



# Berkeley Zen Center



December 2010 Newsletter

## ROHATSU, December 5-11

Sign-up is happening now. Be sure to sign up on the posted list **and** fill out a registration form. Put filled-out registration forms in the sesshin director's box on the community room porch.

Participants are asked to sit at least three full days. If you are unable to take off from work, a partial-day sitting form is available: the first two periods of the day and the last two periods of the day, for five days, plus a full day (preferably the last day of sesshin). Breakfast and dinner can be included in the partial days. If you have questions about scheduling contact Mary Duryee at 510-872-0507, or [maduryee@earthlink.net](mailto:maduryee@earthlink.net).

## NEW YEAR'S EVE AT BZC

Our annual New Years Eve sitting will take place this year on Friday, December 31. Sitting will begin at 7:45 pm, with a Bodhisattva Ceremony at 8:00 pm, an excellent way to renew our intentions as we face 2011. The remainder of the evening will feature zazen, walking meditation, tea, and the traditional ringing of 108 bells leading up to midnight. The sitting will conclude shortly after midnight, and we will have a bonfire in the courtyard and a modest reception and celebration in the community room.

Please come and join us for all or any of the evening. It is a wonderful way to mark the turning of the year. For further information contact Tamar Enoch, who will be directing the event — [tlxeno@earthlink.net](mailto:tlxeno@earthlink.net).

## HEALTH & SANITATION DURING SESSHIN

A health/sanitation question about gomashio led to the larger issue of how we handle sanitation issues during sesshin. BZC's Health & Safety Coordinator (*Ctd. on p. 5*)



### 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

### December

#### Saturday Program Begins at 9:40 am

12/4—note: zazen instruction will be at 8:45 am

#### Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, 12/5 - Saturday, 12/11

#### Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial

Monday, 12/6, 8:00 pm

#### Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/11, after lecture—11:15 am

#### Winter Break

Saturday, 12/18 - Friday, 12/31

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Friday, 12/31, 8:00 pm

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

Friday, 12/31—see article this page for details

### January 2011

#### New Year's Day (zendo closed)

Saturday, 1/1

#### Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 1/2, 8:00 am - noon

#### Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 1/3, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 1/4, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 1/16

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/22, 9:40 am

#### One-day Sitting

Saturday, 1/24, 5 am - 9:10 pm

## FAMILY PRACTICE

**Note:** we are canceling the first Friday midday sitting and discussion, due to, well, change. We are always trying to find ways to support parents who are practicing, so if you have any ideas, needs, or suggestions, please let us know.

To make it easier to publicize, announce, and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we've started 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 at [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie at [deagin@sfo.com](mailto:deagin@sfo.com).

## 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.

Before the winter break (mid-December), please speak with Sojun Roshi or Hozan Sensei.

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

## FINDING PRESENCE IN CONVERSATION

We will continue the conversation we started in September on three Thursday nights in January—1/6, 1/13, and 1/20—and return to exploring compassionate listening and expression in our day-to-day lives. I hope that we can find ways in which many of our familiar teachings, such as mindfulness, loving kindness, and right speech, can be informed by practicing them in the context of open and honest talk.

In this series, I propose to offer some specific skills in empathic listening and then, as we did in the fall series, jump into role-playing of actual situations we would like to deal with differently, or resolve in ways more to our liking.

Sign-ups will appear after Rohatsu sesshin. You can contact me at 510-325-2342, or [peterovrtn@gmail.com](mailto:peterovrtn@gmail.com).

~ Peter Overton



**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**  
Third Friday of the month before each issue.  
January deadline: Friday, 1/21, 8 pm.



## Family Activities at BZC

**Saturday 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 e-mail Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto: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

**3rd Friday Evening**—6:15 pm to 8:00 pm. Check calendar for dates. A potluck dinner for parents and children in the community room, followed by a brief period of zazen and a discussion about family practice in the zendo. Childcare provided in the community room. For questions about our Friday programs, contact Marie Hopper, (510) 559-8831.

