



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2012 Newsletter

SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sitting starting at 5:00 am on Saturday, May 12 and last through the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 24. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations outside the gate. Kisen Hoshin Marie Hopper—Radiant Spring/Dharma Heart—will be shuso this year, sharing the abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. Sue Oehser will serve as benji, assisting the shuso.

There will be a Friday night class with Sojun Roshi studying Dogen Zenji's key fascicle, *Genjokoan*. For a detailed practice period schedule, see the bulletin board shelf. Practice period applications are available on the main bulletin board shelf; please fill one out and return it to the shuso's box on the community room porch by Monday, May 7.

Remember that, besides signing up for practice period and turning in a registration form, you need to sign up separately for a number of the individual practice period events. See the bulletin board for these sign-up sheets. *[Ed. note: Practice period calendar included in this issue.]*

Practice Period Events

Opening sitting: 5/12, 5 am to 9:10 pm
 Opening/Shuso Entering Ceremony: 5/12, 4 pm
 Shuso talks: 5/14, 5/19, 6/1, 6/9
 Classes: Friday evenings, 5/18 to 6/15
 Bansan (tea, dharma discussion with the abbot): 5/18
 Dinner and Skit Night: 6/2, 6 pm
 Shosan (dharma dialogue with the abbot): 6/15, 6/18
 Lay Ordination: 6/16, 3 pm
 Five-day Sesshin: 6/20 to 6/24
 Shuso Hossen (dharma dialogue with the shuso): 6/24



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

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

May

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 5/3, 6:20 pm, Friday, 5/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5/5, 9:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 5/6, 8:00 am-noon

Practice Period Opens—One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 5/12 (details this page)

Kidzendo, Saturday, 5/19

June

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 6/2, 9:40 am

Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night

Saturday, 6/2

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 6/3, 8:00 am-noon

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 6/4, 6:20 pm
 Tuesday, 6/5, 6:40 am

Kidzendo, Saturday, 6/16

Lay Ordination/Zaiko Tokudo

Saturday, 6/16, 3:00 pm

Five-day Sesshin

Wednesday-Sunday, 6/20-24

Shuso Hossen, Practice Period Ends

Sunday, 6/24, 3:30 pm

Informal Zazen

Monday, 6/25, morning

ASHES INTERMENT CEREMONY FOR REBECCA MAYENO

On Saturday, May 19 at 2:00 pm, all are invited to attend a ceremony led by Sojun Roshi to inter Rebecca Mayeno's ashes in the memorial garden at Berkeley Zen Center.

MAY 12 ONE-DAY SITTING: OPENING OF SPRING PRACTICE PERIOD

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sitting on Saturday, May 12, from 5:00 am until 9:10 pm. All are welcome to attend. If this is your first sesshin at BZC, it is strongly recommended that you first participate in a full Saturday program and that you speak with the sesshin director.

Our practice period entering ceremony will take place that day at 4 pm. All practice period participants are welcome to come for this ceremony.

After you've read the sign-up information notice on the bulletin board and signed up for the sitting, please complete a **SESSHIN INFORMATION FORM** and place it in the sesshin director's box. (If you completed one for a prior sesshin, there is no need for another one unless information has changed.) If you have any questions, contact the sesshin director, Mary Duryee, maduryee@earthlink.net or 510-872-0507 (before 9 pm).

MARK THE DATE! PRACTICE PERIOD DINNER AND SKIT NIGHT

On Saturday, June 2, we will celebrate practice period with an evening of good food, great entertainment, and, we hope, some daring comedic episodes. Look to the bulletin board for more information on sign-ups closer to the big day. This is the time to show up with that special offering you never thought would be possible to share with your friends.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
June deadline: Friday, 4/18, 8:00 pm.



