



# Berkeley Zen Center



November 2012 Newsletter

## Rohatsu Sesshin

This year's Rohatsu sesshin, led by Sojun Mel Weitsman, begins on Sunday, December 2 and ends Saturday, December 8. This last BZC sesshin of the year celebrates the enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha, and all sangha members and friends are invited to attend Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony, which will be on Saturday December 8 beginning at 11:10am, 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 3 at 8:20pm, and everyone is also warmly invited to attend this ceremony.

Each day of Rohatsu starts at 5:00am and ends at 9:00pm, with the exception of the final day which ends at about 5:00pm. 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 5:40-9:00pm.

The sesshin fee is \$35 for each full day and \$5 for each weekday evening. Anyone unable to pay the full amount may request a reduced fee from 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 28, immediately after morning zazen.

If you are unfamiliar with oryoki (eating in the zendo), please attend an oryoki training beforehand. Training is offered every Saturday morning at 6:40am for those who request it. If you wish to stay overnight at BZC during the week, please contact the shika, Alexandra Frappier: 415.613.9210 (before 9pm) or [afrappier1@gmail.com](mailto:afrappier1@gmail.com). If you have questions about this sesshin, please contact the sesshin director, John Busch: 510.710.7183 or [john@mobu.org](mailto:john@mobu.org).

## B Z C S c h e d u l e

### November

#### **Founder's Ceremony**

Thursday, 11/1, 6:20pm

Friday, 11/2, 6:40am

#### **Bodhisattva Ceremony**

Saturday, 11/3, 9:40am

#### **Half-Day Sitting**

Sunday, 11/4, 8:00am - 12:00 noon

#### **One-Day Sitting, Aspects of Practice Closes**

Saturday, 11/10, 5:00am - 9:00pm

### December

#### **Rohatsu Sesshin**

Sunday, 12/2 - Saturday, 12/8

#### **Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial**

Monday, 12/3, 8:20pm

#### **Bodhisattva Ceremony**

Wednesday, 12/5, 8:20pm

#### **Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony**

Saturday, 12/8, 11:10am

#### **Winter Break**

Saturday, 12/15 - Monday, 12/31

#### **New Year's Eve Sitting and Party**

Monday, 12/31



#### **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.

**One-day Sitting  
Aspects of Practice Closes  
Saturday, 11/10, 5:00am – 9:00pm**

Aspects of Practice closes with a one day sesshin on Saturday, November 10 (5:00am - 9:00pm). Please sign up no later than Wednesday, November 7, 9:00am. For sesshin details, please contact the director, Carol Paul, at 510.206.5051 or caroljpaul@yahoo.com.



**Half-day Sitting  
Sunday 11/4, 8:00am – 12:00 noon**

The next half-day sitting will be on Sunday, November 4. BZC offers eight half-day sittings each 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 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 the November half-day director, Nina Sprecher at ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net or 510.848.3585.

**Sojun Roshi’s 20’s and 30’s  
Dharma Group  
November/December**

Sojun Roshi invites students in their 20’s and 30’s to join him, usually once a month, for a short period of zazen and open discussion about Zen, Buddhism, meditation, and/or your own practice. We may also discuss selected Buddhist texts. Our next meeting is Saturday, November 17, after lecture at 11:30am in the zendo. We meet for the final time this year on December 1. For more information, e-mail Ron Nestor at rnestor1@yahoo.com.

**Finding Presence in Conversation  
Power and Powerlessness**

What is power? And how do we relate to whatever we think it is? If power is the capacity to mobilize resources (be they external or internal) to meet needs, how do we exercise power? ...in our relationships, at work... in our community life? At our next meeting we’ll explore alternatives to the ways we use power that are more likely to result in the kind of connection we would like with others. Facilitated by Peter Overton in the community room on Thursday November 15, 7:30 to 9:00pm.