December 3	<b>Midday sitting and discussion</b>
December 4	Childcare
December 11	Sesshin – no program
December 17	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
December 18	<b>Merry interim –</b>
December 25	<b>See you next year!</b>
January 1	Holiday!
January 8	Childcare
January 15	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
January 20	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
January 22	Sesshin – no program
January 29	Childcare
February 5	Childcare
February 12	Childcare
February 18	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
February 19	Sesshin - no program
February 26	<b>KIDZENDO</b>
March 5	Childcare
March 12	Childcare
March 18	<b>Potluck, sitting, and discussion</b>
March 19	Sesshin - no program
March 26	Childcare

# The Fourth Day of Rohatsu

*From a lecture by Sojun Roshi*

*December 6, 1995*

**T**oday is the fourth day of sesshin. To begin, I want to remind us about breathing. I know you won't forget to breathe. Whether you forget or not, you will breathe. I want to remind us to allow our breath to be deep, and to let go of tension when we find our breath rising up in our chest. When we inhale, our lower abdomen expands. When we exhale, it contracts. This is where we should focus our attention. If you have pain in your legs and don't know what else to do, put some strength into your exhalation. In Soto Zen, we mostly follow our breath. Rinzai students put a lot of strength in the lower abdomen on the exhalation. When you don't know what else to do, rather than uncrossing your legs, you might try putting some strength in your lower abdomen when you exhale.

Student: If you don't know what to do and you don't want to uncross your legs, do you just grit your teeth and bear it?

Sojun: Instead of gritting your teeth, try letting go. You can't fight it. It's not a battle. It's a letting go. Whatever appears, let it be. There's a saying: "The cool breeze blows through the empty hall." The only approach that works is to open up and let whatever appears just pass through.

Student: But is it better to uncross your legs than to fight it?

Sojun: No. It's better to fight it than to uncross your legs. Otherwise, you'll never find your way. You have to go through your battles. This is sometimes called the battleground of the heart and mind. It's also been called the comfortable way. You have to go through your battles until you give up and let go. So let your mind follow your breath. The first thing is posture. Establish your posture. Really put effort into posture, and then let the mind follow the breath as the rising and falling of your lower abdomen. You can tell that you're getting tense when your breath becomes rough and shallow. Be aware of that. Realize when your shoulders are getting tense. Fear or anxiety makes us tense up. At some point we have to drop our resistance and say, "It's okay." Then we rise to a different level. Our resistance is the problem. We usually have to go through many painful, difficult periods of zazen until we allow ourselves to let go. That's why seven days is a good opportunity, because it wears us down.

Student: I keep hoping that the pain will go away as the week goes on.

Sojun: That's the problem. That's why it doesn't go away. Anything you hope for is a problem.

Student: And I'm afraid that, as the week goes on, it's going to get worse.

Sojun: We should have a sign over the zendo door: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." Hope is resistance, hope is fighting. It's saying, "I wish it would go away. I hope it goes away." But the more we hope it goes away, the more it's right there! The more we hope it goes away, the worse it gets. Instead we should say to our fear or our pain, "Okay, you can be here with me. You can stay here. I'm sitting zazen. You're welcome to stay here too. Howdy." But if we say, "Please go away," this is what pain answers back: "Says who?" Give up hope of anything you want. The Second Noble Truth says that wanting is the cause of our suffering. When we say, "I wish it would go away," that's the cause of our suffering. Having what we don't want is the cause of suffering. Zazen is to drop body and mind. Let go of ego. Let go of self. It's not just words. We have big strong egos which keep us from realization. The important thing is to be compassionate with yourself and not to blame your surroundings, not blame the practice. Sometimes we have people come to sesshin and blame us for making them do these things. They say, "It's all your fault." But the most compassionate thing we can do is look for the problem within ourselves and, at the same time, not blame ourselves for it. When we really take on our own suffering and our own difficulty, we have compassion for everyone. We look around and see that everybody is having a hard time, and we feel compassion for their difficulty. The suffering that we are going through is the basis of our enlightenment. I know that is not what we picture as enlightenment. We think that enlightenment will be the end of our suffering, but enlightenment abides right in the midst of it. Our suffering will bring it out. We have to get to the bottom of our suffering. We have to go down all the way to the bottom of it. Then enlightenment will spring forth.

