



Berkeley Zen Center



November 2011 Newsletter

ROHATSU SESSHIN

This year's Rohatsu sesshin, led by Hozan Alan Senauke, begins on Sunday, December 4 and ends Saturday, December 10. This last BZC sesshin of the year celebrates the practice and life of Shakyamuni Buddha, and all sangha members *(Continued on p. 2)*

WOMEN'S SITTING

Sunday, November 6, 9:00am To 5:00 Pm

PLEASE NOTE: THE TIME CHANGES FROM 2 AM TO 1 AM ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 6. REMEMBER TO REMEMBER TO SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK THE NIGHT BEFORE THIS SITTING!

Kenshin Catherine Cascade will lead a day of exploration into women's experiences and understandings of the dharma as they expand and enrich the evolving practice of Buddhism. She has a long-standing interest in issues related to women and gender, particularly as they arise within the context of spirituality and religious practice.

Lunch will be provided, but will not be formal oryoki.

Payment for the day will be on a sliding scale. The midpoint of the scale is \$35, and if everybody donates that amount, the expenses of the event will be met.

Catherine is a disciple of BZC Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke. She was originally ordained in the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives in 2000, and was re-ordained by Hozan Sensei in 2004. She was a BZC resident from 2007 to 2011 and is now living in rural Oregon with her partner John Mogy. Together with nearby Empty Field Zendo, they host a weekly program of zazen and dharma discussion, meeting at Empty Field in the summer months and at their own Bird Haven Zendo in the winter months, when the empty field is flooded.

A sign-up sheet will be posted on the patio bulletin board. Please contact Marie Hopper at 510-559-8831 or marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net if you have questions.



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

November

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 11/3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 11/4, 6:40 am

Women's Sitting

Sunday, 11/6, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 11/12, 9:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 11/13, 8:00 am to noon

Kidzendo

Saturday, 11/19

Zendo Holiday—Thanksgiving

Thursday, 11/24

December

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, 12/4 - Saturday, 12/10

See article this page

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial

Monday, 12/5, 8:20 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12/10, 9:40 am

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/10, after lecture—11:10 am

Winter Break

Saturday, 12/17 – Friday, 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Saturday, 12/31—details in December issue

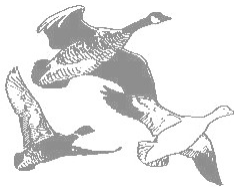
ROHATSU 2011 *(Continued from p. 1)*

and friends are invited to attend Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony, which will be on the morning of Saturday, December 10 at 11:10, right after lecture. Rohatsu is also a time to be inspired by the memory of our founder, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. The Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony will be on Monday evening, December 5 at 8:20, and everyone is also warmly invited to attend this ceremony.

Each day of Rohatsu starts at 5:00 am and ends at 9:10 pm with the exception of the final day, which ends at approximately 5:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the sesshin for as many days as possible, but participants are asked to sit for a minimum of three days, of which at least two should be consecutive. People who cannot participate for full days Monday through Friday may sit the first and last days of sesshin (Sunday and Saturday) and on weekday evenings from 5:40-9:10 pm.

The sesshin fee is \$35 for each full day and \$5 for each weekday evening. With recognition that not everyone will be able to pay this amount, accommodations are readily made by contacting the sesshin director. Please pay in advance, leaving checks marked "Rohatsu" in the kitchen door donation slot. The sign-up sheet and registration forms (along with other important sesshin information) are posted on the patio bulletin board. Please put completed forms in the sesshin director's box, which is located on the community room porch. The deadline for sign-up is Wednesday, November 30 at noon.

If you are unfamiliar with oryoki (eating in the zendo), please attend an oryoki training beforehand. Training is offered every Saturday morning at 6:40 for those who request it. If you wish to stay overnight at BZC during the week, please contact BZC shika Alexandra Frappier at 415-613-9210 (before 9:00 pm) or by e-mail at afrappier@gmail.com. If you have questions about this sesshin, please contact sesshin director Jake Van Akkeren at 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 pm) or by e-mail at jvanakkeren@comcast.net.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
December deadline: Friday, 11/18, 8 pm



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Childcare Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturday mornings for zazen from 9:30 to 10:15, then families are welcome to listen to the lecture on the sound system in the community room. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; phone or email Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or lauries@kushiki.org. Childcare for 8:45 zazen instruction and beginner orientation may be offered by special arrangement.

