



Berkeley Zen Center



March 2013 Newsletter

Shohaku Okumura March Sesshin Saturday, March 16, 5:00 am – 9:00 pm

On Saturday, March 16, we welcome Shohaku Okumura back to BZC to offer his commentary on the teachings of Sawaki “Homeless” Kodo Roshi, one of the most revered Zen teachers of the last century in Japan. This day will be held in sesshin format beginning at 5:00 am. Please sign up by the deadline of Thursday, March 14 at 7:00 am. The cost is \$35, and we ask that you pay in advance (adjustments can be made if you are unable to pay the full amount). A separate donation to the speaker is requested. Please contact the sesshin director, John Busch, with any questions: john@mobu.org, 510.710.7183.

Half-Day Sitting Sunday, March 3, 8:00 am - 12:00 noon

Here’s your chance for end-of-winter and beginning-of-spring calm practice! BZC is offering five half-day sittings this 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.

A \$10 donation is requested. Please refrain from wearing scented products. If you have questions or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the March half-day director Stan Dewey, standewey@comcast.net or 510.528.1989. The next half-day sitting will be on June 2.



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

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, 6:30 pm

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

April

Founder’s Ceremony

Wednesday, 4/3, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 4/4, 6:40 am

Buddha’s Birthday Celebration

Saturday, 4/6

Kidzendo

Saturday, 4/13, 9:30 am

Saturday, 4/27, 9:30 am

One-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4/14, 5:00 am – 5:00 pm

Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

Friday, 4/26 – Sunday, 4/28

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/27, 9:40 am

All-Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting

Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 pm

Sangha 2013 Budget Review and Approval

Work Day on Sunday, March 31

Twice each year we get together for work day. This is an opportunity for us to dedicate time to our practice place as a community. There are a variety of jobs around BZC that call for different skills. Everyone's efforts are welcome and appreciated. If there is something in particular you would like to work on, or if you are holding on to a secret talent, this is the time to let it out. We look forward to your joining us for either a half or whole day of work. Lunch and snacks are provided. If you have questions please contact Dianne Schnapp, kimodi@mac.com.



Kusumi Morikage, between 1620 and 1690

Special First Friday Talk Friday, April 5

On April 5, we will have a very special First Friday talk (5:40 pm) given by Mira Gordon, 13-year-old Willard Middle School student, whose family has been practicing at BZC for many years (her whole life!). Mira will share her eighth grade culture fair project about her family's practice, which includes visuals and words about how Buddhism affects and influences her life. Children and adults of all ages are invited to attend.

Mira writes: *When people ask what my culture fair project is about, and I say Buddhism, many ask, "So are you Buddhist?" Although I have been going to a Zen center my whole life with my family, I wouldn't say I'm religiously Buddhist. I do not meditate often, or pray to the Buddha, or burn incense, or believe in demons and ghosts, as are the stereotypes of Buddhist people. My family practices Buddhism as a way of life. We avoid committing acts of greed, hate, and delusion, as Buddha said that these are the causes of all suffering, and we try to be mindful, compassionate, and kind. From teachings at Zen Center, to conversations about Buddhism with my family, to a goal to end suffering, Buddhism has shaped my life in positive ways.*



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 has expanded. Our new Toolbox and Mindfulness for Families program is 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, is 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).

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
May 4	Childcare
May 11	Sesshin – no program
May 18	KIDZENDO
May 25	Childcare

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.



Raphael, Apostles, 1519

Disabled and Enabled

Comments from Sojun Roshi

March, 2013

The question is: How can I continue (my) practice when I am constantly changing and the circumstances around me are constantly changing as well? At some point in our life we discover this vital practice centered on zazen and are inspired to devote our self to it. But to maintain it is not so easy and the path is not without obstacles. Aside from seductions enticing us from the sidelines there are the inner obstacles such as health and welfare, aging, and events beyond our control. We may begin practice as a single person with few obligations and eventually marry or join with a partner and produce a few children; our time becomes limited and practice becomes a distant memory. Or our job restraints may take up the greater part of our time. Or we may simply find an easier, less

demanding way. There are so many interesting possibilities in this world, it seems like a miracle that anyone would choose this one, so out of line with the mainstream. And at some point we may get so used to the practice that we wonder why we are doing it.