**Family Activities at BZC**

**Saturday Morning Childcare** Childcare is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below), for 9:40am zazen through lecture. Currently childcare is being done by Berkeley High student Lihong Chan, so 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 8:45am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more info.

**Kidzendo** A program for children three and up is offered, usually on the third Saturday morning of each month (or the fourth if there’s an issue with the third). Beginning in the fall of 2012, we are offering a special curriculum called The Toolbox. BZC Resident Tamar has been trained in offering this set of materials, and we are excited about presenting it to BZC families. During this period, the kids will not be attending the first 10 minutes of lecture. See details on our website or in the September newsletter.

November 3	Childcare
November 10	Sesshin – no program
November 17	KIDZENDO
November 24	Childcare
December 1	Childcare
December 8	Sesshin – no program
December 15	Interim – no program
December 22	Interim – no program
December 29	Interim – no program
January 5	Childcare
January 12	Childcare
January 19	Childcare
January 26	KIDZENDO

**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’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 e-mail per week—just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, just e-mail Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org or Marie at marie\_hopper@sbcglobal.net.

# What Makes Sammy Run

Thoughts from Sojun Roshi

November, 2012

After attending the Soto Zen Buddhist association bi-annual meeting last week, which was attended by 90 priests nation-wide who come together and discuss common concerns, I came away feeling grateful for our practice here at BZC. It seems to me that temples or practice places fall into roughly four categories: (1) Residential training monasteries like Tassajara (in our lineage), (2) Like BZC, based on a hybrid residential /non-residential mix, which in some cases can be considered a training temple, (3) A formal non-residential style, and (4) Smaller informal sitting groups.

Our sitting space in Berkeley before our first zendo on Dwight Way was passed around to various living rooms in the no. (4) style. Many people like that small intimate style and leave when it starts to grow. Suzuki Roshi came on Monday mornings and sat, gave a talk, and ate breakfast. That was wonderful. Next, in 1967, we moved into the spacious old house on Dwight Way with a downstairs apartment and a large attic, which we turned into a zendo. We stayed for 12 years at \$130 a month rent. This allowed us to establish a stable practice. It was also the same year that we established the Zen Mountain Center at Tassajara. So little by little, with Suzuki Roshi's hands-off encouragement, I modeled our practice on a combination of City Center and Tassajara. At this time we had no examples to follow for a small practice place. But for me it just seemed like a natural flow. This was an example of the no. (2) style.

We set up a schedule of two periods of zazen daily, and went to San Francisco Zen Center on Saturday morning to sit, clean, work and hear Suzuki Roshi, and also to sit sesshin. When we began I opened the door in the morning at 5:00am, led service after zazen, made breakfast for whoever stayed, and swept the floor. Little by little as the sangha developed, others joined in and we began assigning positions. Some members moved close to the zendo and pretty soon we had a nice cohesive community. When I think about what kept that early sangha together, it was Suzuki Roshi's dedication and confidence in our endeavor, but also the remarkable dedication of the members to create a place where zazen practice could take place.

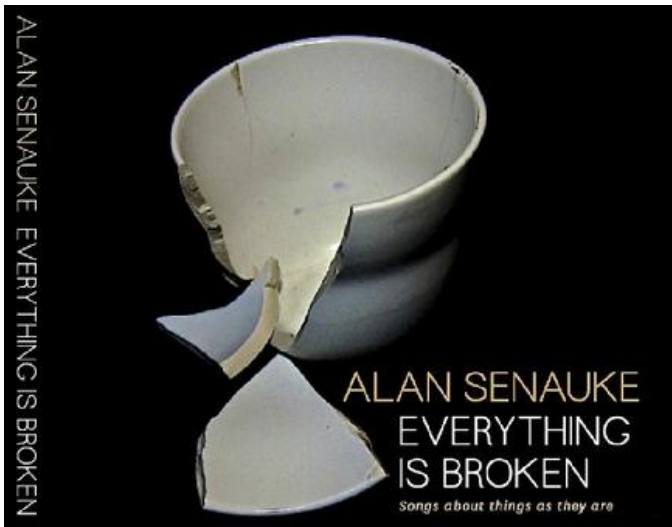
When we finally moved to Russell Street, it was our own place and the beginning of phase (3). We had room for a core of eight committed residents following the schedule as well as a core of committed non-residents. We had to remodel one of our buildings to make a zendo, and lift up another to put in a ground floor. The sangha pulled together as they had, to buy our new property, and we all went to work for a number of years mostly using our own skills and finances. There were many days when we were all working together with picks and shovels, wheelbarrows, hammers and saws, both men and women. I was so naive. I never had any doubt at all that, naturally, this was the way to do it. But this kind of effort brought us together in a way that has allowed the members to feel that this is their place, each one contributing to its existence.