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, 510-845-2215, 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 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) or Marie (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

May	5	Childcare
May	12	Sesshin—no program
May	19	Kidzendo
May	26	Childcare
June	2	Childcare
June	9	Childcare
June	16	Kidzendo
June	23	Sesshin—no program
June	30	Childcare

Note: Childcare for July and August by appointment (lauries@kushiki.org)

DEAR SANGHA AND ESPECIALLY FAMILIES,

We are excited that the shuso (head student) for BZC spring practice period is going to be a parent, Marie Hopper. We want to encourage any parents who would like to participate. Generally the requirements are to come to three periods of zazen a week and attend as many practice period events (classes, ceremonies, sesshins, etc.) as you can (see details in this issue and on the practice period registration form). In order to assist families to attend, we are planning to offer childcare and dinner for one evening zazen per week, probably Fridays, and perhaps for the class as well (Friday evenings). Childcare will continue on Saturdays. Note that Marie will be giving the talk for Kidzendo on May 19. Please let this year's benji, Sue Oehser (soehser@earthlink.net), know what would enable you to join the practice period, and don't be afraid to think outside the box!



PRACTICE PERIOD STANDARDS

May 12 to June 24 2012

What are we endeavoring to accomplish?
A peaceful and harmonious abiding for six weeks, and a renewal of your practice intention, setting a tone for the rest of the year. Finding the right rhythm for this time period and making adjustments. Being careful about your obligations while honoring your practice commitment. Balancing and integrating zazen and your daily activities.

That means creating a reasonable schedule without cherry picking the practice period events. You will most likely end up letting go of some minor activities for this time in order to make your participation meaningful. For most of us it is hard to add any more zazen to our busy schedules, but if you can, all the better.

It is important to make an effort to pay attention to your home and work practice, and ask for your family's support. Please try to be prepared when you come to the Friday evening class, having at least read the material so that it doesn't turn into a lecture.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICES YOU CAN DO AT ANY TIME.

Patience; settle on the present moment.

Complete one activity before going on to the next.

Always be aware of being centered.

Breathe from the abdomen.

Engage each activity totally and thoroughly.

Be mindful of intention. Without intentional practice, there is no way to train, and it is difficult to sustain.

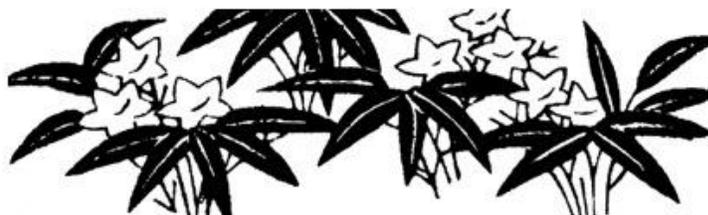
Choose one precept to work with. (This could be a good dokusan subject.)

Set an example.

Feel free to ask questions. Questions are always welcome.

Dogen Zenji encourages all students to blend like milk and water.

If we pay attention to the elements of this simple outline we will be sure to have a good and successful practice period.



SOUNDING BOARD

Leadership Clarity

May, 2012

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

Our abbot and vice abbot, Sojun Roshi and Hozan Sensei, have been working closely together for decades. Sojun's public designation of Hozan as his successor about seven years ago and Hozan's subsequent appointment as vice abbot in 2007 naturally began a new chapter in their relationship to each other and to the sangha. Following this step there was some vagueness between the two and within the community about the timing of Sojun's plans for continuing as abbot versus stepping down and taking a senior teaching role within the sangha. In addition, Hozan's socially engaged peace work with international Buddhist groups raised questions about his plans as well. Because of these concerns, the board asked Sojun and Hozan to each write an article for the BZC newsletter clarifying their understanding of their current roles and plans. The resulting articles have shed a welcome light on their feelings and positions.

The board is also aware that sangha members have further questions as to how the entire process of BZC abbot succession works, given that for forty-five years we've had only one abbot, our founder Sojun. Traditionally in Zen temples the abbot designates his or her successor. The BZC bylaws state, "She/he(the current abbot) shall designate her/his own successor...the position of head priest shall be confirmed by the board and approved by the membership."

This description of the succession process needs further explication. How shall the board and community discuss and designate their approval? Should we simply check the box for abbot approval "yes" or "no" when voting for that year's board candidates as we do now? Should there be a more thorough process that allows some discussion? Should we have a specified term for the abbot as San Francisco Zen Center does, or should it be open ended? Should there be a process for exploring the leadership structure?

