



Berkeley Zen Center



May 2013 Newsletter

2013 Spring Practice Period

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sesshin starting at 5:00 am on Saturday, May 11 and conclude with the Shuso Ceremony on Sunday, June 23. Sojun Roshi invites everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period while still minding their obligations outside the gate. Hoshin Bokuren Jake Van Akkeren—Dharma Faith, Unadorned Practice—will be Shuso this year, sharing the Abbot's seat and setting an example for us all. Anzan Tokugio Jed Appelman—Serene Mountain Virtuous Walking—will serve as Benji, assisting the Shuso.

A Thursday night class with Sojun Roshi will focus on selected teachings by Dogen Zenji and other significant ancestors in our Soto Zen lineage that bring clarity and encouragement to our daily practice.

For a detailed practice period schedule, see the bulletin board shelf. Practice period applications are also available on the bulletin board shelf; please fill one out and place it in the Shuso's box on the community room porch by Monday, May 6.

In addition to signing up for practice period and turning in a registration form, you need to sign up separately for many individual practice period events. See the bulletin board for these sign-up sheets.

Practice Period Events

Opening sesshin: 5/11, 5:00 am - 9:10 pm
 Opening/Shuso Entering Ceremony: 5/11, 4:00 pm
 Shuso talks: 5/13, 5/18, 6/1, 6/7
 Classes: Thursday evenings, 5/16 - 6/13
 Bansan (tea, dharma discussion with the Abbot): 5/17
 Dinner and Skit Night: 6/1, 6:00 pm
 Shosan (dharma dialogue with the Abbot): 6/14, 5:40 pm;
 6/17, 5:40 am
 Lay Ordination: 6/15, 3:00 pm
 Five-day Sesshin: 6/19 - 6/23
 Shuso Hossen (dharma dialogue with Shuso): 6/23, 10:30 am



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

May

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 5/2, 6:20 pm
 Friday, 5/3, 6:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 5/5, 8:00 am – noon

Practice Period Opens—One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 5/11 (see announcement next page)

Kidzendo

Saturday, 5/18

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 5/25, 9:40 am

June

Practice Period Dinner & Skit Night

Saturday, 6/1, 6:00 pm

Kidzendo

Saturday, 6/1

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 6/2, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 6/3, 6:20 pm
 Tuesday, 6/4, 6:40 am

Shosan

Friday, 6/14, 5:40 pm
 Monday, 6/17, 5:40 am

Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo

Saturday, 6/15, 3:00 pm

Five-day Sesshin

Wednesday, 6/19 – Sunday 6/23

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 6/22, 9:40 am

Shuso Hossen

Sunday, 6/23, 10:30 am

**One-Day Sesshin
Opening of Spring Practice Period
Saturday, May 11, 5:00 am – 9:10 pm**

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sesshin on Saturday, May 11, 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 4:00 pm. All practice period participants should make it a priority to attend the entering ceremony and support the Shuso.

After you've read the sign-up information notice on the bulletin board and signed up for the sesshin, 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, Carol Paul, caroljpaul@yahoo.com or 510-206-5051.



May Pole, Isaiah Thomas, 1767

Practice Period Events for Families

For this year's practice period we have scheduled a few special events for families. There will be a regular Kidzendo on May 18, and then on June 1, our Kidzendo program will include a visit to the zendo to hear the first part of our shuso's talk. Don't miss it! Also, as our closing event for family programs this year, we are offering a children's service on Friday, June 7 at 5:00 pm, where Sojun Roshi will teach our young people how we do our service of chanting and bowing. After this special service we will have the kids move to the community room for a pizza dinner; parents who wish can stay for another shuso talk in the zendo, and then join us in the community room for pizza, play, and talk. We'd love to get your input on our programs this year, and your ideas for next year.



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 Toolbox and Mindfulness for Families program is offered two days per month, typically 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 (posted on the website). Check the calendar online or below for exact schedule. As always, RSVP if you plan to attend (lauries@kushiki.org).

May 4	Childcare
May 11	Sesshin – no program
May 18	KIDZENDO
May 25	Childcare
June 1	KIDZENDO
June 7	Children's service – pizza dinner
June 8	Childcare
June 15	Childcare
June 22	Sesshin - no program
June 29	Summer break begins
July 13-14	BZC Campout
July – August	no KIDZENDO, childcare offered by appointment

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.

Practice Period at BZC

Comments from Sojun Roshi

May, 2013

Practice period at BZC this spring begins with the initial Opening Ceremony on Saturday, May 11 and ends with the Shuso Ceremony on the morning of Sunday, June 23. Sojun Roshi has asked Hoshin Bokuren Jake Van Akkeren—Dharma Faith, Unadorned Practice, to be Shuso and serve as exemplar of devoted practice for us. We invite BZC members to participate in this time of intensified practice. The full schedule of events is posted on the bulletin board.