The physical or inner problems come up with our changing bodies and our ability to adapt to those changes. We have been getting older from the moment we were born, and have been adapting to circumstances ever since. As a baby we were working day and night through trial and error to find our way. Just figuring out how to co-operate with gravity took our entire effort. At some point we stood up and ventured out into the world encountering new challenges.

When we are young we take for granted that we are growing, so it is natural to feel that we will never stop because our energy is waxing. But at some midway point that is different for each of us, our trajectory begins a downward slope that we call aging or waning. Of course we have been aging all the time, but that aging contains the growing, while the growing contains the aging. True maturity contains the wonder and optimism of a child. This optimism or innocence is the secret of practice. It is also called beginner's mind or *shikantaza*, allowing the pure unhindered vitality of each moment to be present. Both young people and older people have difficulties over time dealing with the rigors of practice. When I was younger I had many painful problems in zazen that I don't have now. But problems change over time and sometimes circle around and return. Sometimes new problems arise and become a challenge. A young person has a young person's problems and an old person has an old person's problems. But fundamentally they are the same. The question is 'How can I do this' when confronted with a difficult obstacle. We are still dealing with the same fundamental problem we had as a baby that we experience as moment-by-moment change in the field of gravity; finding balance and harmony with our surroundings. But whatever we feel are our limitations, there is always a way to go. Our disabilities and limitations are truly our field of practice. Zazen is not a physical sport for the virtuoso whose ease we marvel at. Otherwise it would not be a universal practice open to everyone. The other secret of practice is that you can actually go beyond what you think are your limitations. There is a time to go forward and a time to step back, a time to drive the practice and a time to follow. But both are important. It is necessary to balance our zendo attendance with our other responsibilities as they change and as we change. It is not a good idea to give up today's practice because it doesn't look like yesterday's. And even though you have a family you can find a way. I remember Suzuki Roshi after having almost drowned at Tassajara, saying that up to that point he wasn't as sincere as he thought. After that he became really serious about his practice.

What do you want to be when you grow up? How about the aspiration to be a Bodhisattva? It is good for young people because it gives them a foundation and a true selfless path to benefit beings. It is also good for older people as it allows one to let go of complaining, appreciate each moment of this precious life, and serve as an example for others. As my old mother used to say, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Thanks, mom. And thanks to Suzuki Roshi, who encouraged me to go where I didn't think I could go.

- Sojun

Maylie's Metta Prayer April Class with Hozan Alan Senauke

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 was invited to become the teacher at the Arcata Zen Center. Maylie died in 2001 and her ashes are buried in our memorial garden. She had a keen sense of the suffering caused by war, discrimination, and aggression, and spent much of her time working to shine a light for others on these painful realities. She was also a model to many of us about how to practice as a Zen priest, mother, and wife, with a spirit of warm buoyancy. The Metta Prayer that she created is based on the Metta Sutra. 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 in the community room. A sign-up sheet will be posted in March. The cost will be \$30 for the series. Discounts are available.



Maylie Scott



Three-Day Mountains and Rivers Sesshin Friday, April 26 – Sunday, April 28

Our next Mountains and Rivers Sesshin will take place Friday through Sunday, April 26-28, at Point Reyes.

The sesshin will begin with an orientation meeting Thursday evening, April 25, in the community room. Friday 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 three days, but provision will also be made for those who may have to arrive late.

The sign-up sheet will be posted on the BZC bulletin board. Sign-up deadline is Saturday, April 20. The fee is \$60. If you have any questions, please call Ken Knabb at 510.527.0959 or e-mail him at knabb@bopsecrets.org.