Moving forward the board feels a keen responsibility to inform, and to listen and respond to these and any other related issues and questions. There is no hurry or sense of urgency, as both Sojun and Hozan are well settled and content in their current roles. Depending on how many people are interested we are proposing a small discussion group format. Some planning is necessary by the board before we do this. If you are interested in participating, or if you have process suggestions, please contact our president Gerry Oliva, olivag@fcm.ucsf.edu, or board communication chair Ron Nestor, rnestor1@yahoo.com. There will also be a sign-up list on the bulletin board.

HALF-DAY SITTING

Sunday, May 6, 8:00 am–noon

Here's your chance for mid-spring calm practice! BZC offers seven 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 entire four-hour schedule.

There is a \$10 donation requested for half-day sittings. Please do not wear scented personal products or clothing laundered using scented products. If you have questions, or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the May half-day director Nina Sprecher at ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net or at 510-848-3585. There will be another half-day sitting on June 3.

FINDING PRESENCE IN CONVERSATION

On Thursday, May 17 this class will meet in the community room from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. The focus of our inquiry into communication is whatever is present for any one of us when we meet. We will continue to explore ways to find greater freedom in making ourselves known and in hearing each other. As we are meeting during practice period, the focus for the class will be whatever theme is suggested by Sojun for the practice period as a whole. All are welcome and invited. The class is facilitated by Peter Overton, 510-848-5239 or peterovrtn@gmail.com.



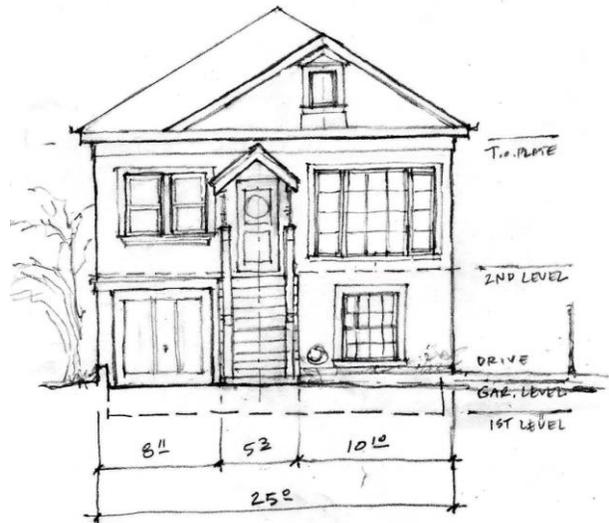
CARING FOR OUR TEMPLE AND PRACTICE PLACE 2012

Consistent with the building improvement program that the Board of Directors established in 2010, the Project Management Team is focusing upon two major projects during 2012—structural repairs and façade improvements to the front of 1933 Russell Street, and functional and design improvements to the community room porch.

The repairs to 1933 Russell Street are required to improve seismic safety of the building and also to repair and replace leaking and rotting windows in the apartment above. There may also be some cosmetic improvements to the façade since the structural repairs may require removing the existing siding on the front of the building. The cost for this project is currently estimated to be between \$20,000 and \$25,000, though effort will be made, as in earlier projects, to reduce costs where possible. Shelley Brock and Greg Denny are coordinating this project.

The improvements to the community room porch have been contemplated for some time and the first phase of the project, improving seismic safety and appearance of the outer wall, was completed last fall. The proposed improvements include expanding and reconfiguring the porch deck, installing “wrap-around” stairs, and installing a new roof structure to match the new stair configuration. The project may also include creating new storage on the porch and improved access to the kitchen. The remaining cost for this second phase of the community room porch project is estimated to be between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Mary Duryee and Ken Powelson are coordinating this project.

