



Berkeley Zen Center



June 2014 Newsletter

Five-Day Sesshin Concludes 2014 Spring Practice Period June 18 – 22

Our Spring practice period will conclude with a five-day sesshin from Wednesday, June 18 to Sunday, June 22. The first four days' schedule is from 5:00 am until 9:00 pm, while the final day's schedule is from 5:00 am until 3:10 pm, immediately followed by Shuso Hossen, dharma dialogue with the shuso. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board for a minimum of three days, two of which should be consecutive. If you want to request an alternative schedule please speak to the sesshin director. Sign-ups close on Saturday, June 14, 12:00 noon.

The Shuso Hossen ceremony will begin promptly at 3:30 pm, and will be followed by a reception. All practice period and sesshin participants should make it a priority to support the shuso and come with a question.

If this is your first sesshin at BZC, it is strongly recommended that you first participate in a full Saturday program, have oryoki instruction, and that you speak with the sesshin director.

The fee is \$35 per day and should be paid in advance. Leave checks marked "June sesshin" in the laundry room door donation slot. If you have questions, contact the sesshin director Gerry Oliva at sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com or 510.652.7217.



B Z C S c h e d u l e

June

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 6/1

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 6/3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 6/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 6/14, 9:40 am

Lay Ordination / Zaike Tokudo

Saturday, 6/14, 3:00 pm

Five-Day Sesshin, End of Practice Period

Wednesday 6/18 – Sunday 6/22

Shuso Hossen

Sunday, 6/22, 3:30 pm

July

Founder's Ceremony

Wednesday, 7/2, 6:20 pm

Thursday, 7/3, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7/12, 9:40 am

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)

Sunday, 7/20

Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

Thursday, 7/31 – Sunday 8/3



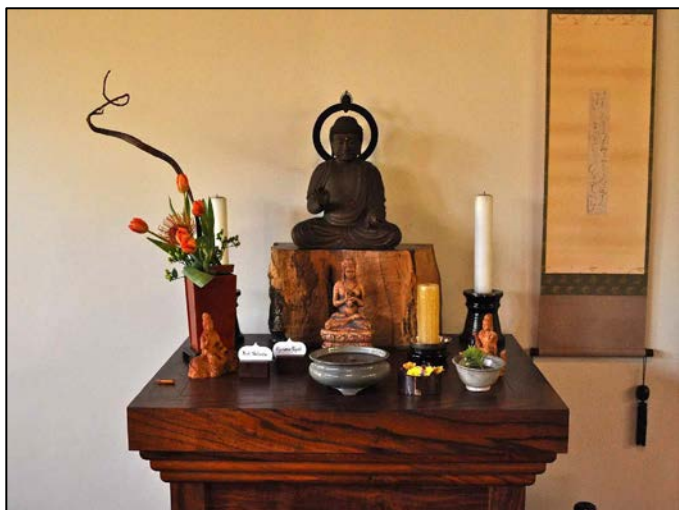
Affirmation of Welcome

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.

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, June 1, 8:00 am - 12:00 noon

Half-day sittings include five periods of zazen, kinhin (walking meditation) and an informal tea. Sojun Roshi asks participants to commit to the entire four-hour schedule. A \$10 donation is requested. If you have questions or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the June half-day director Greg Denny at greg AT techsperience.org or 510.559.8831.



BZC Campout

You are warmly invited to the annual Berkeley Zen Center Campout, scheduled for July 26-27. 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 AT yahoo.com if you have questions, and look for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in early July.



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Supervised play is offered free of charge many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Supervising is Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. If you want to use this service, contact Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries AT kushiki.org by noon the Friday before.

Coverage for 8:45 am zazen instruction is offered by arrangement; contact Laurie for information.

KidZendo

Kidzendo is a program for children three and up, offered about twice a month during the school year, usually on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays, from 9:30 to 11:15 am (check schedule below). Together, we explore meditation, mindfulness, compassion and Buddhist traditions in a kid-friendly fashion. We are developing our curriculum and experimenting with what works best for our situation, which often includes a range of ages from pre-school through late elementary. BZC members Tamar and Judy Fleischman are among those teaching. Come take part! Our program includes songs, stories, discussions, snacks, walks, and art activities. Laurie Senauke oversees the program and can answer questions and receive input.