In order to participate please fill out a registration form on the bulletin board shelf. You must also sign up for Sesshin and a number of other events, even though you may have noted them in your registration form. Those sign-up sheets will be posted.

There are some requirements for participation in the practice period. These are detailed on the registration form. The spirit of this practice is expressed by Sojun Roshi in his words below.



A hummingbird has made BZC gardens her home this spring.

Photo by Nancy McClellan

Our Approach to Practice Period

During the six weeks of practice period we have the opportunity to renew and concentrate our effort, and reestablish our practice in beginner's mind. The practice period has some minimum requirements, but within these requirements each person must create his or her own schedule. This is the nature of lay practice. Some will be able to do only the minimum, while others who have the opportunity will be able to extend or stretch themselves much more.

It should be clearly understood that in no way is any sangha member required to participate, nor is there any pressure to do so. Please come to zazen as usual even if you are not part of the practice period.

When you include your zendo schedule in your calendar it incorporates zazen into the rhythm of your life as an intention rather than as a random or arbitrary activity. When we design our schedule for a limited time period, taking into consideration all of the other factors and responsibilities in our life, we have a foundation for practice. It is also necessary to honor our commitments and to be realistic about how we create our schedule.

I like to think of the spirit of practice period as the wish to do it all, and then narrowing it down to what is practical or possible, rather than simply picking and choosing pieces of it based on preference or convenience. This helps to create an edge; something to push against but not enough to be inhibiting. When we all have this attitude it creates a strong sangha feeling of mutual support and encouragement.

It is also important to manifest the spirit of zazen in our home life and work life as continuous, well-rounded practice; not just something we do on the cushion.

This can also provide a good atmosphere for those who are sitting and are not in a position to practice as fully. What makes the difference are the requirements and commitments. Except for that, we (participants and nonparticipants) are all practicing together.

Our Spring practice period will set a tone for the whole year.

-Sojun

The Third Treasure

Afternoon zazen on Wednesdays often finds only a handful at service, so I give the chanting my all, snatching a breath when others are voicing to sustain an even sound. On Saturday mornings, by contrast, I relax in the full, rich tones, even falling silent for a beat, to hear the many voices resonate as one. I experience this moment as “taking refuge in sangha.” Paradoxically, I feel my presence is *essential* without being *indispensible*; I am here and it is enough.

I forgot this insight during the past winter when, sidelined by a long illness, I had to call on others to cover my practice commitments. I poured out apologies, fervent thanks, and assurances I would soon be back on the job. My disappointment and anxiety escalated when that didn’t happen. In my second month “off,” my sense of worth crumbled entirely: I was benched, out of the game, a burden not a contributor. For a zen student, it isn’t hard to spot the self-clinging in this scenario, but old conditioning dies hard.

Our practice provides a lot of support for letting go of obligations when we need to take care of ourselves. But what finally liberated me from this round of *dukkha* was what I heard when I fell by the way: voices, chanting, “Don’t worry. It’s covered. Come back whenever you’re ready.” It was the sound of people who love our practice as much as I do, who do not feel burdened, who move in tandem as needed to clean the bathrooms, cook the breakfast, weed the garden, ring the bells, light the candles, sustain the chant.

Ultimately, I found willing helpers to take over every part of the Buddha’s birthday bower (my job!) and that morning I rested at home in equanimity while it happened without me. I came for the ceremony and stood in line, deeply moved. This was “taking refuge in sangha” in the most literal and intimate way; I finally traded the illusion of control for the reality of being held by something larger and more reliable than I alone could ever be.

It helps of course that our sangha is robust, in numbers and talent. Many hands. But I believe there is something more that released me from my old, pressured habits of mind. I detected an amazing quality in how help was offered during my time-out: I would have to call it a spirit of *gladness*.

I know that individually we all have moments of resistance, over-extension, tiredness, frustration as we carry out our work assignments. But I hear a harmony humming along under our common efforts that comes from the great resonating bell that is our practice.

For those who come to BZC initially to take refuge in buddha and dharma through meditation and study, the joys of sangha may yet to be discovered. I respectfully urge newcomers to try your hand at any of the myriad opportunities for work in our community. Pace yourself, and if you need to pause, take your break without apology: listen for the sound of gladness echoing your own.

-Catharine Lucas



Sounding Board
Council Meetings Report

At our March meeting, the Board discussed the results of the 2012 Sangha Council meetings on Abbot succession and how to present them to the BZC community. A sub-committee composed of Gerry Oliva, Colleen Busch, and Ron Nestor has been working to identify the key issues that came up, with numerous representative quotes for each issue and a sense of how many people shared similar views. Both the Board note takers for each of the six meetings and the sub-committee have tried hard to be objective and simply report on what was said.

