



Berkeley Zen Center

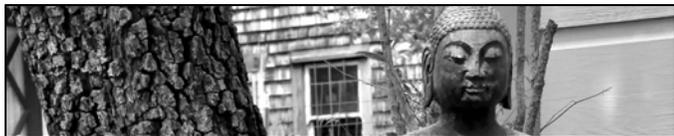


August 2015 Newsletter

A Day with Shohaku Okumura Saturday, August 29

We are very fortunate to be hosting a day of teaching with Shohaku Okumura Roshi on Saturday, August 29. He will give the public lecture in the morning and a longer teaching in the afternoon. The subject will be Dogen's waka poems from *Zen of Four Seasons*. Both talks are open to all.

Okumura Roshi is a Dogen scholar and the author of many translations and commentaries, including *Zen of Four Seasons*, *Realizing Genjokoan* and *Living by Vow*. He is abbot at Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, Indiana.



One-Day Sesshin Saturday, August 15

Sojun Mel Weitsman will lead a one-day sesshin on Saturday August 15, from 5am-9pm. We encourage old and new sangha members to participate. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board by Wednesday morning August 12, after zazen. If this is your first sesshin at BZC, we recommend that you first participate in a full Saturday program and also speak with the sesshin director. The fee is \$35 and should be paid in advance (a discounted fee is possible for those in need; please speak to the director). Leave checks marked "August sesshin" in the mail slot in the courtyard laundry room door or mail to the BZC office manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, 94703.

If you are attending for the first time, you will need to fill out a sesshin information sheet to let us know of health problems, food allergies, or physical problems requiring accommodation. Info sheets are available under the patio bulletin board or from the sesshin director, Gerry Oliva (sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com or 510.652.7217).

B Z C S c h e d u l e

August

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 8/2, 8:00am – 12:00pm

Founder's Ceremonies

Monday, 8/3, 6:20pm

Tuesday, 8/4, 6:40am

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 8/15, 5:00am – 9:00pm

Work Day

Sunday, 8/23

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8/29, 9:40am

A Day with Shohaku Okumura

Saturday, 8/29

September

Founder's Ceremonies

Thursday, 9/3, 6:20pm

Friday, 9/4, 6:40am

One Day Study Retreat

Sunday, 9/6

Zendo Holiday

Monday, 9/7

New Member Entering Ceremony

Monday, 9/14

All-Sangha Potluck – Board Nominations

Tuesday, 9/15

Women's Sitting

Sunday, 9/20

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 9/26, 9:40am

Board Party Fundraiser

Saturday, 9/26



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, August 2, 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 August half-day director Peter Overton peterovrtn@gmail.com or 510.848.5239



Sangha Support Is for Helpers Too

Sunday, August 9, 4:00pm – 5:30pm

Are you helping a loved one do things they used to do for themselves? Many in our sangha are doing so. Sangha Support is sponsoring a gathering to share experiences, tips and resources to support your efforts, facilitated by Laurie Senauke and Debbie Schley. All are welcome to come on August 9, 4:00 to 5:30 pm, at the Senauke house, 1933 Russell. Please RSVP at the contact info below (there won't be a sign-up sheet for this). Also contact us if you'd like more information, or if this topic is of interest but you can't attend: lauries@kushiki.org, debbieresearcher@gmail.com, 503.505.4282 (Debbie).

Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Supervised play during the summer months will be arranged ad hoc by prior appointment. Contact Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org several days before the day you want to attend.

KidZendo Change and Growth

We are excited to announce that starting this fall, on September 12, our Kidzendo program will be offered on almost all Saturdays at the usual time from 9:30am to 11:15am. BZC member and Music Together teacher Ryk Groetchen will be taking the lead; the program will include more and different kinds of music, as well as many familiar activities from previous years. We expect that parents of younger children and those interested will join the program; older kids may stay on their own.

This means that for the time being we will not be offering supervised play. As usual, we want to serve the needs of parents keeping the flame of practice alive, so don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, concerns, and ideas. Direct inquiries to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org, 510.845.2215).

Family Practice E-mail Group

Our Yahoo group makes it easier to communicate about family practice. We only send, at most, one event e-mail a week. To join, e-mail Marie at marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net or Laurie.

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



The Old Buddha Communes With the Pillar

Sojun Roshi

Master Ummon said, "The old Buddha communes with the pillar. What sort of mind is this?" He answered himself, "Clouds gather over the southern mountain. Rain falls on the northern mountain." In the zendo the wooden Buddha on the altar is facing the back wall all day long without getting tired. Human beings are not wooden Buddhas, but nevertheless they are Buddhas, and commune with one thing or another all day long. What are they doing? What does it mean *to commune with a pillar* or with a human being or with an inanimate object? A pillar is a pillar, and a Buddha is a Buddha. Why do we sit *zazen*, why do we bow? Why do we eat the way we do in the zendo? Why do we maintain the various forms of practice that we do?

