



Berkeley Zen Center



January 2012 Newsletter

CORRECTED 2012 CALENDAR

Please note: several corrections have been made to the 2012 BZC calendar. Because of this, we are re-issuing the calendar as an insert in this issue of the newsletter. Please discard the version that came with the December newsletter in favor of this one, marked "revised 12/12/11."

HALF-DAY SITTINGS

Sundays, January 8 and February 5, 8:00 am–noon

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 January half-day director Nina Sprecher at ninasprecher@sbcglobal.net or 510-848-3585. For the February sitting, contact Stan Dewey at standewey@comcast.net or 510-528-1989.

FELDENKRAIS AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT SERIES

Rosie Rosenthal, a longtime friend of BZC, will offer a three-part series in January, demonstrating the Feldenkrais method of body awareness and movement. This work was developed by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904–1984), using his scientifically inclined mind to develop a system whereby he could deal with recurring injuries that were restricting his life. The system (*Ctd. on p. 2*)



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

January 2012

New Year's Day (zendo closed)

Sunday, 1/1

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 1/3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 1/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/7, 9:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 1/8, 8:00 am –noon

One-day Sitting

Saturday, 1/21, 5 am – 9:10 pm

Kidzendo

Saturday, 1/28

February

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 2/2, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 2/3, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/4, 9:40 am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 2/5, 8:00 am –noon

Two-day Sesshin

Saturday-Sunday, 2/18-19

Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2/18

Kidzendo

Saturday, 2/25

Beginners' Sitting

Sunday, 2/26

SOJUN ROSHI'S 2012 STUDY GROUP

Sojun Roshi's study group will continue in 2012. The group is open to all and will begin in a four-part series during the first half of the year. Sojun will pick a subject, yet to be determined, and will comment on the material as well as leading discussion. The study group has a more leisurely and detailed format than is possible during his Saturday lectures.

We finished 2011 studying Zen Master Bankei and his teaching of the "unborn Buddha nature." This year we'd like to try meeting on the last Friday of the month from 7:15 to 8:45 pm. The four Friday evening dates will be: **1/27, 2/24, 3/30, and 4/20**. The schedule for the second half of the year is yet to be determined.

The sign-up for the series will be posted in early January. The fee for the first half-series is \$40.00, and will not be pro-rated for missed classes. If you have questions or wish to sign up early, please email class coordinator Ron Nestor, rnestor1@yahoo.com. We ask that you not sign up until you are sure you can attend. The bulletin board sign-up will be posted the first week of January.

FELDENKRAIS *(Ctd. from p. 1)*

teaches flexibility of mind as well as increasing flexibility in our bodies, and aims more at self-education than at therapeutic manipulation. The first class will focus on gentle innovative movements, based on self-observation and our ability to learn and adapt. The second and third classes will use these techniques to concentrate on the lower back.

The classes will be on three Saturday afternoons, **January 7, 14, and 28** from 12:30 to 1:30 in the community room. Class fee per session is \$5.00. All are welcome. Wear comfortable clothing. We will be sitting in chairs. A sign-up will be posted in mid-December. Rosie is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais practitioner with four years of training and many advanced courses. She also maintains a private practice. For questions you may call her at 525-3867.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
February deadline: Friday, 1/20, 8:00 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 in the community room at 9:30 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene in the community room for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

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).

January	7	Childcare
January	14	Childcare
January	21	Sesshin—no program
January	28	Kidzendo
February	4	Childcare
February	11	Childcare
February	18	Sesshin—no program
February	25	Kidzendo
March	3	Childcare
March	10	Childcare
March	17	Sesshin—no program
March	24	Childcare
March	31	Childcare

SEWING BUDDHA'S ROBE

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination in 2012, remember that 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 sewing classes begin.

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



From Sojun Roshi
January, 2012

Dear Sangha,

I want to express my gratitude to all of you and wish you a satisfying and healthy new year in 2012. Although I have nothing against happiness, I purposely avoid using that word here, although a healthy and satisfying life is a happy one.