Student: I feel like I am flunking Buddhism over and over.

Sojun: Me too. We're all in the same boat. I'm a failure. We're all failures. The main thing is not how successful you are at being perfect. I'm not talking about how to be perfect. I'm talking about how to do something completely. Each one of us does the best we can. That's the main point. If we do our best, that is already an expression of enlightenment. Enlightenment is not at the end of the road. It's within our effort. When you have the hardest time and it seems like you are failing, that's actually pure practice. To have this difficult time and stay with it and do your utmost, that's pure practice. Suzuki Roshi used to say that the people who have the hardest time often turn out to be (Ctd. on p. 4)

## **Sojun Roshi's Lecture** (Ctd. from p. 3)

the most enlightened Zen masters. So you never know.

Student: When I listen to you, I think, "Someday I will have this giant letting go and everything will be great."

Sojun: Just let go, and everything will be what it will be.

Student: But aren't I just going to fall back into hoping?

Sojun: Maybe and maybe not. You are already predicting the future. You are already predicting that you'll fall back into your old ways. Just stop the whole thing! Be where you are. Just be where you are with what you have. That's all. There will always be something missing. That's okay. It's not how much you have. It's not a matter of quantity. It's a matter of thoroughness. It means to unify your body and mind so that whatever you do includes everything. When you do one thing without ego, without self-centeredness, that's thoroughness.

Student: And the results don't make any difference?

Sojun: It's not that the results don't make any difference. It's just that we're not attached to the results. Of course results make a difference. But if it doesn't turn out according to your dream, don't be attached to that. Each one of us has our own perfection which includes all of our so-called mistakes.

Student: What about when our mistakes hurt other people?

Sojun: When you hurt somebody, you have compassion, you feel repentant. "I'm sorry." That's a form of repentance, an aspect of enlightenment. What to do when we hurt others, what to do when we hurt ourselves, and what this means in a deep sense, not just a superficial sense—these are good questions. Just acknowledge. Turn around and continue on in a careful way.



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## **SOJUN ROSHI STUDY GROUP**

Sojun Roshi will begin his monthly Thursday night study group for 2011 on January 27. There will be five sessions on the last Thursday of the month through June. We'll skip May, due to Spring Practice Period.

The first two sessions will be devoted to koan case # 21 in *The Book of Serenity*, "Yunyan Sweeps the Ground." Background and sign-up details will be in the January newsletter.

Below is the main case with the first paragraph of the commentary.

### **CASE**

**As Yunyan was sweeping the ground, Daowu said, "Too busy."**

**Yunyan said, "You should know there's one who isn't busy."**

**Daowu said, "If so, then there's a second moon."**

**Yunyan held up the broom and said, "Which moon is this?"**

### **COMMENTARY**

Daowu bore down on Yunyan, like Foguo urging on Fojian—as it is said, "Without upset there is no solution, without struggle there is no expression." Here as Yunyan was sweeping the ground Daowu casually tested him. Yunyan said, "You should know there is one who isn't busy." Good people, as you eat, boil tea, sew and sweep, you should recognize the one not busy—then you will realize the union of mundane reality and enlightened reality; in the Dongshan progression this is called simultaneous inclusion, naturally not wasting any time.

## HEALTH AND SANITATION (Ctd. from p. 1)

met with Gerry Oliva and Andrea Thach, our MD consultants. Many conditions can give rise to the spread of infectious disease during sesshin. These include, but are not limited to, crowds of people, the use of common utensils (such as gomashio containers, wiping rags, etc), long hours together in a closed environment, and lack of sleep.

Although changing the current practice of handling gomashio may impact spread of infection, our medical consultants don't think that altering our zendo eating practice is warranted at this time. Replacing open waste containers with hands-free covered containers has been done. We will always entertain other specific sanitation practices where there is demonstrated effectiveness and implementing them is feasible.