Family practice schedule:

June 7	Supervised play
June 14	Supervised play
June 21	Sesshin - no program
June 28	Break - no program
July 5	Break - no program
July 12	Supervised play
July 19	Supervised play
July 26	Supervised play - Camp Out

Family Practice E-mail Group

To make it easier to communicate about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We only send, at most, ONE e-mail per week - a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, e-mail Marie at marie_hopper AT sbcglobal.net or Laurie.

Please RSVP for ALL family activities to lauries AT kushiki.org. Thank you!

The Heart Sutra and the Mantra of Our Life

At the end of the Heart Sutra, we chant the mantra, “Gate, gate, para gate, parasamgate, bodhi svaha.” The sutra refers to the great bright mantra. According to Edward Conze, a mantra is literally a kind of spell. But spell means various things to us. We tend to think of a spell as an enchantment by a witch or a magician. It is something which takes us over. If we listen to a piece of music, we come under the spell or influence of the music. If we go into the woods, we come under the spell of the trees and plants. If we go to the beach, we come under the spell of sun, wind and water. Watching a movie, we become absorbed in the story. It doesn’t have to be seductive, but we tend to think of it that way because of our associations. But mantra is not exactly a spell in that way. Maybe you could say it’s a kind of samadhi, a concentration or absorption—something that contains the means for absorption or compels our attention.

There are no mantras in the six hundred volumes of the Prajna Paramita Sutras. So, to have this mantra at the end of the Heart Sutra is rather unusual. It is the mantra that expresses Prajna Paramita, or crossing to the other shore. Gate gate, paragate, parasamgate: gone gone, gone to the other shore, svaha. Svaha is not exactly translatable. It’s a kind of exclamation something like “well-gone.” This mantra is called the great bright mantra, the supreme mantra, the unsurpassable. What does it mean, and how does it apply to the sutra?

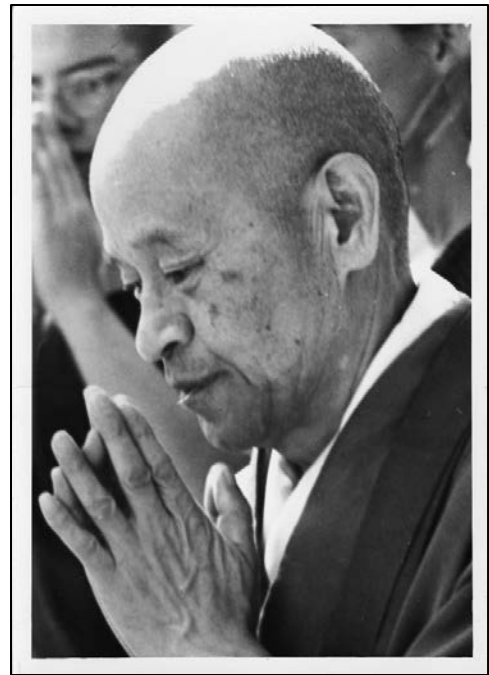
I used to think of Suzuki Roshī’s life as a mantra. We tend to think of a mantra as a phrase which we repeat over and over again. Sometimes people ask, “Can you give me a mantra?”—something to repeat over and over in order to evoke or to maintain a certain concentrated or pure state. But when I observed Suzuki Roshī, it seemed to me that the way he lived his life was a mantra. His life had a very obvious form. Every day at the old Sokoji temple at Bush Street, I would see him enter the zendo from his office and light the incense, sit zazen and do service. Every day he did the same thing, which was amazing to me. I had never seen anyone do that kind of activity before. His life was devoted to sitting zazen, bowing, lighting incense, and the various other things that he did.

When there were so many other things to do in the world, here was this person simply doing these things over and over again every day. And he had been doing them over and over every day of most of his life. I never thought of myself doing anything like that in what seems like such a narrowly disciplined way of life. So I was impressed by it. After a while it occurred to me that his life was a mantra. Every day he had these tasks that he would do. He was always concentrated and went about his activity in a light and easy manner. Somehow, it was not just repetitive. It was a dynamic that was always producing light. One way to produce energy is to have something going around in a circular path. If you hook up a conductor to that energy producer, the energy flows from it as a dynamo. That’s why he had so much spiritual power.

