hearing each other. All are welcome and invited. Facilitated by Peter Overton. 510-848-5239; [peterovrtn@gmail.com](mailto:peterovrtn@gmail.com).

## ALL-CHIDEN POTLUCK & REVIEW ON 3/24!

*All old-timers, newcomers and wanna-bes are invited to join fellow chidens after lecture on Saturday, March 24 for a potluck lunch and an orientation/review session led by Sojun and our head chiden.*

Deep bows to the chidens, old and new, who make up our 2012 roster, and a warm welcome to anyone interested in joining our ranks. (Note: you can be a chiden even if you are a relative newcomer to BZC!)

*(Ctd. on p. 4)*



## Family Activities at BZC

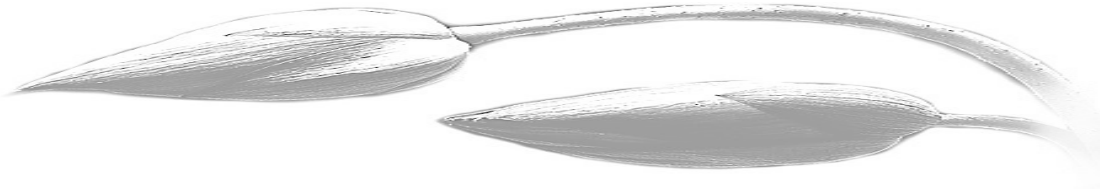
**Saturday Morning Childcare** Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturday mornings for zazen from 9:30 to 10:15, then families are welcome to listen to the lecture on the sound system in the community room. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; phone or email Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto: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 in the community room at 9:30 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene in the community room for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

**Family Practice Email Group** To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We'd love to have you join this list if you have children in your life, even if you don't typically attend family practice events. We promise to only send, at most, ONE email per week, just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, just email Laurie ([lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org)) or Marie ([marie\\_hopper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net)).

March	3	Childcare
March	10	Childcare
March	17	Sesshin—no program
March	24	Childcare
March	31	Childcare
April	7	<b>Buddha's Birthday</b>
April	14	Childcare
April	21	Childcare
April	28	Childcare
May	5	Childcare
May	12	Sesshin—no program
May	19	<b>Kidzendo</b>
May	26	Childcare
June	2	Childcare
June	9	Childcare
June	16	<b>Kidzendo</b>
June	23	Sesshin—no program
June	30	Childcare

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**  
**Third Friday of the month before each issue.**  
**April deadline: Friday, 3/16, 8:00 pm**



## *Thoughts from Sojun*

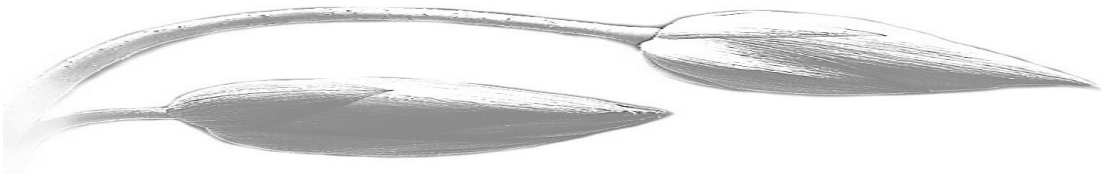
*March 2012*

**7**he basic understanding of Soto Zen is that ordinary beings and Buddhas are not two. So we have to investigate what is meant by “ordinary” and “Buddha.” Since we speak of Ordinary and Buddha, they are two things. But the understanding is that they are one. Although this is a basic understanding, what does it really mean for our daily life?

One day as I was sitting in my office my eyes fell on my bicycle as it was leaning against the wall, and my gaze wandered to one of the wheels, and I saw it as a mandala. The axle, the hub, as the center, and the spokes radiating in all directions, and attached to the spokes, the rim with its tire (for absorbing the hard knocks).

Circles and cycles are fundamental in describing Buddhist understanding, and especially in Zen. There are the ox-herding pictures, Tozan’s five ranks, Isan’s one hundred circles, and in early Buddhism we have the twelve links of conditioned co-arising.