I am grateful for the constancy of your practice and the way the temple has been taken care of while I was at Tassajara. I want to express my gratitude to our board of directors, who have, among other things, put in so much time and effort this year dealing with the complications of our finances. I also want to thank all the members for your willingness to pay your dues, the support that keeps us rolling along.

The balance of daily participation among the practice leaders and members willing to take positions, making financial contributions, coming to dokusan and practice discussion, study, dharma group, and attendance at lecture creates a strong sangha based on mutual support.

I did not plan on being here for Rohatsu sesshin, until Jake suggested that I might work in the kitchen in the morning and eat breakfast. I couldn't refuse a good offer, so that is what I did. It made me very happy to be working with the various tenzos and crews mostly chopping veggies. I remember Suzuki Roshi saying that when what you have to do and what you want to do are the same, your discriminating mind is under control. This is Shikantaza, just doing, and the secret of happiness.



FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

Once more the dying of the faded year.
The long night stretching out its skyward climb
Turns new things old, and turns the old things dear.

Gold fall, that diva in the woods, called clear
And sharp and ringing out to prime
Once more the dying of the faded year.

Red fall is dead now, dichrome winter's here.
Ice white, bark black, the stark-spined branches' mime
Turns new things old, and turns the old things dear.

At home, the dog, the cat, and I can hear
The night-watch clock each hour its worn bells chime
Once more the dying of the faded year.

A few friends gather for a laugh, a cheer,
A glass raised to the toast that time
Turns new things old, and turns the old things dear.

And I, and you, and all our hearts, come near
And mark our bond by sharing thought and rhyme:
Once more the dying of the faded year
Turns new things old, and turns the old things dear.

- Kate Gilpin



MEN'S SHELTER DINNER STILL A HIT

BZC has a crew that cooks and serves Friday night dinner at the Berkeley Men's Shelter twice a month, every month—and we've been doing it for over 15 years! Lance Shows heads things up on the second Friday of the month and Laurie Senauke is the tenzo on the fourth Friday. Every time they do this, they need two or three volunteers to be assistant cooks, four more people to serve the food and clean up the shelter kitchen at the end of the meal, a shopper, and someone to provide dessert. It's satisfying work, and more help is always needed. Please consider adding your name to the sign-up sheet on the BZC bulletin board. The food offerings to help the homeless are, like offerings in the zendo, an opportunity to give to something larger than oneself. For more information, contact Lance at lanceshows@pacbel.net, or Laurie at alan@kushiki.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT: Women's Potluck

WHEN: Saturday, February 4, noon - 2:00 pm
(or later as needed for cleanup)

WHERE: Margret Wotkyns' house, 2929 Wheeler St.,
Berkeley (2 blks above Shattuck bet. Russell & Ashby)

The women of Berkeley Zen Center invite you to attend our afternoon potluck. This will be our first informal get-together after our Women's All-Day Sitting Meditation in October. As one of the attendees from our all-day event said, "We are looking to keep the momentum going from our women's sesshin, which was a gathering of great bonding and learning. We successfully created a wonderful space in which people openly expressed themselves fully, and that's no easy trick!" To continue the process of growing our women's community, we welcome women for a delicious lunch and ever-stimulating conversation.

Please join us! Reply to Sue Oehser, soehser@earthlink.net or 510-339-0243, Margret Wotkyns, mwotkyns@comcast.net or 510-710-2974, or Afsaneh Michaels, afsaneham@gmail.com or 415-533-0491. The sign-up sheet will be posted on BZC's bulletin board two weeks before the potluck. Let us know what you'll bring and please have food already prepared.



At the End of Rohatsu

Hozan Alan Senauke
BZC 10 December 2011

Seven days of joyful sitting
Eating, eating, and again eating
Resuming big mind
In this very time and place
This leaky wooden boat

Lose your mind in the bilgewater
And find it again
Perfect as it is
Dripping in crankiness and delusion

I'm happy to have enough problems
To keep me rowing for the other shore
How about you?
Can you see the practice Buddha
Fashioned just for you?