Further, we want to remind sesshin participants of BZC's policies with regard to infection control (see below). Sesshin participants are encouraged to take personal responsibility for complying with them. In addition, we encourage people who are at higher risk for infection to consult their personal physicians about being in very close contact with people for an extended period of time, and consider alternative arrangements such as sitting in the community room and bringing their own food.

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

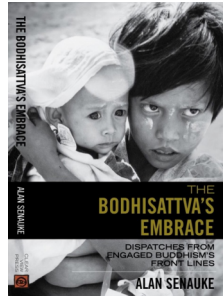
**Remember, careful hand washing is the most important and effective way to avoid spreading influenza!**

### 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 which 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.

If you have further questions, please contact Health and Safety Coordinator Peter Pfaelzer; Gerry Oliva, M.D.; or Andrea Thach, M.D.



## THE BODHISATTVA'S EMBRACE: BOOK RELEASE

Hozan Alan Senauke's new book *The Bodhisattva's Embrace: Dispatches From Engaged Buddhism's Front Lines* has recently been published. We will celebrate its release with a reading and discussion on Friday, January

14 at 7:30 in BZC's community room. Alan will be glad to talk about the experiences that led to and shaped this collection of essays. Books will be available for purchase and for signing.

## HALF-DAY SITTING

**Sunday, January 2, 8:00 am-noon**

Start your new year with calm practice! 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 January half-day director, at [standewey@comcast.net](mailto:standewey@comcast.net) or 510-528-1989.

## BZC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Please check your BZC membership directory to be sure the entry for you is accurate. If it's not, you can alert us in one of two ways:

- 1) Send the correct info to [bzcofficeanager@gmail.com](mailto:bzcofficeanager@gmail.com) or
- 2) Make corrections on the printout of the directory which is located next to the printer in the community room. If you choose this option please write legibly—like you would intentionally do otherwise!—especially when doing an email address.

If you have any questions, they, too, can be sent to [bzcofficeanager@gmail.com](mailto:bzcofficeanager@gmail.com).



## NEW BZC MEMBER

Please welcome new member Margaret Wotkyns.



## INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PEACE AND JUSTICE AWARDS

Every year the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center honors local peacemakers with a Peace and Justice Award. This year members of the community were asked to submit nominations for the awards. Six nominations were received, and the selection committee selected three recipients.



One is the team of **Jeff Heaton** and **Baika Pratt**, founders/organizers of the Crosses of Lafayette. Jeff and Baika have provided a moving, graphic, and thought-provoking display of the death toll of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by placing a cross for each fallen soldier across from the Lafayette BART station, showing the world that these people are not forgotten. The display has provided the local community with not only a location to grieve, but also a constant reminder of our involvement in these wars, and has drawn national attention to the area.

## TAOIST ROOTS OF ZEN

Our Chinese Ch'an ancestors were deeply steeped in the Taoist traditions and writings of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. In the coming year Bob Rosenbaum will offer four classes on this topic on four Thursday evenings: February 3, 10, 17, and March 3. We'll study chapters from the *Tao Te Ching* and selections from Chuang Tzu. Look for more details in the January newsletter.

## WELL-BEING AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

Many thanks to Catherine Cascade for coordinating BZC's well-being and memorial services for the last three years with care and dedication. As of November 13, Tamar Enoch has assumed these duties. To schedule a memorial or well-being service, or to place a name on the well-being list, please contact Tamar at [tlxenoch@earthlink.net](mailto:tlxenoch@earthlink.net) or leave a note in the zendo manager's box.