The form that he gave to Zen Center is what made Zen Center work so well. The schedule is also like a mantra. The mantra is a powerful basis. There also has to be sincerity and some incorruptible leadership. With good leadership and the strong, powerful, dynamic mantra of form, the prajna paramita reveals itself and is lived through the form.

Thich Nhat Hanh talked about the Heart Sutra when he was here. He said that you shouldn’t just refer to the Heart Sutra as some ancient Buddhist document. He said that you should use it. You should know how to use it. And he kept saying that every day. We should think about how to use the sutra. It tells us something and prepares our mind; but the dynamic of the mantra expresses the actual use of the sutra.

- Sojun Roshī



Shunryu Suzuki Roshī, from shunryusuzuki.com.

Lay Entrustment Ceremony

On Monday, July 7, during the morning program, Clay Taylor will receive Lay Entrustment from Sojun Roshi. Clay is a long time student of Sojun's who moved to Colorado with his family several years ago. The ceremony will be held in the zendo, and will be followed by a simple reception in the community room. Everyone is invited to attend and to offer support and congratulations to Clay.

Changing Hands

Many thanks to Mike McVey for keeping our community room tidy this past year. We've appreciated his care for this integral space. We are grateful to Barbara Warsavage for assuming the position of maintaining the community room.

We also offer thanks to Heather Burns for taking care of the memorial garden altars. She's devotedly tended to them while also doing weekend chiden tasks. We welcome Mary Beth Lamb as the new caretaker of memorial garden altars.

20's and 30's Dharma Group

The 20's and 30's dharma group that met regularly for a number of years has been re-activated. Sojun Mel Weitsman and Gerry Oliva co-lead the group, cultivating a supportive environment that promotes kalyana mita, spiritual friendship, for young adults. It provides an opportunity for members to get to know others in their age group and to support each other in bringing practice more fully into their daily lives. The format is a short period of sitting, an opportunity to check in about personal dharma practice and open discussion about Saturday's lecture, an agreed-upon reading or other topics selected by the group. We hope that leadership will emerge from group members and other formats and activities will develop. Remaining meeting dates for 2014 are: 6/28, 7/19, 8/30, 9/27, 10/25, 11/22, 12/13. For information contact Gerry Oliva at olivag AT fcm.ucsf.edu.

Lay Ordination

This year's lay ordination ceremony – Zaike Tokudo – will take place on Saturday, June 14 in the zendo at 3 pm. Receiving lay ordination from Sojun Roshi are the following students:

Linda Hess
Stephanie Seaborg
Troy Dufrene
Joe Gaston.

Congratulations in advance to all who have been studying and sewing diligently with our sewing teacher Jean Selkirk. Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and reception afterwards. Check the zendo bulletin board for details and please sign up for preparation (tenzo assistance & set up) and clean up.



Taking Care of Our Home: Where Your Building Fund Donations Go

This year's fundraising goal of \$25,000 for buildings may seem far-reaching. If you regularly pay dues and make donations to Berkeley Zen Center, you may wonder, do I need to contribute more? Do we really need to raise that much money?

Our buildings may *appear* solid, but they are just as in flux as everything in the universe. Some of our buildings are now nearly a century old, including the venerable structure at 1929 Russell Street that houses the community room and kitchen, and the upstairs resident apartment (1929A). At BZC, some building repairs have been put off for decades – sometimes knowingly, to keep expenses down, sometimes unknowingly, as when problems were hidden behind walls. A prime example of this deferred maintenance is the bathroom and kitchen in the 1929A apartment, which have received no significant attention for at least 25 years. There is extensive water damage to counters, cabinets, and tile work. Fixtures are worn. The plumbing supply lines are stressed by age and clogged with silt and have already necessitated partial fixes when and where visible leaks have occurred.