The Tibetan model pictures the hub of the wheel of karmic life as greed, ill will, and delusion as characterized by the pig, the chicken, and the snake, and they are known as the three poisons. There are six spokes emanating from the hub that divide the six worlds, or realms: heaven, hell, fighting demon, human, hungry ghost, and animal. The rim that binds it all together is made of the twelve nidanas, or karmic conditions that continuously turn the wheel and lead to suffering. So this wheel, as it is, illustrates the human condition when turning on the three poisons and driven by karma and self-centeredness. The pig, the chicken, and the snake are symbols of self-delusion, which include greed and ill will and are the basis for ordinary human suffering. So in order to free our self from turning and being turned by our karmic life, we center our self on Buddha. We make a shift, and become Buddha-centered rather than self-centered. We offer our self to Buddha. This is renunciation. With Buddha as the hub of the mandala we are illumined from within and the six worlds become our fields of practice. This is the freedom of living by vow instead of being pulled around by karma. This is the meaning of ordination and the vow to save all beings. Even after taking our vow, we will still find our self shifting back and forth. This can only reinforce our determination for true practice.



## ABBOT'S REPORT TO THE SANGHA

First, I want to say a few words about our fundraising last year. In addition to our requests for regular member dues and donations, we conducted two special fund drives, one for capital projects (building repair) and one for future teacher support. Members generously contributed to the two special fund drives and they were very successful, but the flow of cash from dues and donations to support regular ongoing activities went into drought mode. This resulted in a shortfall in income to support our ongoing operations. Having had to choose among three worthy causes for contributing your hard-earned money to Berkeley Zen Center was understandably challenging. In the future we promise not to exceed more than one special fund drive a year so as not to undercut regular operations. (Lesson learned!) On behalf of all of us, I want to thank each one of you for your generosity.

From my point of view, income from membership dues and general donations is the most basic. We have always made an effort to keep our dues and fees as low as possible and have avoided nickel and diming (my computer thinks that is not a word) the sangha. The board is working on ways to make it easier for us to remember dues payments. When each one of us pays our dues on a regular basis it keeps our finances in good order and gives us lots of flexibility.

On another note, I want to let you know about my own situation and clarify any doubts or misconceptions about the future of BZC leadership. About five years ago I revealed to the board that I had

chosen Hozan Alan Senauke to be my successor as abbot should anything happen to me such that I might be unable to continue. The reason I revealed this was because the board wanted to plan for the potential future need to pay for both my retirement and the salary of another abbot. At that time, I spoke openly to the sangha about gradually stepping back from my responsibilities as abbot, and we created the position of vice abbot for Hozan to help with the transition. However, after exploring what my retirement might look like for the past few years, I've decided that I do not want to retire. I'd like to continue in my role as abbot for as long as I am able to do so. This change of heart has caused some tension in relations between Alan and myself, and some anxiety within the sangha.

I have apologized to Alan for setting up expectations in the short term, regarding my retiring and his assuming the role of abbot, that were not fulfilled. From time to time, Hozan and I have difficulties with each other that make some people feel uneasy. Sharing leadership responsibility in such a close environment, we sometimes step on each other's toes, and questions of style come up. But I wish to make it clear that Hozan has made an enormous contribution to BZC and its members and has faithfully supported me for many years. When the time comes that I am no longer able to fulfill my duties as abbot, Hozan is my choice to be the next abbot. I look forward to an ongoing dialogue with the board and sangha members as we continue to discuss leadership and transition issues and to envision the future of BZC. Please feel free to come to me with any questions or concerns.

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### ALL-CHIDEN POTLUCK *(Ctd. from p. 2)*

There are a few spaces left, and this is a great time to sign on. Call head chiden Catharine Lucas at 510-526-3100, or email: [cmanerlucas@earthlink.net](mailto:cmanerlucas@earthlink.net).)

Chidening, the art and practice of caring for our altar, is a rich opportunity to deepen your practice of mindfulness and your awareness of zendo forms. Though it is a solitary practice, each chiden becomes part of an invisible network of those who share and support each other in this position. And now here's a chance to get acquainted!

We'll start around 11:30 in the community room and move to the zendo from 12:30 to 2:00 pm. Please bring a dish to share and your questions, suggestions, confusions, and smart tips for our shared work. Watch for bulletin board sign-up!

I look forward to seeing you!

In gassho, Catharine Lucas

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### FOUR-DAY MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS SESHIN

Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place Thursday through Sunday, April 26-29, at Point Reyes.

The sesshin will begin with an orientation meeting Wednesday evening, April 25, 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.