We have multiple comments from about sixty BZC members, so our task has been to organize the hundreds of individual comments into a cohesive picture without either minimizing important points or getting lost in unnecessary detail. The diversity of viewpoints expressed can seem overwhelming at first. However, we've found that after going over all the comments slowly and repeatedly, certain common themes clearly emerge as being of concern to many of us. We imagine that this is where we'll begin as we consider possible next steps. Along with these major themes, some suggestions and ideas, while not representative of the views of many people at this point, may turn out later to be creative and useful.

While the sangha's speaking and listening process has been intentionally wide open, our founder Sojun Roshi's guidance and our Soto practice tradition also require respectful listening and attention. We look forward to BZC members' responses to the council meetings report. Staying in touch with how the community is feeling helps us to clarify our overall direction for the eventual succession of Abbots, both near and long-term.



*Flying carp —
 brought back to life
 by the rising wind.*

Haiga by Kazumi Cranney

BZC Campout - Save the date!

You are warmly invited to the annual Berkeley Zen Center Campout, scheduled for July 13-14. 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 sheet on the bulletin board in early July.

Sangha Council Meetings: A Report from the Board

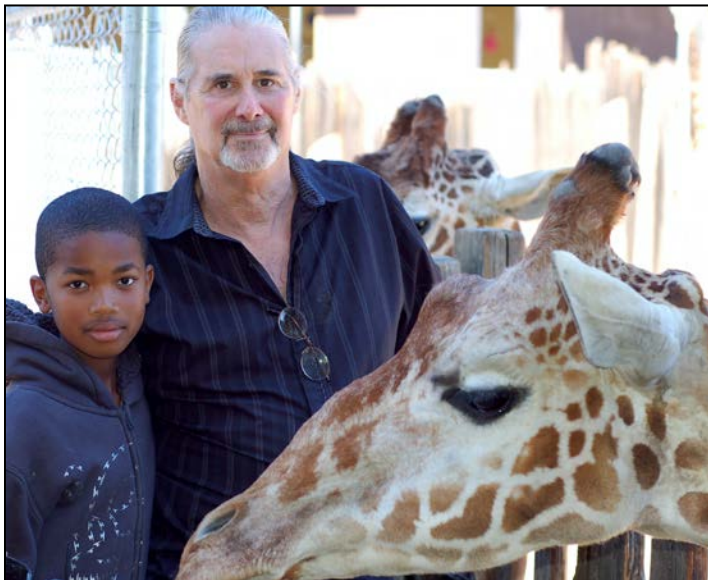
In 2012, the BZC Board held a series of sangha council meetings so that sangha perspectives would inform Board efforts to plan for a smooth transition in leadership when the time comes. A group of Board members has compiled a report on perspectives and concerns that emerged in the council meetings. Copies will be available on the bulletin board shelf after May 1. If you have further comments or questions or would like an electronic copy of the report, contact the Board Secretary at bzcsecretary@gmail.com.

Last Chance for Raffle-Raising

The development committee welcomes your raffle donations of baked or handmade goods, gift certificates, or purchased items for the BZC bazaar on September 28. Contact Veronica Reilly (609-915-7909; very23@gmail.com) or Andrew Corson (510-541-2004; andrewcorson@sbcglobal.net) about potential donations by June 1.

Pet a Giraffe and Support BZC

BZC Treasurer Paul Farber's favorite animal at the Oakland Zoo is the White-Handed Gibbon. Why? "They mate for life, sing love songs to each other every morning, are superb athletes—leaping up to 30 feet—and have a very sweet nature," says Paul. A volunteer zoo docent since 2011, Paul will take a lucky group behind the scenes to visit the animal habitats and discuss the myriad manifestations of Buddha nature on display at the zoo. To sign up, come to the Bazaar in September and bid on Paul's zoo tour and other one-of-a-kind



fundraising offerings from sangha members. Do you have a passion or talent to donate? Contact Peter Pfaelzer (510.843.1490; pfpfaelzer@gmail.com) or Jeff Taylor (925.997.7831; jeft2k@yahoo.com) by August 1.



Closing Zendo Windows

When the zendo windows get extended out as shown, just pulling on the latch not only stresses the fixture, often resulting in it breaking off, but also the hinge system the windows slide on. The best way to close the window in this scenario is to simultaneously push up on the frame closest to you while pulling the latch towards you. This saves us the time and cost of repair. Thank you.

Thanks, The Maintenance Department

Two Hands, Two Feet

Speaking of two hands, Sojun Roshi encourages us to use two hands while receiving or returning gomashio. Please use one hand to steady the tray, and handle the gomashio with the other. This not only helps stabilize the movement but also better connects you to self and other.

