



Berkeley Zen Center



November-December 2015 Newsletter

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, November 29 – Saturday, December 5

This year's Rohatsu sesshin, led by Sojun Mel Weitsman, begins on November 29 and ends on December 5. Each day begins at 5:00 am and ends at 9:00 pm, with the exception of the final day, which ends at 5:00 pm. All are encouraged to participate for as many days as possible, but participants are asked to sit for a minimum of three consecutive full days.

The sesshin fee is \$35 daily, paid in advance. (Anyone unable to pay the full amount may request a reduced fee from the sesshin director). Payment must be received by the sign-up deadline or no seat will be reserved for you. Please leave checks marked "Rohatsu" in the courtyard laundry room door slot or mail it to the BZC Office Manager at 1929 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. The sign-up sheet will be posted on the patio bulletin board by November 1 and sesshin information forms (with other important sesshin information) are on the shelf below. Please put completed forms in the sesshin director's mail slot. The sign-up deadline is Wednesday, November 25 at 7:00 am.

(Continued....)



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 Ceremonies

Tuesday, 11/3, 6:20pm
Wednesday, 11/4, 6:40am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 11/8, 8:00am – noon

Close Aspects of Practice Sitting

Saturday, 11/14

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 11/21, 9:40am

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, 11/29, through Saturday 12/5

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony

Monday, 11/30, 8:30pm

December

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/5

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12/12, 9:40am

Winter Break

Sunday, 12/13 through Thursday, 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Thursday 12/31

January

One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/16

Beginner's Sesshin

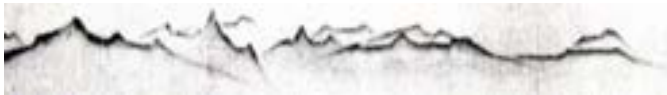
Sunday, 1/31

(*Rohatsu...continued from page 1...*)

We will be eating all of our meals oryoki style in the zendo. If you are unfamiliar with oryoki please request training which is offered every Saturday at 6:40 am. You may also contact oryoki instructor, Ellen Webb at elweb@sbcglobal.net to schedule an oryoki training session at a different time. If you wish to stay overnight at BZC during sesshin, please contact the shika, Tamar at bzcshika@gmail.com.

If you have questions about sesshin, please contact the sesshin director, Gerry Oliva, at 415.290.6015 or sesshindirector_bzc@gmail.com.

Finally, as Rohatsu commemorates the enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha, everyone is invited to attend Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony on Saturday, December 5, at 11:10 am, after lecture. In addition, everyone is invited to the Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony on Monday, November 30 at 8:20 pm.



Close Aspects of Practice Sitting Saturday, November 14, 5:00 am – 9:00pm

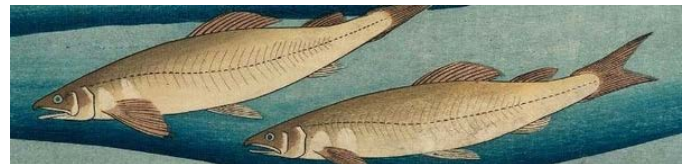
Aspects of Practice 2015 will close with sesshin on Saturday, November 14, led by Ryushin Andrea Thach. Everyone is encouraged to attend, whether signed up for Aspects or not. This will be a Saturday sesshin schedule--5am to 9pm. There will be the option of a lighter schedule--8:30 to 5:40--for students with significant physical limitations only. The signup will have a check box for those asking for this shorter schedule. The Aspects of Practice closing ceremony will be at 8:40pm.

Questions about sesshin or the schedule should be sent to the Director, Gary Artim (Sho Toku) gartim@gmail.com.



Half-Day Sitting Sunday, September 7, 8:00 am - 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 director Greg Denny at greg@techperience.org or 510.559.8831.



Come and Sit with Us

The weekday zazen schedule includes informal zazen at noon.

Monday through Friday

5:40am - 7:00am		zazen, service, soji
12:00pm - 12:30pm		zazen
5:40pm - 6:30pm		zazen, service



Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate. Before the winter break (mid-December), please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman or Hozan Alan Senauke.