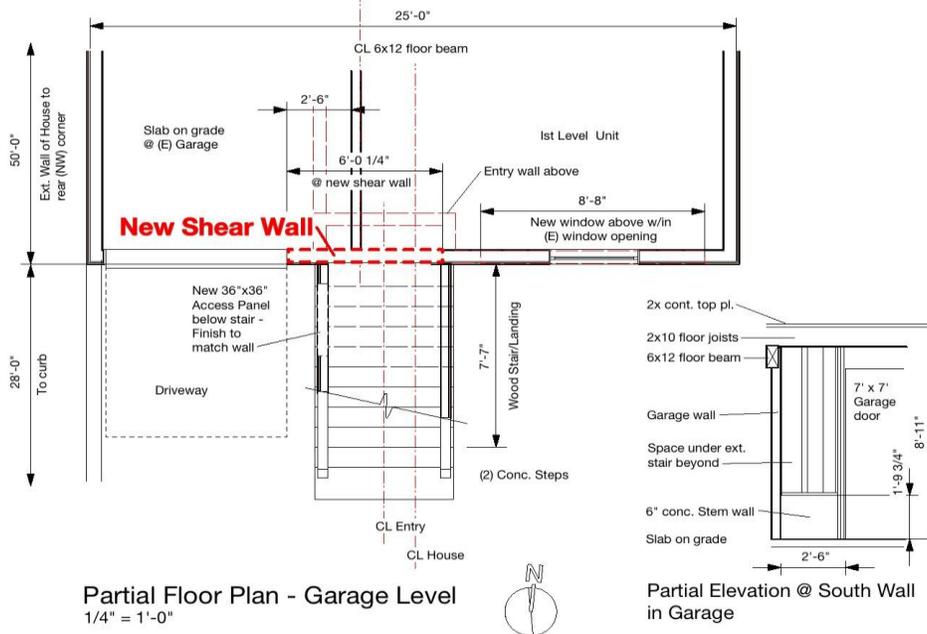
These projects will be paid for with money from our BZC building fund. The fund currently contains \$28,000. Through the generosity and support of the sangha we hope to add \$20,000 this year in order to assure adequate funding for these projects. As has recently been the case we expect the construction work to be accomplished by a combination of volunteer effort and paid contractors. As the projects move forward through the design process we will post sketches and other information on the bulletin board to keep sangha informed. Meanwhile, if you have questions feel free to contact the respective project coordinators.



SOUTH ELEVATION - PROPOSED

1933 RUSSELL ST., BERKELEY

S. BROCK, 3/12/12



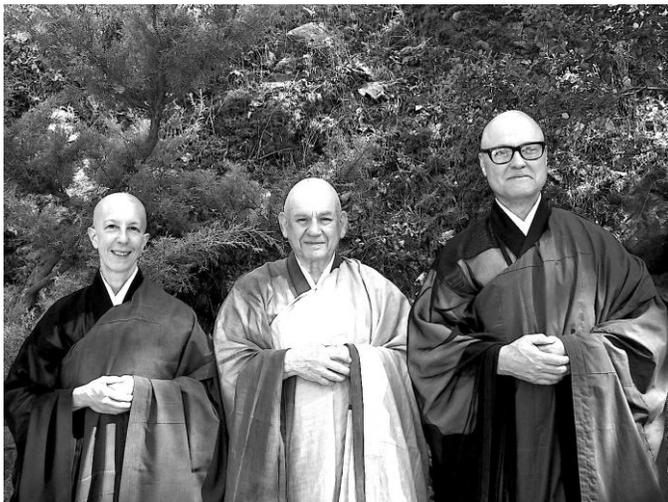
Partial Floor Plan - Garage Level
1/4" = 1'-0"



1933 Russell Street Berkeley, CA
Berkeley Zen Center
March 30, 2012

GREAT CONGRATULATIONS

Zenshin Greg Fain and Kodo Linda Galijan completed the weeklong ceremonies of Dharma Transmission with Sojun Roshi in the early morning hours of April 19 at Zenshinji/Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. Sojun Roshi was assisted in the ceremonies by Zenki Mary Mocine and Hozan Alan Senauke. Also deep thanks to Jean Selkirk, whose sewing labor in support of Greg and Linda's transmission is beyond measure. Great congratulations to two new buddhas!