The sustaining quality has been the rotation of practice positions: the coordinator (director), tenzo, zendo manager, sesshin director, board, practice committee, office manager, gardener, Abbot and Vice Abbot, just to mention a few. We try to give every member a position even to taking care of an altar or a bathroom. This way we are mutually supportive and can relate to the practice from many different viewing points. I think of this as an American-style teaching temple as it includes qualified teachers, regular zazen, study, sesshin, close sangha practice, and experience in various positions, as well as room for residential and non-residential participation.

We are so fortunate to have a close relation with the SFZC and access to Tassajara for monastic practice. Because of this and other factors, many good teachers have been able to find their roots here. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to all of you who are here now, sustaining our practice, and to all those who have passed through the gate and offered their contribution.

- Sojun.





## Everything Is Broken

*Everything Is Broken: Songs About Things As They Are* is Hozan Alan Senauke's brand new cd of "buddhistic music." Featuring songs by Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Bernice Reagon, and Alan, along with traditional songs rewritten to bring out their dharma direction, the album also includes Greg Fain's Lotus Sutra hit "Our Hero," about the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging.

The album is available for purchase at Alan's website <http://www.clearviewproject.org>, and, as a whole album or individual songs, from Amazon, iTunes, and CD Baby. Of course it is also available at the BZC Saturday book table. Don't miss it if you can.

## Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

Please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman or Hozan Alan Sensei before the sewing class begins (and preferably before the winter break).

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



## Colds & Flu Season

As we head into the winter months, we hope that everyone will reread the health policy below and take personal responsibility for not spreading infections, and preserving their own health.

### ***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 immunocompromising, 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 necessary. If you have concerns about someone else in sesshin who appears ill please consult with the sesshin director rather than approaching that person yourself.

Remember, careful hand washing is the most important and effective way to avoid spreading colds and influenza!

Thank you for supporting wellness in the sangha.

## September Party a Success

Our recent party to raise money for the BZC Building Fund was a huge success. On a warm sunny September Saturday, amid colorful balloons and a very creative BZC banner, participants enjoyed great old time music, scrumptious food, delicious homemade cookies, and of course, plenty of good conversation. Members of the project management team, accompanied by detailed posters, were on hand to answer questions about work already completed, projects in progress and work still to be done. To raise money for the Building Fund we sold lots of raffle tickets and BZC t-shirts. Many people participated in the silent auction that featured everything from fine art works to cabin vacations to a tea ceremony. Numerous members and friends added their generous contributions to the donation box. All in all it was a most festive day, and we collected over \$15,000. With this and with what people had donated earlier, we've now met our 2012 goal of raising \$20,000 for the Building Fund. We are grateful to everyone who donated auction and raffle items, to all who participated in the auction and raffle, and to the many folks who contributed their time, talent and energy to make this event happen.