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



Winter Break

Sunday, December 13-Thursday, December 31

Our winter break will begin on Sunday, December 13. During this interim all formal practice activities are suspended until our New Year's Eve sitting and celebration on December 31. We will be offering informal zazen in the morning, at noon, and in the evening during the break. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the patio bulletin board for volunteers willing to open and close the zendo.

Changing Hands

We are grateful to Katy Guimond for holding the position of kitchen keeper for over a year now. She has been in charge of keeping the kitchen tidy and stocked with supplies, and we appreciate all her efforts. We welcome Teri Jo Tinus to this position.

Teri Jo has been our community room caretaker this past year. She has kept this hub of activity clean and welcoming for all who use this room. Cole Bartholomew has graciously agreed to step into this position.



Directories

We are beginning to prepare for the 2016 BZC Directory. Please take a moment to check your current entry in the Directory and let the office manager know if anything should be changed. This is also a good time to let us know if you want to change your membership status, or if you do not want to be listed in the directory. You can e-mail changes to bzcoffice manager@gmail.com or call the office at 510.845.2403.



From the Residents' Table

Dear Sangha,

The residents would like to invite you to dinner! You may have noticed a new signup sheet on the porch bulletin board; we will now have space for two people to sign up for each meal. (Occasionally, the cook will be inviting guests which may take these two slots, but we will do our best to reflect this on the signup sheet in advance.) Please sign up and join our table!

Dinner starts at 6:30 (after afternoon zazen) every Tuesday except for the first Tuesday of the month (dates are shown on the signup sheet) and runs to 7:30. Then the rezzie meeting, which is limited to residents, begins. However, in the interests of greater transparency, we will be letting the sangha know, via this newsletter, what is on the residents' minds at these meetings (besides who is doing which chores.) Recently it has been:

Development around the corner?

An SF real estate developer has proposed to transform AW Pottery on the corner of Adeline and Russell into a 55 unit five-story apartment building. There have been two community meetings thus far to air the neighbors' views and there will no doubt be more. Rahul Brown, his wife Asha and their daughter Uma came to Resident Dinner a number of weeks ago. They live next door at 1935 Russell "Tenants In Common" complex where Mark Copithorne, another sangha member, lives with his family. Rahul has been very involved in community organizing around this development project and shared some of his ideas to further our collective involvement as neighbors.

Katy has reported back (in a previous newsletter) the results of one of these community meetings. We are trying to keep abreast of these changes in our community, and to be part of the process that extends beyond our gate to shape the community we live in. If you are interested in participating, please let us know.

Or just come join us for dinner!

Gasshos,
Ken
Head Resident



Sangha Support Is for Helpers Too

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 second gathering to share experiences, tips and resources to support your efforts, facilitated by Laurie Senauke and Debbie Schley. All are welcome to come on Nov 22, 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).



September Fundraiser

The BZC Board and Development Committee wish to thank the sangha for making our September fundraising party a joyous event. Along with the great food and drink, the wonderful jazz accompaniment, the photo booth and raffle drawing, there were just the simple pleasures of hanging out together in a formless way. We started the Building Fund drive with an appeal letter in June, raising \$26,000, and the party brought it up to just over \$28,000. Combined with what we raised last year, we should be able to pay for the currently-in-progress remodel of 1929A, without dipping into reserves at all. Great appreciation is extended to all those people who helped make this year's fundraiser a success.



Plum Blossom, a Haiga painting by BZC member Kazumi Cranney

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

November 7	Gerry Oliva
November 14	Ryushin Andrea Thach
November 21	Zenju Earthlyn Manuel
November 28	Sojun Mel Weitsman

(Note: no early Saturday program)

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

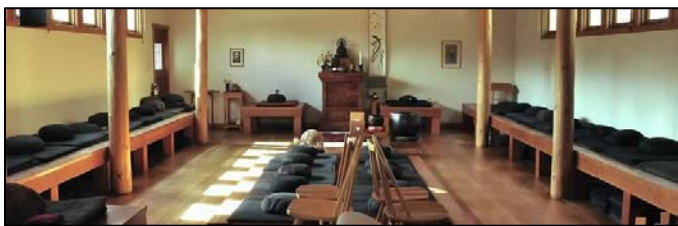
November 2	Monday 6:25am	Laurie Senuake
November 6	Friday 5:40pm	Ross Blum
November 9	Monday 5:40am	Shosan with Hozan Alan Senuake
November 16	Monday 6:25am	Mary Duryee
November 23	Monday 6:25am	Rob Lyons

