



Berkeley Zen Center



January 2014 Newsletter

Join Us for the January 18 All-Day Sesshin

Taking the time to sit still after all the holiday and year-end activity is a great way to begin the New Year. The sesshin, led by Hozan Alan Senuake, will be from 5:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Please check the patio bulletin for the sesshin sign-up sheet, the sesshin forms and further information. If you have questions, call the sesshin director, Gerry Oliva, at 510.652.7217 or e-mail her at olivag AT fcm.ucsf.edu. Sesshin fee is \$35, due by Wednesday, January 15.



Photos:
Nobuo Iwanaga

Thanks to President Oliva

For the last ten years Gerry Oliva, Seisen Ikushin, has tirelessly served the BZC community and our board. She began as the board's Recording Secretary and was then elected as a member-at-large. Subsequently Gerry served four years as Vice-President and four years as Board President.

On the surface our practice and Zen activities appear seamless, but the board officers and the President in particular hold so many of the threads that weave together the well-being of our community life. Gerry has been skillful, dedicated, and incredibly generous in every way during her time on the board. We offer her one hundred and eight bows, and then another hundred and eight.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

December

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Tuesday, 12/31, 8:00 pm – after midnight

January

Founder's Ceremony

Thursday, 1/2, 6:20 pm

Friday, 1/3, 6:40 am

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/18, 5:00 am – 9:00 pm

A Day with Shohaku Okumura

Saturday, 1/25

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/25, 9:40 am

February

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2/2, 8:00 am – 12:00 noon

Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 2/3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 2/4, 6:40 am

Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

Saturday, 2/15

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/22, 9:40 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.

Sojun Roshi's Study Group

Sojun Roshi's study group will continue with selected koans for the first half of 2014. Our two main sources will be The Blue Cliff Record and The Book of Serenity. There will be five Friday evening meetings on February 21, March 14 and 28, April 4 and 18 from 7:30 – 9:00 pm. A sign-up will be posted in mid-January. For questions or to register in advance, contact class coordinator, Ron Nestor, at rnestor1 AT yahoo.com. All are welcome. The fee for the series is \$50, payable at the first meeting.

A Day with Shohaku Okumura - January 25

BZC is again fortunate to host a day of teaching by Shohaku Okumura Roshi on Saturday, January 25. He will give the public lecture and a second longer teaching in the afternoon, both of which are open to all.

Shohaku Okumura Roshi is one of the preeminent teachers of Dogen Zenji's works, and the author of many translations and commentaries, including Realizing Genjokoan and Living By Vow. He is abbot at Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, Indiana.



Finding Presence in Conversation

This open dharma group focuses on practice in the context of everyday communication. These meetings, addressing ways we speak and listen to each other, have been ongoing for a few years, and are open to everyone. They are coordinated by Peter Overton. The upcoming meeting will be held in the BZC community room; Thursday evening, January 16, 7:30-9:00 pm. For further information contact Peter at 510.325.2342, or peterovrtn AT gmail.com.

Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Supervised play is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Currently supervising is Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. We need to know by noon the Friday before if you are planning to use this service. Contact Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries AT kushiki.org.

Coverage for BZC's 8:45 am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more information.

KidZendo

BZC's Saturday program for children three and up usually happens twice a month during the school year, typically on the second and fourth Saturdays, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am (see schedule below or check online). Several BZC members are teaching in this program: BZC resident Tamar has been trained in a curriculum known as The Toolbox. Nancy Suib and Jin Young, longtime practitioners at BZC, have been trained in the Mindful Schools program, and Seicho Judy Fleischman has participated in children's programs in Brooklyn, NY. RSVP if you plan to attend (lauries AT kushiki.org).

Family practice schedule:

January 4	Supervised play
January 11	Kidzendo
January 18	Sesshin – no program
January 25	Kidzendo
February 1	Supervised play
February 8	Kidzendo
February 15	Kidzendo
February 22	Sesshin – no program
March 1	Supervised play
March 8	Kidzendo
March 15	Sesshin – no program
March 22	Kidzendo
March 29	Supervised play

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 AT kushiki.org or Marie at marie_hopper AT sbcglobal.net.

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

New Year, Free Mind

As we enter the new year we are encouraged to take this opportunity for a fresh beginning. In many countries, people take the last weeks before the new year to clean out the accumulations of the old year, the closets and the basements both physical and emotional, and whatever is still lurking there. It is also a time to pay off debts and forgive the many impasses, hurt feelings, unresolved fetters and those things that blind and preoccupy us. The more we accumulate over the year, the harder it is to do this.