Please do not walk on another's zabuton once they've laid theirs out for service. Step around, making skin contact with the wooden floor only. On Saturday at 9:30 zazen until after lecture due to the aisles being entirely covered with zabutons this request is not applicable.

One Hand Clapping

In order to maintain better relations with our neighbors, we've elected to cease sounding the "wake-up" clappers outside on the temple grounds before 5:40 am zazen. They will be sounded in the zendo, and in the community room, when people are staying there overnight. The clappers will be sounded at the other usual times during the day of sesshin, as well as before weekday 5:40 pm zazen.

Thanks, The Wake-Up Department

Work Day 2013

More than a dozen sangha members helped out for BZC's twice-a-year work day, led by our work leader, Diane Schnapp, on Sunday, March 31.

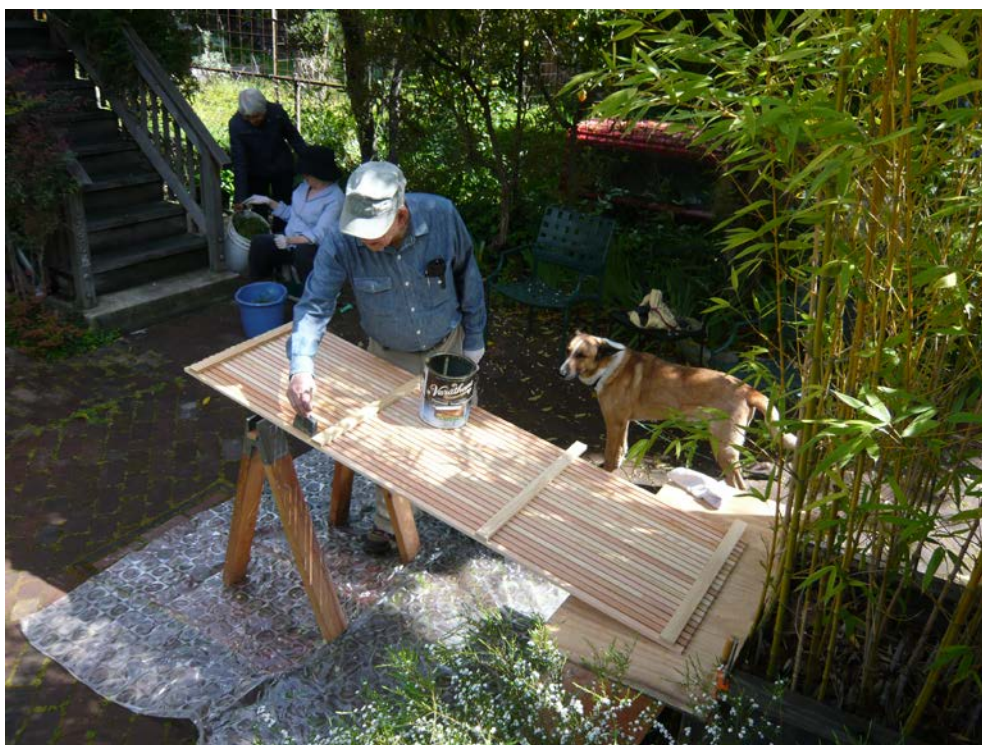
Someone was overheard to say, "If anyone feels like getting a little more intimate with buddha, dharma, or sangha, work day satisfies all three."

We shared two periods of zazen, coffee throughout the day, work practice, some silence, some not-so-silence, and food! Lots of great food!

Working both inside and outside, and dancing with the on-again, off-again light rain, we were able to follow through with our multiple projects in a satisfying way.

All are welcome and invited to sign up for the next work day, August 25. The date and a sign-up sheet will be posted ahead of time on the patio bulletin board.

Thanks to everyone who contributed, and welcome to those who are interested in joining us next time!



Changing Hands

Walter Kieser will be the new Assistant to the Health & Safety coordinator. Stephanie Seaborg will be assistant to the head chiden. Peter Carpentieri has taken over the Head Dishwasher position from Steve Treagus. Bruce Coughran has taken over the Work Leader position from Ko Blix. Tamar Enoch and Maria Winston will take over the Head Jikido position from Bruce Coughran.

Kate Gilpin and William Gordon are now co-hosts of the BZC Saturday bookstore. In February, Kate replaced Andrew Corson in the position. Thank you Andrew! Also in February, Gary Artim took over oryoki instruction duties from Ellen Webb and the coordinator position shifted to Alexandra Frappier from Peter Overton.

Thanks to everyone for your diligence and effort!



Work Day photos by Susan H.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Third Friday of the month before each issue

June deadline:
Friday, May 17, 8:00 pm

Berkeley Zen Center
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