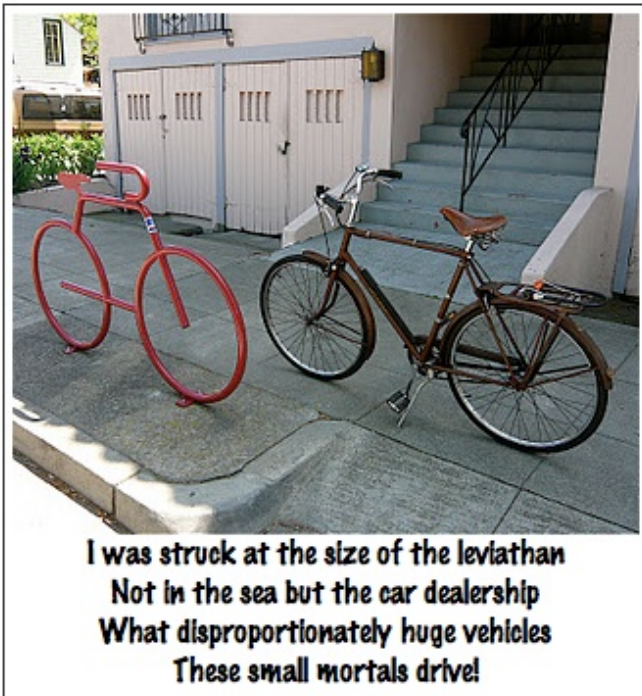
If you can see it
If I can see it
Enlightenment unfolds quietly
Every day is Bodhi Day.

CHANGING HANDS

Here are the latest shifts in practice positions at BZC:

Much appreciation for Jake Van Akkeren, who is stepping back from being sesshin director after two years. John Busch will be moving into this position as of January 1. We thank John for his steady presence as Saturday director, and salute co-Saturday director Christy Calame (also moving on), whose good cheer and sense of humor has enlivened us all. Welcome (!) to Linda Hess and Colleen Busch as co-Saturday directors beginning this New Year. Many thanks to Mike McVey for taking such good care of the bits and pieces of our administrative affairs as AATA. Jen Taylor will be stepping into those shoes. Thank you, Jen! Our head dishwasher, Karl Shoenberger, is leaving this position after two years of putting the kitchen in order every Saturday. Rondi Saslow, who has been a wonderful and steady member of the practice committee and welcomer to new members, is leaving these positions. And, lest we forget, much gratitude to Gary Artim, our tenzo. Gary is passing the reins to Leslie Bartholic. We look forward to her leadership in the kitchen. And there's more: Deborah Good, who has been shepherding the BZC website, will be on an extended visit to Green Gulch, and has handed off this realm to Mike Cole. Thanks, Deborah for your patience in this almost invisible role!

- Coordinator Peter Overton



**I was struck at the size of the leviathan
Not in the sea but the car dealership
What disproportionately huge vehicles
These small mortals drive!**

Ross Blum



**Memories are but precious morsels for sustenance
brought out into the light from one's pocket when
hungry for either the bitter or the sweet...**

Ross Blum

OLD PLUM MOUNTAIN: The Berkeley Zen Center, Life Inside the Gate

This film by documentarian and BZC member Ed Herzog weaves a rich tapestry of Soto Zen's ancient ceremonies and rituals, and shows how the Berkeley Zen Center has created a unique practice of American Zen that has widened its appeal around the country, helping to popularize eastern spiritual practices in the West.

Copies of the DVD are available at BZC, or contact: edherzog@comcast.net or www.oldplummountain.org.