We are fortunate at BZC to have relatively modest operating expenses and to own outright the buildings on the temple grounds. But with ownership comes responsibility. The time has come to catch up on the maintenance we can no longer safely (or sagely) defer.

Here's a breakdown of the most pressing priorities, identified by our own experts on the project management team in consultation with outside professionals:

Project	Location	Reason for Repair	Estimated Cost
Replace bedroom wall heater	1929A	Safety	\$1,500
Replace water service line	1929	End of lifecycle	\$2,500
Replace galvanized water pipe	1929	End of lifecycle	\$3,000
Bathroom remodel/upgrade	1929A	Deterioration	\$7,500
Kitchen remodel/upgrade	1929A	Deterioration	\$12,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST			\$26,500

Every effort is made to contain expenses and make use of volunteer labor on building projects, but these estimated costs are just projections. They're likely to be on the *low* end of our actual costs. As the kitchen renovation project in 1929 demonstrated, when walls are opened, especially in old buildings, there's always the risk of finding the problem you didn't know you had behind the problem you set out to fix. It was just this type of situation – the discovery of water damage in the community room bathroom during kitchen construction – that depleted the building fund to a balance of \$2,383 (as of April 30). Clearly, the account needs replenishment before we can proceed with these building repair projects.

This is where your donations come in. While member dues are essential for our everyday operations, they do not come close to supporting the larger capital outlays needed for building projects and extensive repairs.

You can donate online at BZC's website, or by writing a check and specifying "Building Fund" in the memo. If you have any comments or questions about these projects, please contact BZC president Jake Van Akkeren at: [jvanakkeren AT comcast.net](mailto:jvanakkeren@comcast.net).

Thank you for your continued practice of generosity.

Sojun Roshi's 85th Birthday Picnic Sunday, July 13th

July 4 will commemorate the 238th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Sunday, July 13 will celebrate the 85th birthday of Sojun Roshi, who has taught interdependence at BZC since 1967. In both cases liberation and harmony within our everyday life and community is the issue.

We'll gather at Laurel picnic area in Tilden Park between the hours of 11 am and 4 pm. Although BZC will provide certain main dishes, including vegetarian shish-kebab and drinks, we will depend on pot-luck offerings from the sangha as well. As many people will be coming, it's best to keep the amounts modest. Kids' activities, games, bluegrass music from Hozan Senauke and friends, and who knows what else, will happen. Sojun suggests "no gifts please."

As you can imagine, there are many ways besides food that you can help. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board and on BZCPC groups within the next month. Our aim is to keep it simple, casual, and fun. Please feel free to contact coordinators Ryushin Andrea Thach or Ron Nestor for suggestions or with questions.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 24, take the Fish Ranch Road exit. Drive up Fish Ranch Road, right on Grizzly Peak Blvd., right on S. Park Drive. Continue for 0.7 miles, and the Laurel parking lot will be on your left.

From BZC, turn right on MLK Way. Head north to Rose, about eight blocks beyond University. Turn right on Rose and go about eight blocks to Spruce and turn left. At the top of Spruce, continue straight across the Grizzly Peak Blvd. intersection, Spruce becomes Wildcat Canyon Road. Continue for 2.2 miles on Wildcat Canyon, then turn right on S. Park Drive. Continue 0.8 miles, and the Laurel parking lot will be on your right. This is a walk-in site with a short walk. A shuttle will be available for those with difficulty walking or carrying things.





*A plum blossom
A plum blossom ...
a long line
before the tea house.*

- Haiga by Kazumi Cranney

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

June 2, Monday 6:20 am – Bob Rosenbaum
June 6, Friday 5:50 pm – Sojun Roshi, Zazen Instruction
June 9, Monday 6:20 am – Gerry Oliva
June 16, Monday 6:20 am – Shosan with Sojun Roshi
June 23, Monday 6:20 am – Closed (post 5-day sesshin)
June 30, Monday 6:20 am – Mary Beth Lamb

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Third Friday of the month before each issue. Submit to bzcnewsletter AT gmail.com.

**July deadline:
Friday, June 20, 8:00 pm**

New Phone Number for BZC

Please note this new phone number for contacting BZC: **510.665.3168.**

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