- photos by Ko Blix

## Family Sesshin 2012

On October 7, 30 sangha members gathered to create and experience BZC's first-ever Family Sesshin. The theme for the day was "Finding your quiet safe space." Eleven younger people and 19 older people, including parents and sangha "aunties and uncles," flowed back and forth between the zendo, the community room and the grounds. Activities included zazen, service, kinhin, several creative projects, stories, bell ringing, a listening walk, a game of "statues," sharing lunch, working together, and enjoying cookies served in the zendo. We were all pretty amazed and thrilled about how well it worked; it was, in the words of one young attendee, "dazzling." Many bows to the organizers, Marie Hopper, Catharine Lucas, Laurie Senauke, Jin Young, Tamar Enoch, and Nancy Suib. And more bows to families and helpers for your wholehearted presence. We are already looking forward to doing this again next October.



## Saturday Morning Zazen

The warm soft glow  
All-encompassing  
All eradicating  
All permeating

Soundless, thought-less, self-less  
Loving by nature  
Guiding in its essence  
Pure in its intent.

Endless, eternal, immediate, convivial  
Putting hostility and judgment to sleep.

Tucking them in beside criticism and hubris

Smoothing the waters of a turbulent mind.

Setting sail on a sea of joy

Heading nowhere

Perfectly on course.

- Peter Carpentieri



## On Complementarity

Lao Tsu said, "There is something black, like lacquer, which upholds the Universe. What it is I don't know, I call it 'The Tao.' "

Zen Master Kai of Mount Dyang said, "A stone woman gives birth to a child in the night."

Carl Jung said, "Nature is matter but She is also Spirit . . . We forget that we are still primates and this needs to be taken into consideration."

The Bhagavad Gita says, "The individual human self and the God-self sit together like two birds in the same tree."

Erik Faery says, "Thank you Lao Tsu, Master Kai, Carl Jung, and Bhagavad Gita; allow me to proceed:

*The Undivided longs to know Itself,  
so puts on a play of Womb and Seed,  
The fertile Womb gives birth to Light,*

*(so to speak, "a child in the night")  
All Creation has its feet in Light  
(or else how could we ever see?),  
All Creation is Individuation,  
Individuation is Separation, Loneliness, Perception,  
Experience --  
But with Individuation coming from one Source,  
(we tend to miss this point, of course)  
It can only exist as Complementarity.  
Complementarity's joined at the basis,  
Kuan Yin's thousand arms,  
Krishna's hundred faces --  
The Undivided generates Perception  
so as to Experience Itself  
through the reunion of Complementarities  
driven by their Loneliness of Separation --  
(the stuff of high drama, eh?)  
Individuation, Separation, Loneliness, Complementarities,  
are relatively true,  
and fundamentally false,  
(the footlights blaze away whether noticed or not)  
yet within this masquerade,  
The Undivided can taste Itself --  
(I guess I said that already)*

*Now strutting and fretting our hour upon the stage  
come smelly, exquisitely-crafted Humans  
trailing muddy footprints from the riverine savannahs of  
Africa,  
(No - **Don't** mop them up I like 'em!) --  
Have a seat in the front row and contemplate,  
with your chardonnay and inhalants if you like  
(We **like!**)  
we're born compulsive thespians  
(He's gay, I'm straight, they're lesbians --)  
and yes the play's the thing **but**  
we're endowed with Sight  
to look behind the wings, alright --  
those who appreciate The Masque,  
will want to meet the Director-Set Designer-Scene Painter-  
Actors  
(the Janitor at their task?)  
as **well we should**, so as to know The Factor(s).*

*The Prophet (blessings be upon him) has said,  
"The One you go seeking is closer to you than the neck of your  
camel."  
Dogen Zenji (everybody bow) declared,  
"Do not be amazed at the identity of the True Dragon."  
Given all the preceding hot air, religious name-dropping,  
uneven meter & rhyme, and Bardaceous ripoffs, Dear Reader,  
let Me ask You this --  
How can We not care for Each Other,  
if You and I are but Variations upon a theme  
of Light?"*

- Erik Ferry



But Does a Cat Have Buddha Nature?

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
Third Friday of the month before each issue

**December deadline:**  
Friday, November 16, 8:00pm

**Berkeley Zen Center**  
1931 Russell Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703