Day After Rohatsu, 2011

*A fey wind barges about --
Yellow leaves flee the tree
fluttering, all in a flock . . .
Westwards, weary sandpipers,
are blown crazily sideways
as they streak, with high-pitched shrieks
for nourishment, roosts, and respite
on brilliant, worm-bored mud-flats
bounded by brown Bay waters,
rich in river-silt pouring
forth from a cornucopia
of greenening hills and hollows.
Creation stands in Clarity . . .*

*It's a Good Day to Transcend,
Now's The Hour to Blend,
Here's The Moment, Amen.*

Erik Ferry



SOUNDING BOARD

This—originally scheduled for the December newsletter-- is one of a regular series from the BZC Board of Directors.

Several different agenda items at our October meeting touched on the difficulty of staffing some of our BZC practice positions that require specific technological and organizational skills, as well as the time to do them. These positions include: website manager, recording and audio cataloguing manager, office manager, board recording secretary, and potential new positions such as archivist and information/data system coordinator. Because of recent technology we now have communication and organizational capabilities that we never dreamed of even a few years back. On our website we can download a variety of lectures and classes, read the newsletter, view photos, make donations, and more. Our sesshin directors and work leaders have helpful databases and forms to work with in our computer files. Our bookkeeping system is becoming more precise and comprehensive. Perhaps not surprisingly, we're discovering that it's more and more difficult to find members who are willing and able to assume positions that have become more technologically demanding. The problem is we don't have "instructions for the website manager" from Dogen to turn to. To help with this problem, the board is preparing a skills survey to give us a better idea of sangha capabilities. As always, many of our members help out in myriad ways. The people currently in our more technologically demanding positions are doing an excellent job. We continue to look for ways to remove obstacles and burdens they may encounter. It's an ongoing challenge.

- Ron Nestor

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RESIDENT

Katy Guimond, who is returning from a year and a half of dissertation research in the Bronx, will join BZC as a resident in January. She will be living with Ken in Ken and Bruce's apartment. Please welcome her back to BZC!

OFFICE MANAGER'S CORNER

The beginning of a new year brings a new year's BZC Directory. We would like the information in our directory to be as complete, accurate, and useful to the whole sangha as possible. This is a chance to practice awakening with everyone.

- If the newsletter has been forwarded to you, this means we don't have your correct information! Please email the office manager at bzcoffice manager@gmail.com with the updated information.
- If you will not be physically present to check over the draft version of your information during January, consider sending the office manager an email (or letter) with your correct information (name, address, phone number(s), email address). Giving a few minutes of your time now will make a whole year's worth of difference to the sangha.
- If you are not yet a BZC member and would like to be, please come on a Saturday in early January and speak to a new member representative after lecture, or contact the office manager to start the conversation.

Wishing all a Happy New Year of practice together.



2 am, Final Morning of Rohatsu

A head half-awakes in the depths of the night,
and finds itself rolling in a wave of Light,
Is all sewn up in a fabric of Light,
is planted and sprouts in a field of Light.
This head in the night,
encompassed by Light
Is Alright.

Erik Ferry

Three poems from
88 Ango Poems
Tassajara, Fall 2011
by Colleen Morton Busch

1.

Just when you swear you can't
take another bite of this life,
The silence and darkness
 and solitude of it,
Someone comes to you
and offers a sweet,
Warm and buttery.
They bow to give it,
You bow to receive it.
Through tears you reach
for the steaming cup,
swallow, reach
for what love and an oven have made,
take it *all* in.



3.

Three cracks
one after another
Kick the blanket off dark morning:
 The zendo han,
 answered with a hit
 at the abbot's cabin,
 and in between,
 breathing out,
The round bones of my spine
shift
behind the heart.

2.

*"I want to do with you what spring
does with the cherry trees"*
~ Pablo Neruda

Why should it make me so happy
to gaze upon the maple,
ablaze with autumn,
a deeper red each passing day?
I mean Joy—
unaccountable, inexplicable,
here then gone.
Tomorrow, an even more
astonishing shade of red
until finally a shower of leaves
leaves branches bare.
I think of Neruda's cherry trees,
fiercely alive with spring,
his wish to give that blossom—
I want to be like the maple leaf
 in November,
which needs no convincing,
makes no arguments,
completely receives change
and is beautiful because of it.

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