March Sounding Board **Members and Friends**

The board has been fine-tuning and clarifying BZC's policies on the expectations and categories of "members" and "friends" over the last few months. Members are people who regularly participate in practice at BZC and pay dues or just want to contribute at that level. Friends may not attend regularly but see themselves as part of the wider practice community and want to support and maintain a connection with BZC.

While these designations seem pretty simple they raise various questions. Part of our concern in clarifying these categories has been financial. How can we help the near and extended sangha to conscientiously support our practice place and teachers, balancing individual circumstances with a common responsibility? Our overall intention is simply to encourage everyone's ongoing involvement in a way that works for each person. The consistency of financial support is more important over the long run than a particular dollar amount. Thus, while we need to set standards, there is always the option to adjust the amount as needed.

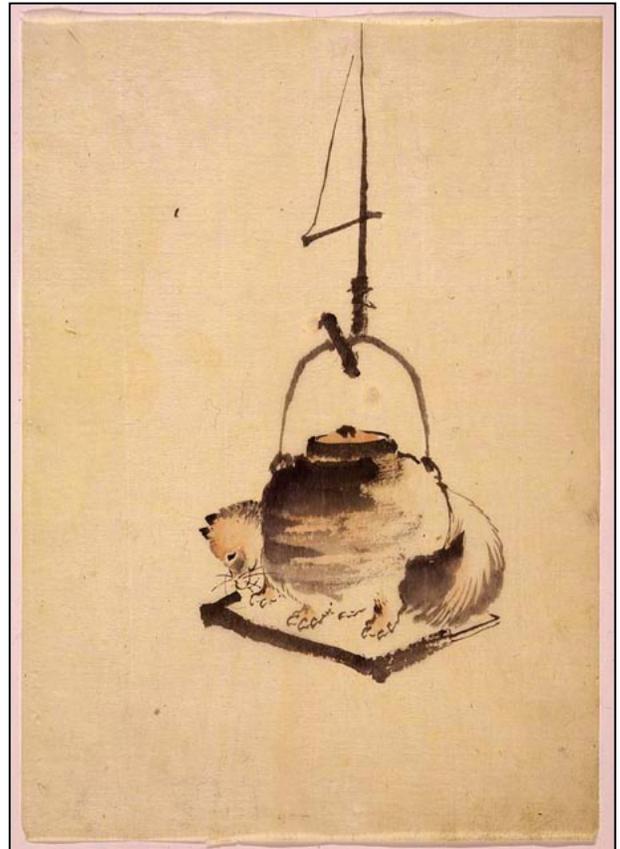
Another aspect of our discussions has been communication. With over 240 members and friends in the directory, how do we stay in touch with everyone, as their financial and life circumstances may change over time? Our aim is to stay more informed but not to pressure.

Yet another issue is what should the benefits of each category be? Library privileges, newsletter mailings, member directories, Hawaiian vacations?

Finally one of the most important concerns for the board was unity. We want to practice and to sustain BZC together without creating the distinction of "insiders" or "outsiders," whatever our role and support level is. In our busy urban lives, we're trying to be mindful of BZC's myriad financial and organizational details, without losing sight of this bigger picture.

Friday Afternoon Tea is Back

The Friday afternoon tea, held at 5:00 pm just before evening zazen, has been revived after a brief hiatus. Now that the days are getting longer and the weather is good we can generally serve the tea and refreshments in the courtyard. Walter Kieser will be the tea server. This tea time is an opportunity to meet informally with sangha members, ask questions, and enjoy each other's company. Please join us on Friday and sit some zazen thereafter.



*School of Katsushika Hokusai, Tea-kettle tanuki
(raccoon-dog in the Japanese folktale Bumbuku Chagama), c. 1840s.*

Two More Chiden Places Available!