LIVING BY VOW - SUMMER STUDY GROUP

For six sessions, meeting every other week, we will study Shohaku Okumura's *Living by Vow*, his just-released commentaries on the chants used daily in Soto Zen temples. We will spend a week with each chapter, covering the Four Bodhisattva Vows, the Verse of Repentance, the Three Refuges, the Robe Chant, the Meal Chants, and the Verse for Opening the Sutra. Ryushin Andrea Thach will facilitate the group, which will begin the last week of June. We will meet at a day and time that works best for those interested, with a request that group members attend the majority of the group meetings. If you are interested, please contact Andrea at andrea.thach@gmail.com. Books will soon be available through Wisdom Publications or Sanshin Zen Community at <http://sanshinji.org/books/> (proceeds from sales to Sanshin directly benefit Okumura Roshi's work), as well as the BZC Saturday book table. There is no fee for this group.

BZC CAMPOUT!

You are warmly invited to the somewhat-annual Berkeley Zen Center Campout, scheduled for July 14-15. We've reserved a group campsite in nearby Tilden Park, and will meet for a potluck dinner and possibly a short hike, as well as S'mores and songs around the campfire, followed by oatmeal and coffee/tea/cocoa in

the morning. Join us to pass on the campfire rounds we grew up with, tell stories, and learn the latest songs from our own kids.

Families and those without children are all welcome—if you prefer not to stay for the night, come for the dinner and company. If you would like to stay but are missing a tent or sleeping bag, let us know, and we can almost definitely find one for you. Contact Katherine O. at klo999@yahoo.com if you have questions, and look for a sign-up on the bulletin board in early July.

THE RAFFLE SUB-COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

We are planning on gathering many scintillating raffle prizes for the fall fundraising party and would love your help.

Here are three different ways you can participate:

1. Ask a business that you frequent (restaurant, body worker, pet sitter, handy person, etc.) whether they would be willing to donate a gift certificate. Who knows? They may gain another regular client.
2. Buy an item that you find interesting or useful (for instance, last year people bought emergency wind-up radios) and donate it in-kind to the raffle.
3. Consider sharing a brief story about yourself (500 words or less) for the *Compendium of Little Known Facts about BZC Members* that we will be compiling as a raffle prize. (Deadline July 1 for stories.)

Thanks for participating. You can contact Veronica Reilly at very23@gmail.com or Christy Calame at cccalame@earthlink.net to discuss any of these suggestions or another creative idea of your own.



Sojun Roshi Says:

Use two hands when receiving/returning gomashio. While the passive hand steadies the tray and interconnects you with the server, the active hand will handle the gomashio ramekin with care. Then again, which hand is truly passive and which active?

In a similar vein, the wear marks on the zendo door from the bamboo key ring can be minimized by holding the bamboo with one hand and the key with the other.

Thank you!

~Ross Estes Blum

UPCOMING WOMEN'S SESSHIN, NOTES FROM WOMEN'S POTLUCK

Nineteen women gathered for a potluck lunch this past February at the lovely home of Margret Wotkyns where we enjoyed wonderful food and discussed what we'd like to see in the women's sesshin scheduled for Sunday, September 23.

The women at the potluck wanted someone from the BZC community to lead it and would like a sesshin format that includes time for participants to talk about their lives and their practice and to connect with each other. This might be called a council format.

Marie Hopper is serving as women's coordinator and Andrea Thach will be the doshi for the sesshin. The sesshin director and facilitator will be announced closer to the date. Andrea, Marie, Sue Oehser, Susan, and Laurie Senauke will serve as contact people for your input and questions. Their phone number and emails are in the BZC directory.

ENTERING THE FLOW: A DAY TO PRACTICE INTUITION AND THE FLOW OF WORDS

Berkeley Zen Center will host Zen teacher and poet Angie Boissevain in a special one-day workshop on Sunday, May 6, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in the community room. Angie has extensive experience in teaching skillful means to draw on intuition in writing, journaling, and artwork. The day will include teaching, meditation, silent walking and observation, creative writing or artwork, and sharing. Please bring writing materials and/or art materials, and a bag lunch, which can be eaten in community. Cost: \$20, plus dana for the teacher. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Note: please enter quietly, as there will be a half-day sitting from 8:00 am to 12 noon in the zendo.

Questions and sign-up: contact Lisa Nelbach, bzcofficermanager@gmail.com.



Set free
and full of life –
spring horses.

~ Kazumi Cranney

**Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703**