



Berkeley Zen Center



February 2013 Newsletter

Sojun Roshi's February Study Sesshin February 16 & 17

During the February two-day study sesshin, Sojun will continue to provide his commentary on Suzuki Roshi's talks on the *Sandokai* as described in his book, "Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness." The *Sandokai*—a poem written by the eighth-century Zen master Sekito Kisen, comes alive through Suzuki's insight. Sojun began his commentary during Rohatsu sesshin, and will continue with a focus on the fifth, sixth and seventh talks from the book. Reading materials will be available on the bulletin board shelf prior to sesshin.

The dates are February 16-17 (Saturday 5:00 am – 9:00 pm, and Sunday 5:00 am – 5:30 pm). Please see the bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and further information. Contact the sesshin director Carol Paul at caroljpaul@yahoo.com or 510.206.5051 with questions.

Half-Day Sitting Sunday, February 3, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 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 February half-day director Nina Sprecher at 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 February

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2/3, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 2/4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 2/5, 6:40 am

Kidzendo

Saturday, 2/9, 9:30 am

Saturday, 2/23, 9:30 am

Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

Saturday, 2/16

Two-Day Sitting

Saturday, 2/16, 5:00 am – Sunday 2/17, 5:00 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/23, 9:40 am

Beginners' Sitting

Sunday, 2/24

March

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 3/3, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 3/4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 3/5, 6:40 am

All-Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting

Tuesday, 3/5

Kidzendo

Saturday, 3/9, 9:30 am

Saturday, 3/23, 9:30 am

One-Day Sitting (Okumura Roshi, 2 talks)

Saturday, 3/16, 5:00 am – 9:00 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3/23, 9:40 am

Work Day

Sunday, 3/31

Beginners' Sitting Sunday, February 24, 8:30am - 4:30pm

On Sunday, February 24, BZC will offer a beginners' sitting from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. Rev. Yakuso Ryshin Andrea Thach will offer instruction in the basic forms of our practice—zazen, kinhin, service—while maintaining our ground in meditation throughout the day. There will be a lecture on zazen and plenty of time for discussion. This is a good opportunity to ask questions about our practice.

Participants should bring a bag lunch, which we will eat informally in silence at midday. Newer people are particularly encouraged to take part, but we welcome longtime students who can enjoy a day of sitting and model the richness of our practice. The cost will be \$15 for the day. Please see the zendo bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and further information. Contact the sesshin director Carol Paul at caroljpaul@yahoo.com or 510.206.5051 with any questions.

Maylie's Metta Prayer Class with Hozan Alan Senauke

Our Vice Abbot, Hozan Alan Senauke, will teach a three-week class in April on Seisho Maylie Scott's Metta Prayer. Maylie was a much loved core member of BZC, dating back to the early 70's. She and Hozan received dharma transmission from Sojun Roshi in 1998. Soon after that she became the teacher at the Arcata Zen Center. She died in 2001. Her ashes are in our memorial garden. Maylie was devoted to working for peace, equality, and justice, as well as practicing and teaching the wisdom and compassion of our practice. Using the Metta Sutta as a basis, she blended it with words of her own to create her Metta Prayer. Hozan will lecture and lead discussion on this invocation over three successive Thursday evenings. The dates are April 4, 11, and 18 at 7:15 pm. A sign-up sheet will be posted in March.

Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony Saturday, February 16

On Saturday, February 16, please join us for a brief ceremony commemorating Shakyamuni Buddha's passage into Parinirvana (nirvana beyond nirvana) upon the death of his physical body. The ceremony will be held immediately after lecture. All are welcome to attend.



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Currently childcare is being done by Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. We need to know by dinner time Friday if you are planning to avail yourselves of childcare on the following day (so she can sleep in if not!). Phone or e-mail Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries@kushiki.org. Childcare for 8:45 am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more information.

Kidzendo Expands!

BZC's Saturday program for children three and up is expanding beginning January 2013. Our new Toolbox and Mindfulness for Families program will be offered two days per month, typically meeting on the second and fourth Saturdays, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am. We hope this will support more continuity and cohesiveness. (We are always open to feedback from parents about our program.)

BZC resident Tamar has been trained in offering the Toolbox materials. Nancy Suib, a longtime practitioner at BZC, will be co-leading this program using The Mindful Schools Curriculum. See details on our website or in the September 2012 newsletter. Check the calendar online or below for exact schedule. As always, RSVP if you plan to attend (lauries@kushiki.org).

February 2	Childcare
February 9	KIDZENDO
February 16	Sesshin – no program
February 23	KIDZENDO
March 2	Childcare
March 9	KIDZENDO
March 16	Sesshin – no program
March 23	KIDZENDO
April 6	Buddha's Birthday
April 13	KIDZENDO
April 20	Childcare
April 27	KIDZENDO

Family Practice E-mail Group

To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We only send, at most, ONE e-mail per week—just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, e-mail Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org or Marie at marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net.