First, welcome to three new chidens who have joined our roster! Last-minute leaves of absence have opened up two more spaces—yours for the asking! The open dates are March 25-29, July 1-5, August 19-23, and October 21-25. If you can fill in one or more of those dates, please contact head chiden, Catharine Lucas, 510.526.3100, or cmanerlucas@earthlink.net.



Alan Bond, 2013

Chiden Challenge: A Reflection

Serving as chiden is the first responsible position I've had the privilege to offer to our Shogakuji temple. Being introduced to the formal caretaking of our altars, I felt as though I was crossing from being an earnest sheep among the flock to joining the watchful shepherds.

With other new chidens gathered around the altar in our zendo, I heard Sojun Roshi say, "When you look at the altar, think of the 'altar' of your own life; remind yourself to keep enough time and space so that you give everything the right amount of attention without overcrowding." Such a simple phrase, but I really needed to hear it. I curled my bare toes on the wooden floor and nodded, taking his admonitions to heart.

When my week came to tend the altars, I allotted extra time in the afternoons so that I might enjoy the whole process: trimming the candles with our old folding pocket knife, wiping the dust, spacing the name card-holders, arranging the green stems of the yellow flowers in the vase, and then taking a few steps back to see how all the pieces and spaces flowed together. I even took time to enjoy not being quite sure everything was there. As I bowed to leave, it felt good to know I was part of the whole. — from Chris Evans

BZC's FUNdraising Bazaar

Save the Date!

Saturday, September 28, 2013

Games * Music * Food * Merriment * Raffle Prizes and more...

Come together for some social time as a community as we raise money for our leadership fund. Stay tuned for how you can contribute your talent and energy to this unique BZC event.

The development committee is in the early planning stages, but if you have questions or would like more information, contact Jake Van Akkeren, 925.933.3486 or jvanakkeren@comcast.net.



Report from the Annual Lay Zen Teacher's Association (LZTA) meeting

The LZTA had its annual meeting in mid-January at the retreat center in Garrison, New York. Twenty-four people attended from a wide range of sanghas and lineages; Bob Rosenbaum and Sue Moon formed our Bay Area contingent.

We had two small group discussions of particular interest: one centered on John Welwood's article on the dangers of spiritual bypassing (covering over unresolved emotional issues under the guise of practice) and focused on the importance of being psychologically sensitive. The other, spurred by a chapter from Barry Magid's forthcoming book, discussed the subtle but crucial difference between submission and surrender in teacher-student relationships. Other topics discussed included practical issues (e.g., when, as a lay teacher, it is/isn't appropriate to accept money for teaching the dharma); peer support issues (how to be careful to not over-extend); how to continue to develop as teachers; how to help students develop.

We also had a session where we reviewed some innovations in teaching with which various people are experimenting. Some of these include: writing as a spiritual practice; group koan work; householder sesshins (in which participants continue to attend their jobs but have daily meetings and sittings before/after work); introducing more movement interludes; using dreams in practice; and (from BZC) mountains-and-rivers practice.



Sawaki "Homeless" Kodo Roshi and unidentified girl.

On the Day Oscar Pistorius is Charged with Murder and a Meteor Crashes in Siberia, Injuring 1,000

I catch a glimpse of you on Mission in Hayward
Rush hour, cars cramped, radio, noise, full ramps
Foot on break, windows down
A hint of spring, warm breeze, sundown

You are wearing a plaid skirt to the knee
And a black blouse with puffy sleeves
You hold a patterned dress over your outfit
Wondering if it's becoming, a good fit

Watching you from behind
I imagine you ordinary
Easily lost in the crowd

Then the thought: Everyone is interesting
if I am willing. Who are you?
What floats through your mind's eye?
What moves and fills your heart?
What is your body like from the inside?

What shapes you? What makes you?
Do you struggle to sleep at night?
Who loves you?
And most important, are you a lover of life?

Gaze moves
Light turns
Gears shift
A new moment arrives

- Kata Galasi

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Third Friday of the month before each issue

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

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