Kidzendo A program for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday morning of each month (or the fourth if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). We meet at the Senaukes'—1933 Russell—at about 9:40 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene at 1933 Russell for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

Zazen, Discussion for Parents, Childcare Provided BZC is no longer offering a potluck for families on the third Friday of the month. However, we have started a new dharma group for parents, and we welcome parents in all stages to join us. The meetings will include zazen, check-in, and study. Childcare will be provided for those who need it. We are meeting at 10:00 am on the 2nd Sunday of each month; the group is led by BZC parents/senior students Laurie Senauke and Greg Denny, and the meeting and childcare are at Chez Hopper-Denny. This is not a drop-in group - we would like folks to commit to attending for this current school year. Of course we know that not everyone will be able to make every meeting. RSVP, including your childcare needs, to Laurie (lauries@kushiki.org), Greg (greg@techsperience.org) or Marie Hopper (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

Family Practice Email Group To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We'd love to have you join this list if you have children in your life, even if you don't typically attend family practice events. We promise to only send, at most, ONE email per week, just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, just email Laurie (lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

November	5	Childcare
November	12	Childcare
November	19	KIDZENDO
November	26	Childcare
December	3	Childcare
December	10	Sesshin—no program
December	17	Interim—no program
December	24	Interim—no program
December	31	Interim—no program



Fall Weather

Sojun's Reminder, November, 2011

Fall weather at Tassajara is usually mild in the beginning, coming on the coattails of summer. There have been some rainy days and a few cold ones as we settle in for the ninety days of practice period. The Tangaryo for the new students, when they sit continuously for five days with few breaks, is over. I think of it as the entrance exam or the transitional passage from one world to another. Happily chatting away now like little birds, and enjoying the cool, sunny mornings of the mountain forest, it is a special treat for them, like newborns, free of conditioned responses.

For most of the students, the first few weeks are spent getting used to the rhythm, which includes a good deal of zazen, work, ceremonies, services, sesshins, and the relentless demands of the daily schedule that starts with the wake-up bell at 3:50 am. People are tired, and often have to deal with their resistances, but as time goes on the students will find their rhythm, and it is now coming together in a harmonious way.

I saw an article in the periodical *Buddhadharma* asking the question, "Is monastic practice necessary in America?" My response is that monastic practice is the fountainhead, the source from which all modified practices, such as temples and dharma groups, trace their origin. Tassajara is a model for Zen Center and Zen Center affiliates in a fundamental way, which allows for variations that accord with the circumstances of individual practice places without losing sight of the essentials. The monastery is a training place for students and teachers, both priest and lay, where we absorb the fundamentals while practicing together in a concentrated environment. When the students come to Tassajara, both priest and lay, I think of us all together as monks.

I modeled the Berkeley Zen Center on the principles of Tassajara and City Center and Suzuki Roshi's teaching. What a wonderful treasure we have, indeed! We continue to follow, in our own way, the Japanese monastic model that was introduced by Suzuki Roshi and other Japanese priests. This affords a valuable continuity, bridging both worlds so that we do not lose the root in a whorl of change.

Japanese Zen is embedded in Japanese culture, and although we are in the process of distinguishing the two, we should know what we are doing, not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The more we can absorb the ancient way in our bones, the easier it will be to achieve that. As Suzuki Roshi would say, "It will be accomplished little by little. No need to be hasty. When you are hasty you will make mistakes."

I am so grateful to be here now with so many BZC members and a wide range of dharma relations. All is well.

HALF-DAY SITTING

Sunday, November 13, 8:00 am-noon

BZC offers eight half-day sittings each year. Each includes five periods of zazen, kinhin, 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 sitters. 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 Stan Dewey, the November half-day director, at standewey@comcast.net or 510-528-1989..

SEWING BUDDHA'S ROBE

Sewing classes in preparation for Lay Ordination next year will start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

If you are interested, please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi or Hozan Alan Senauke Sensei before the sewing classes begin, and preferably before the winter break in December.

After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

CHIDEN SIGNUP FOR 2012

Now is a great time to become a chiden! Help care for the altars in the zendo, trimming candles, cleaning, arranging flowers. You commit to a week, twice a year, about thirty minutes a day, Monday through Friday, at your own best time (when the zendo is not in use.) Some chidens add a few minutes of private zazen for the perfect break in a busy week. Being a chiden is an excellent way to get familiar with the forms of our practice and to support the practice of all.

The chiden roster for 2012 is now being compiled. Relative newcomers are welcome. If you wish to learn about the chiden’s job, please call head chiden Catharine Lucas at 526-3100. And of course, current ongoing chidens are gratefully encouraged to continue.

Gassho!

ORYOKI INSTRUCTION

In preparation for Rohatsu this year, Ellen Webb will be teaching oryoki in the zendo on Saturday, December 3, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, as well as by appointment on Saturday, November 19. There is no sign-up. If you have questions, or want to make an appointment, please contact Ellen at elweb@sbcglobal.net.

OFFICE MANAGER'S CORNER

A. Reminder on payments: For all payments to BZC, please itemize exactly what the payment covers, with amounts specified for EACH ITEM, even if you think we know what it is for. Separate payments may be combined in one check, but the amounts must be clearly specified. Many thanks for your help.