This is Zazen

Comments from Sojun Roshi

February, 2013

Suzuki Roshi once said that our practice is difficult, not because of the pain in our legs or because it is hard to assume the posture, or because we have to get up early in the morning. What is difficult is to keep our practice pure. By pure he meant not falling into duality and being driven by our discriminating mind. This is why he was always talking about beginner's mind; the unassuming open, non-judgmental awareness that arises moment by moment, when meeting circumstances, untainted by self-centered discrimination. He called this "Seeing things as it is." "Things" are the building blocks, the Legos, of phenomena. Separating one thing from another we are constantly comparing and making order or chaos according to the limitations of our emotion/ thought. "As it is" refers to our universal nature that becomes apparent when our discriminating mind is at rest. This is the mind of clarity and non-separation. This is zazen. Every moment is new, and letting go we simply start from here and now. But pure and impure are simply the two sides, and we go back and forth all the time. "It" is the essence of "things," and "things" are the function or activity of "it." There is a saying that purity is found within the impure. So in order to have a balanced practice we sit zazen in the morning and the afternoon and lead a compassionate, selfless life of service in between, allowing the light of our beginner's mind to illuminate our surroundings.

When I first began practice in the early 60's life was much simpler. Our first zendo, a large old Victorian on Dwight Way, was \$130.00 a month. Today many people seem busy, working hard just to pay the rent, not to mention the seductive distractions that are competing for our attention. Nowadays there are many diverse practices in the Bay Area that attract students. Being one of the oldest Buddhist practice places in the area, we have managed to establish our formal Zen without becoming institutional and bureaucratic. Although there is a lot of talk about Zen, there are not a lot of people who actually practice. So I want to acknowledge all of you who have been practicing here for such a long time. Your sincere participation is an inspiration for me.



Changing Hands

With the New Year we have new energy in the form of helping hands. Kate Gilpin will join William Gordon as a co-host of the BZC Saturday bookstore, and Gary Artim is now our new oryoki instructor. The coordinator position has shifted to Alexandra Frappier from Peter Overton. Thanks to everyone for all your diligence and effort.

Notes from the Librarian

In the last newsletter I made a request for overdue library books, and when I came into the community room after winter break, the “return” basket was overflowing onto the shelf and even the floor below. Since then, books have continued to come in, but the pace has slowed to a trickle. So I am making one more request for everyone to check their bookshelves for forgotten BZC items and return them. There are still 66 books missing from the library, a few from as long ago as 2002. I will start sending individual notices out soon.

- Thank you, Ellen Webb

Office Manager's Corner

The new 2013 BZC Directory will be available for members and friends to pick up from boxes in the community room, filed in alphabetical order. If you are able to attend BZC, please save BZC the cost of postage by picking up your copy by Feb. 16th. We will also be working on sending the directory as a pdf to members who have requested it.

We are happy to welcome new members Helen Cheng and Philip Coffin, as well as newly-rejoining members Susan Nesbitt and Michael Friedman. Please look for their photos on the community room bulletin board, so you may recognize and get to know them.



Claude Monet, Walk (Road of the Farm Saint-Simeon), 1864

Journey

Clap your hat upon your head,
leave the house at break of day
and let your questions point the way.

When you come upon a crossroad
where the crone must sweep all day,
let her finger point the way.

Just keep walking, come what may.
Let your questions point the way.
Let each footfall be a dancer.
Let each footfall be an answer.

- Meghan Collins

Saturday Program Practice

Everyone is welcome to join the program at various points on Saturdays, but your Saturday directors would like to remind you of a few simple practices that help the morning go smoothly.

* If you arrive after the first period of zazen, please go directly to the kitchen and ask the tenzo to add you to the count. The Saturday director takes a count at the end of the first period of zazen that affects how much food the tenzo prepares and how many servers we have for the meal. When many people arrive after the count is taken, we may run low on food or run over on the time allotted for breakfast before zazen instruction begins.

* Avoid arriving right before breakfast. Seating last-minute arrivals in the zendo can cause delays.

* We depend on people signing up to cook or dish wash (no training required) and to serve oryoki (training available during the second period of zazen). It is most helpful if people sign up ahead of time, but we encourage you to check the bulletin board on the community room porch when you arrive in the morning and fill any empty slots.

* Sojun asks that you stay for work period if you come to breakfast. Many essential tasks of tending to our temple are completed during the Saturday work period.

* We create and maintain silence together. If you need to speak with someone, please do so quietly and away from common areas.

Thank you!

Two More Chidens Needed for 2013!

Care of the altars at BZC is a quiet, meditative, and mindful way to deepen your own practice while supporting the practice of all. It is also a way to become familiar with the forms of our practice, including the details of the altar, the secrets of the keys, the locations of supplies, and many other wonderful bits of lore. This means, among other things, that you can volunteer to chiden on Saturday morning or during sesshin, or step up like an expert to keep things going when our community practice gives a little hiccup. It's great to have these tools in your kit!

To stay up to date, you commit to a week of daily altar care, usually twice a year. The checklist of tasks can be completed in about 30 minutes, at a time of your choosing, Monday – Friday, whenever the zendo is not in use. Some chidens add a few minutes private zazen for the perfect break in a busy week.

If you'd like to be included on the 2013 roster, call Catharine Lucas, head chiden, at 510.526.3100, or e-mail to clucas@earthlink.net.

Think Wide Spaces

Ego hankers after rhyme and reason
Intent on smallness, on revenge
Out to prove it is of a different substance
(The ultimate victim, victimizer)

Shift focus, look elsewhere
Think not thinking
Think wide spaces

Assent again and again

- Kata Galasi



"South Wind and Clearing Weather: Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji," polychrome woodblock print, by Katsushika Hokusai, circa 1831.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Third Friday of the month before each issue

March deadline:
Friday, February 15, 8:00 pm

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