



Berkeley Zen Center



December 2014 Newsletter

Remembrance and Celebration of Nancy McClellan's Life Saturday Dec. 13, 3:00 pm



Please join us on Saturday, December 13 at 3:00 pm to honor Nancy's life in story, pictures, food and friendship. We will perform our formal funeral ceremony to support her in her transition, hear a few speakers and have a

chance to remember her.

We will need to get a sense of how many people will be attending in order to plan seating and food. Please RSVP by December 7 by responding to the evite if you received one, or to Leslie at lbartholic@comcast.net. There will be limited seating in the zendo.

There will be a sign-up sheet for providing sweets and for helping with the preparations and cleanup. Karen Sundheim and Nancy Suib will be organizing the reception. If you have questions about the event itself, contact Andrea at andrea.thach@gmail.com.



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

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, 11/30 – Saturday, 12/6

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial and Stone Dedication

Sunday, 11/30, 4:00 pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12/6, 9:40 am

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/6, 11:15 am

Winter Break

Sunday, 12/14 – Wednesday, 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Wednesday, 12/31

January

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/3, 9:40 am

Founder's Ceremonies

Monday, 1/5, 6:20 pm,

Tuesday, 1/6, 6:40 am

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/17

Beginners' Sesshin

Sunday, 1/25

Winter Break

Sun. Dec. 14 – Wed. Dec. 31

Our winter break will commence on Sunday December 14. During winter break all formal practice activities are suspended until our New Year's Eve celebration, which begins on December 31 at 8:00 pm. Otherwise, we will offer informal zazen in the morning and evening for those who wish to attend through New Year's Day. A sign-up sheet will be posted for volunteers willing to open and close the zendo. For further information, please contact Ross, our zendo manager.

New Year's Eve Sitting and Celebration Wednesday, Dec. 31

Join us on Wednesday 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 2014 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 begin
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 Ross at rossblum@icloud.com.



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Supervised play is offered many Saturdays (schedule below) from 9:40 am zazen through lecture, supervised by Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. To use this service, or for coverage for 8:45 am zazen instruction, contact Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or lauries@kushiki.org by noon the Friday before.

KidZendo

BZC's Saturday program for children 3 and up is offered during the school year, typically on the fourth Saturday of each month, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am (see schedule below or online). BZC members create this program, which includes songs, stories, offerings, art activities and a snack. For more information, and to RSVP, contact Laurie.

Theater Games

We are continuing our monthly Theater Games offering suggested by sangha member Thea Gold. It's a way to be silly and free together, while cultivating creativity, body awareness, spontaneity, relaxation, expressivity, trust, laughter, and concentration. It is suitable for all ages, and for the shy as well as outgoing. Through games, storytelling, and improvisation, we practice fully opening to each moment. It is held typically on second Saturdays (see schedule or online) from 9:30 am to 11:15 am. To RSVP, contact

lauries@kushiki.org. Family practice schedule:

December 6	Sesshin - no program
December 13	Theater Games
December 20	Interim
December 27	Interim
January 3	Supervised play
January 10	Theater Games
January 17	Sesshin - no program
January 24	Kidzendo
January 31	Supervised play

Family Practice E-mail Group

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

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

Grassroots Zendo

December 2014

Dear Sangha,

Suzuki Roshi taught us about the two wheels of the Dharma; the spiritual wheel and the material wheel. When the spiritual wheel is turning, the material wheel will also turn to support and balance the practice. Because of the sincere effort of our Sangha for the past 47 years of turning the spiritual wheel, we have been inspired at the same time to support our practice both materially (financially) and most importantly with our presence.

I envisioned the BZC as a grassroots Zendo based on what I learned in the early days at SFZC and Tassajara. I wanted to combine the lay practice of living at home with those monastic forms that would give structure to a vital city practice available to anyone who would be willing to make the space in their busy lives. A lot of people have passed through the gate and many have managed to stay around from the beginning or for a long time. We are truly blessed with so many collective years of experience and wisdom.

Our daily practice and the rotation of positions that support and turn the spiritual wheel has always balanced the material wheel. Our policy has been to not ask for too much financially, but to match the rhythm and pace of the practice over a long period of time. Whenever we needed something you the members have quickly responded. Consequently we have never had a major financial crisis. In the past few years, due mostly to wear and tear of the property and teacher support, we have been asking for funds. But my hope is that we not lose our balance and stay within our means as much as possible.