Today I want to talk about bowing. What is bowing? In our everyday practice we bow quite a lot. When I first came to Zen Center, the first thing that struck me—right away—was that everyone was bowing. At first I was a little hesitant to engage in something like bowing. Nobody I knew ever did, and it was something that I had seldom done. My gut feeling, though, was that I was drawn to it—but you know—who does it? Maybe I was getting caught by something, or engaging in something that made me feel some trepidation. But everyone around me was doing it. So I did it, and actually I liked it. It felt right to bow. Once I accepted it I felt grateful for the opportunity it afforded me to express myself with deep sincerity in such a simple direct way.

I remember my teacher bowing. He didn't have any hesitation at all, and when he would bow to me, it would have felt funny not bowing to him. I felt very much at ease bowing to him. I began to realize that the act of bowing was as important as the act of sitting. That sitting and bowing are two expressions of the same thing. *Zazen* settles us in the deep fundamental stillness of the self, and bowing gives outward expression to that. I came to understand that sitting is *just sitting* and bowing is *just bowing*. Then I began to realize that the formal way of eating in the zendo is *just eating*, and it was very rarely that I had ever done that. Even though I had always just eaten, it didn't have the same quality of attention and merging.

When working with my teacher in the practice environment, the work always had a different feeling. *Zazen*, bowing, eating, and working together felt like the ancient Buddha communing with the pillar, the stones, the creek and the garbage. To understand *zazen* is to understand *bowing*. We can have a problem sometimes when we see ourselves as the subject, over against the other as the object—whether it be a pillar or a person. It is said that the foolish person sees himself or herself as other, whereas the sage sees the other as the *one body*. But more often than not, we don't see the water for the waves. We don't see the forest for the trees. In *zazen* we allow the waves to subside so that we can be at one with the deep fundamental stillness that is water. When the waves are calm, we can see all the way to the bottom.

When we bow we don't necessarily think, "I am now bowing to that Buddha," or "I am now bowing to that pillar," or "I am now bowing to that person." We can bow with nothing at all in our mind. When



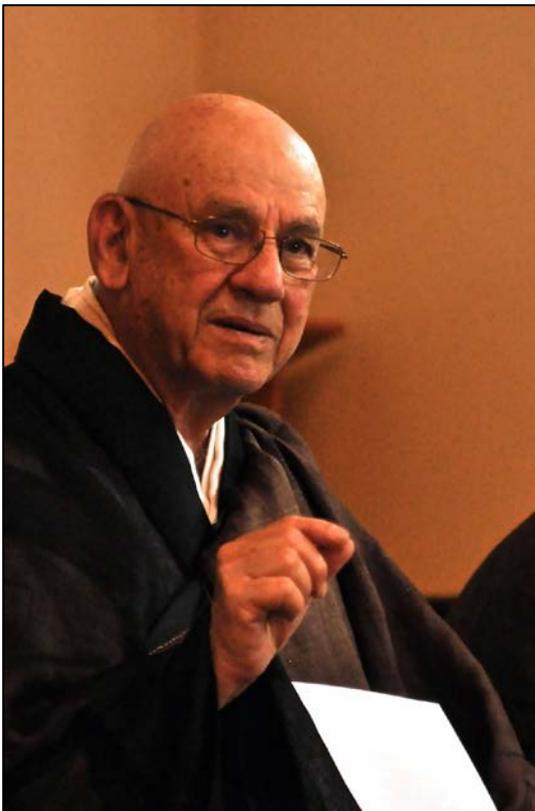
Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

we bow to the pillar, we are not bowing to an object. One day someone asked, "Do we have to bow to the *gomasio*?" *Gomasio* is the sesame salt that we use to season our cereal. We bow when we pick it up and when we put it down. Formal practice is to bow at the beginning and at the end of each activity.

Bowing is an act of merging, communion, gratitude, acknowledgement, respect, and letting go of discriminating mind so that we enter the deep ocean of complete being. So, when we bow, we may ask, "Who am I bowing to? What am I bowing to?" We can also say "Just this." When we bow to a wooden Buddha we're bowing to ourselves, and when I bow to you, I'm bowing to myself—an all-inclusive, selfless act.