The sign-up sheet will be posted on the BZC bulletin board. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, April 21. The fee is \$75. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at (510) 527-0959 or email him at [knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

## SOUNDING BOARD

March, 2012

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

The board recently discussed the pros and cons of hiring sangha members to do paid project contract work at BZC. The work in question almost always involves repair, maintenance, or construction of our buildings or grounds, although it might extend to internet or computer-related projects, as well. On the one hand, we like the idea of providing work to our fellow members. It supports their livelihood and provides us with workers who care deeply about BZC and can express that partly through their heartfelt effort and craft. On the other hand, painful conflicts can arise, and have indeed arisen in the past. If there is miscommunication about a project, or the results aren't what we hoped for, or time and money issues develop, we feel as if we have to walk on eggshells to avoid any lingering resentments that may occur. With an "outside contractor" we can be freer in negotiating difficult issues without fear of creating a sour relationship. Another factor is that almost all practice positions at BZC are done on a volunteer basis. This has been true since day one in 1967. Many positions require extensive effort and time. Why pay one person but not another?

The board has created a new policy in principle, taking all this into consideration, although the finalized wording is yet to be voted upon. We will generally engage outside contractors for all our paid project work. The two possible exceptions will be short-term emergencies where time is a critical factor or rare cases in which previous harmonious relationships over decades are sustained. In either situation the board will give careful consideration before proceeding. If you would like to comment on this policy please speak to or email President Gerry Oliva or Board Communication Director Ron Nestor.

~ Ron Nestor

### A DAY OF JUST SITTING—ZAZENKAI

Sunday, March 25, from 8:00 am to 5:10 pm will be an opportunity to spend a rare day doing nothing but zazen, kinhin, bowing, and eating. During this semiannual sitting, we will maintain silence throughout, with the exception of bells to mark meditation periods, and chanting the Refuges aloud at 5:10 pm.

Participants are encouraged to come for the whole day. Please plan to come for the entire time that you commit to. A break from 12:20-1:00 will allow time for bag lunches to be eaten in the community room or, if we're enjoying fair weather, outdoors.

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Following the practice of BZC teacher Maylie Scott, there will be a ten-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.

The zazen will be led by BZC priest Andrea Thach, andrea.thach@gmail.com. Please feel free to contact her if you have any questions. A sign-up sheet and further information will be posted on the courtyard bulletin board. A fee for the day of \$15 is requested.

### ITEMS NEEDED FOR 9/12 BZC PARTY!

Mark your calendars! Berkeley Zen Center will hold a gala appreciation/fundraising party on Saturday, September 22, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. There will be music, refreshments, a raffle, and a silent auction. The development committee is just beginning its search for raffle and auction items. Last year, sangha members contributed such popular items as a delicious prepared dinner, three nights at a Tahoe cabin, art work, coffee and tea tasting at Peet's, and a Tassajara survival kit.

**If you have an item or an activity you'd like to donate, please contact Jake Van Akkeren, 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 pm) or email jvanakkeren@comcast.net.** Thanks in advance for your support!

### LZTA MEETING REPORT

In January Sue Moon and Bob Rosenbaum attended the third annual meeting of the Lay Zen Teacher's Association (LZTA) in New Orleans. The LZTA is a sangha specifically for lay teachers who have been formally entrusted to teach in their respective Zen lineages and who have decided to teach not as priests but as lay people. After adopting a mission statement and criteria for membership, the bulk of the meeting was spent exchanging information about the wide variety of ways members practice and teach the dharma. For example, in some sanghas lay teachers perform traditional ceremonies; other sanghas restrict these functions to priests; and still other sanghas dispense with most formal ceremonies. Some of the novel forms members are experimenting with include co-teaching, public dokusan, and having students at all levels answer questions in a kind of shosan. There was a good deal of friendly debate, but no sense of attachment to one "right" way, and this led to a great feeling of mutual support, as well as excitement about the future of lay Zen practice. If you're interested in more information, speak to Sue or Bob, or go to the website at [www.lzta.org](http://www.lzta.org).

~ Bob Rosenbaum

### Mark The Date!

### OKUMURA-ROSHI TEACHING DAY

**Saturday, August 4, 2012**

Okumura Roshi will be coming to BZC again this August to offer an all-day program ending at 5:00 pm. More information will be available as the date grows nearer.

*On December 3, 2011, a sunny, mid-day procession by the participants of the 88<sup>th</sup> Tassajara Ango to Suzuki Roshi's Memorial commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. An elegantly simple ceremony with offerings of light, flowers, incense, and heartfelt words. Gentle gusts of wind with red-tail hawks screeching and circling overhead.*

Suzuki Roshi,  
Forty years: a flash and an eternity  
The Buddha hall overflowing with people and tears  
Chogyam Trungpa sobbing at the foot of your coffin.  
I hear your chuckle in the creek and feel your strength in the stones.  
Gate gate para gate  
Parasam gate bodhi svaha!

Al Tribe

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