I want to express my appreciation to all of you who have offered so much of your time, money, work, taken practice positions, and supported us all with your inspiring practice.

I look forward to joining you in the zendo (or the dokusan hut) in the coming year.

- Sojun



Sounding Board

Board Transitions: A Note From the President

As the year draws to a close, there are several transitions on the board to report. Dave White will be handing off recording secretary duties to Carol Paul. Stepping down as members-at-large are Andrew Corson, Ed Herzog and Colleen Busch. Taking their place will be Troy DuFrene, Mark Copithorne and Stan Dewey. Paul Farber will be succeeded as treasurer by Walter Kieser.

David White has done an exemplary job this year taking notes at our meetings and then following up with capable editing. He has worked diligently with board members to see that what is said at our meetings is accurately and succinctly reported. Dave's unfailing equanimity at meetings has been much appreciated.

During his single term, Andrew was an important member of the development committee and later the finance committee. He was very involved with the by-laws revision process that took place last year, and more recently he has been an active member of the newly established nomination/election committee. Andrew's quiet voice of common sense, logical thinking and vigilance for fairness will be much missed during our board deliberations.

Colleen has served two terms and has been one of the movers and shakers on the development committee, making huge contributions toward implementing our fundraising campaigns, particularly with regard to our auctions and sangha-led events. This year her role shifted toward contributing numerous informative articles to our newsletter that made the case for our fundraising goals and needs. She has also worked behind the scenes using her considerable writing expertise to craft communications to the sangha. She played a significant role in the succession review meetings and analysis, and more recently, as a member of the nomination/election committee, has helped spearhead discussion on ways to improve BZC's election process. Colleen's attention to detail and concern for straightforward communication has been highly appreciated during meetings and committee work.

Over his two terms, Ed has been a person who always seems willing to take on yet another challenging assignment. He has served us tirelessly on the finance committee, established the electronic communications committee (EComm) and served as its first chairperson. The whole Paypal idea and its subsequent implementation is due to Ed. He worked on the succession review process, and more recently he has assumed a leadership role on the nomination/election committee. Although he will no longer be on the board, Ed plans to continue on both the finance and nomination/election committees, which epitomizes his dedication to sangha. At meetings, Ed has steadfastly been a champion for transparency, accountability and follow-through of assignments.

Paul has completed two years as our treasurer. During his tenure he has simplified the accounting system, worked to better define the position of office manager, initiated and implemented plans to improve BZC's investment return and provided the sangha with easily understandable reports at our annual budget meetings. In his final months Paul has been working on producing a treasurer's manual that should make future transitions from one treasurer to the next much easier. Under his dedicated guidance, BZC has taken many important steps toward improving its financial situation, not just for the short term but over the long haul. Deep gratitude is shared by all of us on the board for what Paul has accomplished these past two years.

Men's Shelter Extra Support Opportunity

Berkeley Zen Center sponsors two meals a month at the Berkeley Men's Shelter—we budget \$150 per meal for this. We would like to raise an extra \$100 to splurge a bit on food for the Men's Shelter Dinner on December 26. Please mail a check or leave it in the donation slot; be sure to note "December Men's Shelter" on your check.



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 begins in mid-December, please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman or Hozan Alan Sensei.

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



Sojun Roshi's Koan Study Group

Sojun Roshi will continue his koan study group during the first part of the year for five Friday evenings in January and February: January 9, 23, and 30 and February 6 and 20. We meet from 7:15 to 8:45 pm in the community room.

We'll continue with the Book of Serenity, a collection of 100 koans and accompanying verses, compiled by the Chinese Zen master, Hongzhi or Tiantong, in the 12th century. Further commentary on the koans and verses is then provided by the brilliant Zen teacher Wansong. The Book of Serenity is the collection of koans most associated with our Soto Zen school.

For most of us, these koans are not easy to understand. Fortunately we have the able guidance of Sojun to help us find our way through the various twists and turns. Losing our way may not be so bad either.