B. Reminder on how to reach the Office Manager:

- **Email:** Please use the email address bzcofficemanager@gmail.com.
 - **Payments, reimbursements, valuable or sensitive information:** Put in mail slot in kitchen door.
 - **General:** Office Manager slot on community room porch.
- NOTE:** Sesshin information sheets go in the Sesshin Director's slot, **NOT** the kitchen door, where the director does not have access.

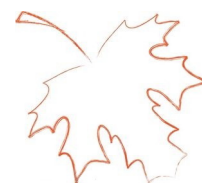
Notes from the Librarian

Dear Sangha,

Greetings from your librarian! Library hours are changing a little, since I came across a scheduling conflict I was previously unaware of. I will be available in the community room on the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 pm and every Tuesday from 5:00-5:30 pm. You are welcome to stop by with a question, a suggestion, or just to browse the library. Additionally, I will be available on Saturdays after lecture as often as possible.

I also wanted to let you know about a few of our recent acquisitions. Many may find *the river of heaven: The Haiku of Basho, Buson, Issa, and Shiki* of interest. Robert Aitken Roshi selected the haiku in this volume and offers a commentary on each poem, in an engaging examination of the relationship between the themes of haiku and Zen literature. His commentaries also give interesting background information about the poems and elucidate some images quite beautifully. Others may be interested in *Gone Beyond: Volume One*, an in-depth study of the *Abhisamayalamkara*, which offers a summary of the prajnaparamita sutras, with commentaries from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective. We have quite a few other fairly recent and potentially fascinating books, so I hope to see you in the community room soon!

Gassho,
Veronica Reilly, very23@gmail.com



SOUNDING BOARD

This is one of a regular series from the BZC Board of Directors

November, 2011 - At the September board meeting we discussed problems that can arise when the lines of responsibility and authority between various practice positions overlap or become unclear. This could happen in a number of position relationships. Examples are: work leader and projects manager, tenzo and kitchen keeper, treasurer and office manager, coordinator, and class coordinator. Confusion about who in particular is responsible for directing or doing a certain task can also occur when other members, volunteering their time, become involved in projects. Coming forward to volunteer is vital to the spirit of BZC and allows us to thrive. However, even with the best of intentions, the lines occasionally become blurred.

The board has decided to add this issue to its future agenda. We already have guidelines in place, so it shouldn't be too complicated to refine them over time. We may also redo the BZC organizational chart to make the division of duties more clear. Sojun, Hozan, and coordinator Peter Overton have agreed to meet and begin this discussion. It's a joy to work together as smoothly as we do, but it does take care.

BZC POLICY ON COLDS AND FLU SEASON

In an effort to support each other's health, we are asking that sangha members stay home if they are ill. We are recommending following the Center for Disease Control's guidelines: please don't come to the zendo if you have fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, or anything you equate with viral illness. Please stay home and take care of yourself for seven days or until you have not had fever for 48 hours, whichever is longer. If you realize you are ill after you have arrived on a Saturday or sesshin day, please let the director know and go home. Some of us are not only older, but also have medical conditions that are immuno-compromising, so your awareness and self-care is important to us all. We understand that some coughs and sneezes result from allergies. Please inform the sesshin director if this is the case with you. If you are uncertain, speak with the sesshin director, who can consult with an M.D. if one is available. If you have concerns about someone else in sesshin who appears ill, please consult with the sesshin director rather than approaching the person yourself.

If you have further questions, please contact Health and Safety Coordinator Peter Pfaelzer or BZC vice-president Jake Van Akkeren.



RINSO-IN'S 500TH ANNIVERSARY

On Wednesday, October 19, Sojun Roshi flew off to join the three-day celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of Rinso-in Temple in Yaizu, Japan. It is the home temple of Suzuki Roshi, and now Hoitsu Roshi.

Sojun is bringing a photo book called *Endless Beginnings* as a present from BZC. Sections of the book include: "Face to Face," "Early Days," "Berkeley Zen Center," "Sojun's Mountain Seat Ceremony," "To Rinso-in," "Friends," "Outside Look at Berkeley Zen Center," "In Zendo," "Inside Look at BZC," "40th Anniversary," "Mountains and Rivers Sesshin," "Zaike Tokudo," "Couples," "Marriage of Max and Kana," and "Zaike Shukke."

A scanned version of the book is in the BZC Photo Library at <http://berkeleyzencenter.shutterfly.com>. Click the "Endless Beginnings" tab if it's not already open. Then you can see the book as photos of the front and back covers and pages, and as a photo (video from photos).

A revised and expanded version is planned for the BZC library and for sale at BZC soon. As you look at version one, if any suggestions occur for captions, more photos, layout, or other aspects of the book, please share them with Ko Blix.



Sojun Roshi and Hoitsu Roshi

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