People often ask how to take their practice into the world. I am not sure that this is the right question. It may be better to simply start from here and, clear the mind moment by moment. What, after all, do we really need? Am I in control of my needs, or am I under the control of my needs? If we have an empty table it doesn't stay that way very long. The same with the mind.

The art of practice is not something to take with us as much as it is allowing the present mind unhindered, to manifest. It is letting go of bondage one moment at a time. Letting go means forgiving. It is responding rather than reacting or harboring ill will. Revenge is sweet, but not as sweet as a free mind. A free mind is Buddha's mind, the norm, the natural order. With a free and settled mind we naturally express love, compassion, serenity, and balance, and this is what returns to us.

Although we cannot avoid accumulating over the year, it behooves us to practice cleaning out and appearing new on each moment without straying from our Big Mind. Even though we cannot avoid suffering in our life, we do not have to be a victim of our own making. Practicing in this way there is no difference between sitting in zazen and meeting circumstances off the cushion. In this way we free ourselves and we free others. This is Buddha's teaching wherever we are, and this is our humble offering to our world.

So if you want a Happy New Year, try Grandpa Sojun's elixir for staying afloat.



- Sojun Roshi

Changing Hands

Announcements from the Coordinator

- Many thanks and much gratitude to outgoing Sesshin Director, John Busch, who will be replaced by Gerry Oliva in January 2014, joining Carol Paul in the position.
- Leslie Bartholic is stepping down after two years as Tenzo, making sure that we have been well and tastefully nourished. She is taking on a new position as Assistant to the Coordinator, replacing Jed Appelman who has been a great support for Coordinator Alexandra Frappier.
- As for our new Tenzos, we welcome Susan Marvin and Ryushin Andrea Thach.
- Christy Calame is handing the Zendo Manager position to Ross Blum. Thanks to Christy and Ross (who has been her assistant) for handling the ceaseless demands of this vital sangha position.
- We bow to our outgoing Saturday Directors, Colleen Busch and Linda Hess; and we welcome new Saturday Directors, Susan H. (Kika) and Ken Powelson.
- With true dedication, Dianne Schnapp has served four years as Sesshin Work Leader. The new Sesshin Work Leader is Paul Ridgway.
- The Head Jikido position is being shared by Tamar Enoch and Maria Winston.
- And, many many thanks for years of service to Head Chiden Catharine Lucas, who ensures that the altars are always cared for. Stephanie Seaborg is the new Head Chiden.

- Alexandra Frappier



January Transitions

Announcements from the Board

As we begin the New Year, it's appropriate to note some changes. Besides Gerry Oliva, who has been Board President these past four years (see Hozan's page 1 article), Ron Nestor and Veronica Reilly will no longer be Members-At-Large. Ron has been the primary author of the newsletter "Sounding Board" and a member of the finance committee. Veronica was very instrumental in organizing our sangha council meetings and has been a member of the development committee. Though no longer on the Board, both will continue with their committee work. Taking their places on the Board, we welcome Laurie Senauke and Stephanie Solar.

Stepping down as Recording Secretary is Maria Winston. David White will now take on this role. As Jake Van Akkeren moves from Vice-President to President, Mary Duryee will assume the VP position. After serving as Accounting Consultant, Jean Selkirk will be stepping down from that role. Finally, after serving as Office Manager, Lisa Nelbach will be handing that work over to Tamar. Deep gratitude is offered to these sangha members for their dedication and whole-hearted practice serving our BZC community.



A quiet moment between cooking and serving the men's shelter dinner, caught by Don C.

To Chiden is to Walk Through a Door, Bowling, with Your Hands Full

New Chidens needed for 2014!

Care of the altars at BZC is a quiet, meditative, and mindful way to deepen your practice while supporting the practice of all. It is also a way to become familiar with the forms of our practice, including the details of the altar, the secrets of the keys, the locations of supplies, and other wonderful bits of lore. This means that you can step up like an expert whenever a chiden is needed.

As a chiden, you commit to a week or two of daily altar care during the year, usually once in spring, once in fall. The checklist of tasks can be completed in about 30 minutes, at a time of your choosing, Monday – Friday, whenever the zendo is not in use. Some chidens add a few minutes of private zazen for a grounding in your busy life.

If you'd like to be included on the 2014 roster, call me at 925.376.8281.