Newcomers to the class are most welcome. Class materials for each koan will be provided or the book may be purchased at your favorite bookseller. A sign-up sheet will be posted early this month. The cost is \$50 for the series, with discounts available as always. For questions or to sign up by e-mail, contact class coordinator Ron Nestor at rnestor1@yahoo.com.

Shōsan Ceremony Shunryu Suzuki Lecture

Tuesday Evening, April 23, 1968, Tassajara

Student I: Docho Roshi, for my practice, I believe that the hardest and deepest teaching of Buddhism for all men is to know not to be attached to any thing. Can you explain why this is so?

SR: Not to attach to any thing, we say. Why you asked this question is, you know, it is impossible not to attach [laughs] to anything. So it means that in your mind you have the idea of attachment and detachment. But true non-attachment means to get free from the idea of attachment or detachment, knowing that attachment and detachment is the two side of one reality.

Student I: Thank you very much.

Student J: Docho Roshi, how are we to know how to behave when a strong dualistic situation arises in our life? It seems as though we can only take one of two paths.

SR: Don't hesitate to — to take one — just one choice. Don't think which is good or bad. When you do not think about it, you will intuitively know which way to go and which is better.

Student J: Thank you very much.

Student K: Docho Roshi, what should I do about the fear that causes small mind or limited mind?

SR: Fear looks like something which will cover your entire being, but if you wait, and if you watch it — watch the fear, watch yourself, that will not be any more fear. Whatever it is, it is necessary to break it as your motor [?]. It is necessary to drive your fear.

Student K: Thank you very much.

SR: Attack your enemy by his horse [laughs]. You understand? All right.

Student L: Docho Roshi, love is love, and hate is hate, and love is empty, and hate is empty.

SR: There you will have a great sorrow or longing — loneliness of emptiness. Until you get accustomed to this experience, you cannot be — you cannot get out of the trouble, or fear, or whatever it is. When you can remain still with some composure in pitch dark, you will have deep true composure.

Student L: Thank you very much.

Student P: Docho Roshi, one step forward, one step back. How can I go where I don't want to go?

SR: When you don't want to go, there is no other way to stop there. And while you are stopping, you should, you know, warm — make your seat warm [laughs] to stay. That is the way.

Student P: Thank you very much.

Student AA: Docho Roshi, I was alone [?]. I have no questions.

SR: No question? Oh, all right. I hope you can continue your practice in that way. If you have problem, you should think more when you have problem. But right now you are going on big freeway. Very good.

Student AA: Thank you very much.

Student C: Docho Roshi, how can being in sesshin be practicing the middle way?

SR: Middle way? When you forget all about the middle way, there you have middle way.

Student KK: Docho Roshi, the top of the mountain is a place without competition. Why is there so much competition to get there?

SR: Because you forget your seat, you know, and try to find out your seat there is so much competition. Each one has — each one sit on the top of his own mountain, you know. Each one of us are boss. [Laughs, laughter.] There is no competition.

Student KK: Thank you very much.

Student G: Docho Roshi, the wheel of dharma turns

in our life in many ways. It'll go from sickness to health to sickness again to health. Should we try to master this dharma? What is its nature?

SR: Wheel of dharma. When it is turning means to master it. Because it is always turning, it is difficult to tell how it turns in detail. Only when we allow it to turn, or we can keep up with the turning wheel, we can master it actually. But—but actually we are turning with it. We are actually a part of the wheel. In this way, we should master the wheel without trying to master it.

Student G: Thank you very much.

Student O: Docho Roshi, how can I behave with my usual mind when my house is on fire?

SR: Mind—your house? House? Excuse me.

Student O: On fire.

SR: On fire. [Laughs.] Why don't you get out of it? [Laughter.] Give up your house. You will find a good new house.

Student O: Thank you very much.



Summer 1967. Shunryu Suzuki lecturing in the old Tassajara zendo, with David Chadwick, Peter Schneider, Ananda Dalenberg, others; by Minoru Aoki.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

Dec. 6 - Sojun (Sesshin: Rohatsu last day)
Dec. 13 - Sojun

Monday Talk Schedule

Dec. 8, Monday 6:20 am - Open Discussion

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

January deadline:
Friday, December 19, 8:00 pm

Most photos by Ko Blix



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