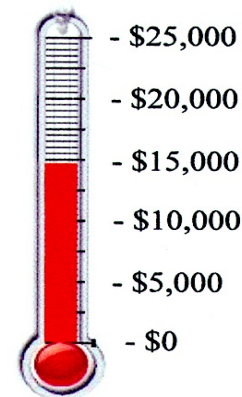
## SOUNDING BOARD

*This is one of a regular series of reports from the BZC Board.*

Over the past year the board has focused its attention on clarifying processes and procedures at BZC. This is due to increasing sangha growth and complexity, and our desire to take good care of the way our community works together. A few of the subjects we've acted on include: spending authorization; emergency repair protocol; a major accounting system revision; members' dues confirmations; clarification of donations, dues, and fee categories; a five-year plan for building repair and improvements; and bylaw revisions. Each of these processes requires careful thought and communication within the board and interaction with the sangha. When only a few people are involved it's not so difficult. Involving many, as we usually do, becomes much more complex. If there are too many rules and protocols we can bog down. If we're too loose things get sloppy and confused. Where is the balance? We're working on it.

If you're interested in seeing copies of past board decisions you can find them in the Board Binder in the community room where all the minutes and policies are kept.

### Building Improvement Project Current Total - \$14,900



## TRANSITIONS

Come January, please place your hands in gassho and bow your fond farewells to our current residents Catherine Cascade and John Moge. Their commitment to carrying the BZC dharma up to their new home near Eugene, Oregon connotes a further flowering of practice for those coming into contact with them in an area already planted with dharma students. With their own unique expressions of understanding, the bouquet of Zen will be a stronger magnet of attraction for those seeking the teaching to the North. Creating a zendo is anticipated, as well as your presence for visits in the coming year. Our 2011 directory will contain their new contact information. All the best and then some, Catherine and John!

Nature abhors a vacuum. Thus, filling the newly vacated space in 1933-1/2 Russell Street will be Paul Ridgway, BZC's longtime student and our newest resident, moving in with partner Tamar Enoch. Welcome, Paul!

## WARM HAND TO WARM HAND

This month marks the transition of several major positions at BZC:

After three years of tending to the well-being, memorial, and founder's ceremonies with care and heart, **Catherine Cascade** has finished her term as assistant zendo manager. We extend our thanks to Catherine for offering herself to the sangha so completely. A deep gassho as well to **John Moge**, who will be transitioning out of the role of zendo manager during Rohatsu. We will all miss Catherine and John when they head to Oregon at the first of the year.

If you would like a ceremony performed now, please contact our incoming zendo manager, **Tamar Enoch**. Tamar will be handling most zendo manager functions, including overseeing all the ceremonies at BZC. **Laurie Senauke** is the new assistant zendo manager, and will be assigning doans and front seat positions, and inviting Monday and Friday speakers. Thanks to both Tamar and Laurie for accepting these important roles.

Deep thanks to **Stephanie Solar** and **Nancy Suib** for their harmonious activity as co-head chidens, caring for the many temple altars and an increasingly complicated routine these past years with joy and sincerity. We are delighted to welcome back **Catharine Lucas** as new head chiden at the first of the year.

This month, **Sue Oehser** will conclude her two years as co-Saturday director. Thanks to Sue for her warmth, flexibility, unflappability and inclusive eye to us all. **John Busch** will begin as a co-Saturday director in January.

We also give a bow of thanks to **Catherine Cascade** for her deep listening and wide view as the coordinator for the women's sesshin and activities related to it these past two years. Welcome to **Linda Hess**, who will be the contact and coordinating person for women's activities. More details about some shifts regarding women's events leadership and groups will come in the new year.

A kitchen so shiny that no ant has been tempted to trespass, so orderly that a tenzo's mind easily settled upon entering, and so well-stocked that cookie tea monsters were always satisfied these past two years has been the handiwork and labor of outgoing kitchen keeper **Lisa Nelbach**. Thank you, Lisa, and welcome to the new kitchen keeper, **Will Fuller**.

Finally, thanks to our hard-working office manager **Sue Dunlap**, who has handed off the position to **Laurie Senauke**, who will hold the reins pro tem until a permanent office manager is found.

## Three New Year Haiku

Along my journey  
through this transitory world,  
new year's housecleaning

Year's end, all  
corners of this  
floating world, swept.

On New Year's Day  
each thought a loneliness  
as winter dusk descends

- Basho



**Berkeley Zen Center**  
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