- Stephanie Seaborg, Head Chiden

108 Bells Ringing from a Zendo Near You

As the new year begins, our supporters, members and friends are asked to remember:

1. If you need **reimbursement** for money you spent on behalf of BZC, we need to have your receipts by Monday, January 6, at the latest.

2. Checks dated December, but received in January, will be credited to the 2014 tax year.

3. Make sure your listing in the directory is correct. If you have changes, please let the office manager know as soon as possible (bzcoffice manager AT gmail.com) AND check the draft copy available at BZC.

4. Members and friends are asked to check that their dues are up to date. Our budget process depends on regular contributions. Even a small amount, given regularly, helps the sangha.

Here is our current dues policy:

"BZC is supported solely by dues and donations. We ask members to make a regular monthly contribution to support BZC. The current dues amount is \$40 per month. We recognize that each person's financial circumstances are different and we are grateful for whatever contribution a member can make.

If distance or some other reason keeps you from coming regularly, we appreciate your support as a friend, with a suggested contribution of \$15 per quarter (\$60 per year)."



Thanks to 2013 Chidens!

Thanks again to the thirty-four sangha members and friends who faithfully tended the zendo altars in 2013. Your conscientious care has helped maintain calm practice for all of us. Deep bows!

Please let me know if you're planning to retire or take a break from chidening this year, otherwise I'll schedule you as returning. Thank you, Stephanie



*Japanese maples
burning their last red leaves
in the winter sun.*

- Kazumi Cranney

BZC member Kazumi Cranney has been working in *haiga* painting for more than 30 years. *Haiga* is a form of painting that combines three traditional Japanese arts: haiku, calligraphy, and watercolor. She is a longtime resident of Berkeley. Her paintings have been exhibited in many locales throughout the Bay Area, including the Japan Cultural Community Center, Gallery Voyage in San Francisco, the San Ramon Community Center, and Berkeley Art Center.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for lay ordination this 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 Senauke before the first sewing class.

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

Old Plum Mountain in the News

Old Plum Mountain: The Berkeley Zen Center, Life Inside the Gate has been selected to participate in the international online film festival, *Spirit Enlightened*. The festival is put on by Culture Unplugged Studios. Culture Unplugged has launched eleven festivals which “explore the present forms of individual being, the currents of our collective humanity, the earth/nature/environment, as well as the ever-evolving spirit/consciousness... These festivals are non-commercial.”

Since the launch of the first online film festival in 2008, Culture Unplugged festivals have been visited by more than 60 million people from 39,000+ cities across 231+ countries/territories.

Culture Unplugged efforts are focused on enabling networks of socially & spiritually conscious content and its creators, with presence in India, USA, Indonesia and New Zealand. The festival’s efforts are driven by a socio-spiritual mission serving citizens around the globe. Stay tuned for launch dates.



Half-Day Sitting Sunday, February 2 8:00 am – 12:00 noon

Here’s your chance for mid-winter calm practice! BZC is offering six half-day sittings this 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 entire four-hour schedule.

A \$10 donation is requested for half-day sittings. If you have questions or if you cannot sign up on the bulletin board, contact the February half-day director Stan Dewey at standewey AT comcast.net or 510.528.1989. The next half-day sitting will be on March 2, 2014.

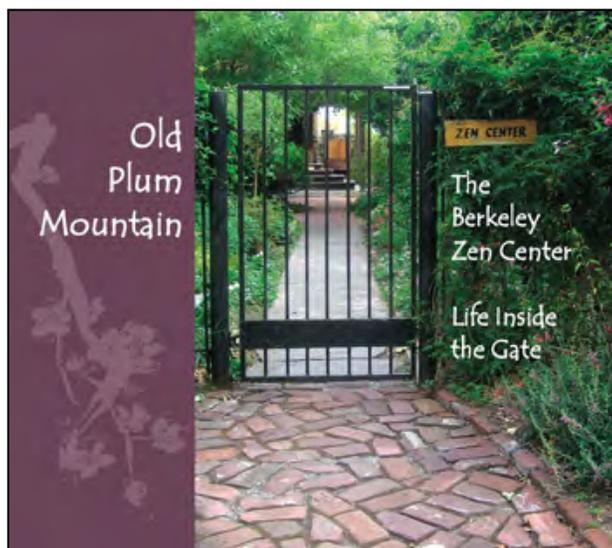


Photo Note: All photos in this issue were taken by Ko Blix, unless otherwise attributed.

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

February deadline:
Friday, January 17, 8:00 pm

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703