Master Tung-Shan, after recognizing his true face in the stream, said "Everywhere I turn I meet myself." Of course each being has its own individual existence. The waves rise and fall. When the wave that is me rises up I say, "This is me here, and over there is you." But whether rising or sinking, we're always merging with ourselves. We are rising and sinking like the animals on the merry-go-round. And in this undulating whorl called *samsara*, while the band plays on, we can wave to each other and smile. Although waves can be a problem we can learn how to ride them. But at the same time, we should understand the source of the waves, and we should know who we are. The purpose of our practice is to settle on *just this* as the touchstone of our lives.

- Sojun Roshi, from the February 2004 BZC Newsletter



Sojun's Summer Class Series

Sojun Roshi will teach a new class series beginning in August. The subject will be a continuation of his practice period class on Vasubhandu's *Thirty Verses*, which describes a system of eight consciousnesses developed by the Yogacara school of Buddhism. The interplay between all eight aspects is the subject of *the Thirty Verses* and Sojun's class.

If you did not attend the practice period class you are still most welcome and encouraged to join us. Sojun will bring us up to speed. We'll meet on Thursday evenings from 7:15-8:45pm. The six dates are: **8/6, 8/20, 9/3, 9/10, 9/24, 10/1**. Because of summer vacations, the class fee will be \$50 for the series or pro-rated at \$10/class. Our basic text will be Thich Nhat Hanh's *Understanding Our Mind* (previous edition: *Transformation at the Base*).

Caring for Buddha's Robe

If you need assistance (or simply time and space) with rakusu/okesa/robe repairs, replacement, or finishing already started rakusu, the following dates are on the calendar. Each session is from 1-5pm except as noted. Please contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk (510.655.0820), before you attend the first time. Any changes to the schedule will be made on the bulletin board.

Material fees only apply for envelopes or new (second or replacement) rakusu, and the usual class fee applies for new rakusu, which must be started by the end of August. Starting first rakusu for Lay Ordination will begin in January as usual. If you are considering this, please speak with your teacher and then also speak with the sewing teacher before the winter break begins.

Sunday	August 2	1 - 5pm
Saturday	August 22	1 - 5pm
Sunday	August 30	1 - 5pm
Saturday	September 19	1 - 5pm
Sunday	September 27	2:30 - 5pm
Saturday	October 10	1 - 5pm
Sunday	October 18	1 - 5pm
Sunday	November 8	1 - 5pm



Come and Sit with Us

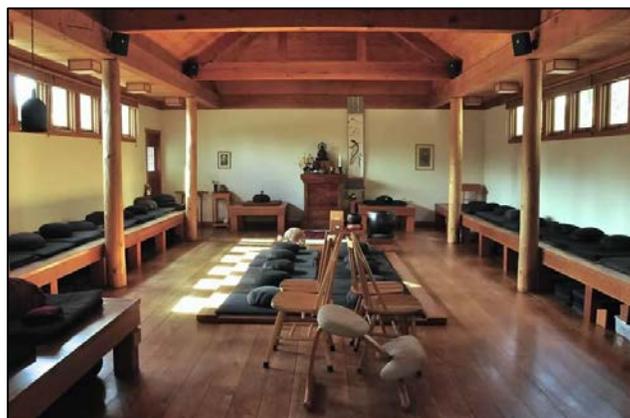
The weekday zazen schedule includes informal zazen at noon.

Monday through Friday

5:40am - 7:00am || Zazen, service, soji (temple cleaning)

12:00pm - 12:30pm || Zazen

5:40pm - 6:30pm || Zazen, service



Photos by Ko Blix

Changing Hands

We are deeply grateful to Mark Copithorne for being our audio archivist for the past two years. He has done a great job of getting our Saturday talks and classes onto the website in a timely manner. We welcome Dean Bradley to this position.

Jen Taylor has been our newsletter editor these past three years. Each month she has solicited items, then formatted and edited them to produce a well-designed and informative document that conveys vital information to our sangha about our temple. Jen has done a wonderful job as newsletter editor. Thank you, Jen! Greg Denny has graciously agreed to step into this position.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

August 1 – Hozan Alan Senauke

August 8 – Gerry Oliva

August 15 – Sojun Roshi

August 22 – Sojun Roshi

August 29 – Shohaku Okumura Roshi

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

**Third Friday of the month before each
issue. Submit items to
bzcnewsletter@gmail.com.**

**September deadline:
Friday, August 21, 8:00 pm**

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

August 3 Monday 6:25am – Open Discussion

August 7 Friday 5:40pm – Marie Hopper

August 10 Monday 6:25am – Tom Painter

August 17 Monday 6:25am – Paul Ridgway

August 24 Monday 6:25am – Fulani Offut

August 31 Monday 6:25am – Dave Rutschman

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1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703