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

January-February deadline: Friday, December 25, 8:00 pm





New Year's Eve Sitting and Celebration Thursday, December 31

Join us on Thursday evening, December 31 for the chance to ring in the New Year with the quiet and reflection of zazen, punctuated by 108 soundings of the bell to mark the last 108 minutes of 2015 and a bonfire after midnight. Everyone is welcome to attend any portion of the program, entering the zendo during kinhin or the beginning of a period of zazen.

The schedule is:

8:00 pm	Zazen
8:35	Kinhin
8:45	Zazen
9:20	Kinhin
9:30	Zazen
10:05	Tea
10:13	108 bells bgin
10:35	Kinhin
10:45	Zazen
11:20	Kinhin
11:40	Zazen
12:10	Slow Heart Sutra and sitting.

A celebration and potluck will follow in the community room. Watch the bulletin board for details and the sign-up sheets for providing food and help with clean up. If you have any questions, contact Sue Oehser at soehser@earthlink.net or 510.339.0243.

Family Practice at BZC

BZC Family Practice on Saturdays

BZC Family Practice is offered on almost all Saturdays (still check the calendar for details, and always RSVP so we can share late-breaking news), at the usual time, from 9:30 to 11:15. BZC member and Music Together teacher Ryk Groetchen will be taking the lead. See details on our section of the website: berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice.

New Sign-up Form

Check out our handy new sign up form on the website (berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice) - you may use this form, or send an email to lauries@kushiki.org.

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Due to the expanded KidZendo program, we will not be offering supervised play. 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 wish list. Direct inquiries to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org).

Family Practice E-mail Group

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

Family Practice Schedule

November 7	Family Practice
November 14	No program - sesshin
November 21	Family Practice
November 28	Family Practice
December 5	No program - sesshin
December 12	Family Practice
December 19	No program - interim
December 26	No program - interim

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

Mindfulness Practice During Sesshin

From a talk by Sojun Roshi, 1985



I want to say just a little bit about how I would like us to practice today. When you walk, be conscious of how your feet touch the floor. When you're serving a meal, be careful when walking to not pound your heels on the floor. What does the floor feel like? Am I creating a disturbance when I walk? When I carry the pot, is it up here, or down there? What does it feel like to carry this pot? When I serve someone, am I really bowing to that person, or am I just going through the motions because I'm supposed to? If you and the other person are bowing at a different rhythm, it doesn't make much sense; you're missing each other. The point is to meet each other at the bottom of the bow just for a moment. When you open the zendo door, try to open it so that you make as little disturbance as possible. How do you slide the bolt with your undivided attention, so that it slides easily this way and that way, opening and closing without a sound?

To be that attentive creates a mindful atmosphere. When we use our eating bowls, we pick them up and put them down in such a way that we don't make a sound. We should keep the same concentration during work period, being careful not to start up a conversation with somebody. Sometimes when we're discussing a project, we get caught up in a conversation without thinking about it or without being aware of it, in the same way that thoughts come up in zazen. Before we realize it, we've become involved in some fantasy. So when we become aware that our conversation is getting out of bounds, we can just bow and return to silence.

When working in the kitchen, it's good to figure out a systematic way to arrange your space in order to work efficiently. Take care of the food and equipment so you don't have things piling up around you while you're working in a small crowded space. Keep the whole thing moving so that you don't find yourself cornered. In order to do that, you have to clean up as you go, taking care of the ingredients and the tools, aware that you are also working in harmony with others. Let go of anxiety, knowing that if you pay attention, everything will come out on time.

Having that kind of concentrated absorption, we can forget ourselves in our activity. Let yourself immediately accept the total situation, adjusting to changes without judgment or regret; "This is good or bad." "This is right or wrong." "Why did that have to happen?" Just to do is how you drop yourself and merge with the activity in a selfless way. Even if you're doing something that you don't like, you can still have freedom within it. Keep returning to your deep, calm mind from moment to moment and abide in the samadhi of equanimity.



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