



Berkeley Zen Center



January 2015 Newsletter



First Sesshin of 2015

Saturday, January 17, 5:00am - 9:00pm

Taking the time to sit still after all the holiday and year-end activity is a great way to begin the new year. The first sesshin of 2015, led by Sojun Mel Weitsman, will take place on Saturday, January 17, from 5:00 am to 9:00 pm. We encourage old and new sangha members to participate. If this is your first sesshin at BZC, we recommend that you first participate in a full Saturday program and also speak with the sesshin director. Please check the patio bulletin for the sesshin sign-up sheet, the sesshin information forms and further information. The sesshin fee is \$35 (a discounted fee is possible; please speak to the director). Place checks marked "January 17 sesshin" in the slot in the laundry room door or mail to BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703.

The deadline for sign up and payment is Wednesday morning, January 14 after zazen. If you have questions, contact the director Gerry Oliva at 510.652.7217 or sesshindirectorbzc@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

January

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/3, 9:40am

Founder's Ceremonies

Monday, 1/5, 6:20pm

Tuesday, 1/6, 6:40am

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/17, 5:00am – 9:00pm

Beginners' Sesshin

Sunday, 1/25, 8:30am – 4:15pm

February

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2/1

Founder's Ceremonies

Tuesday, 2/3, 6:20pm,

Wednesday, 2/4, 6:40am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/7, 9:40am

Two-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 2/14 – Sunday, 2/15

Buddha's Parinirvana

Saturday, 2/14

Zendo Holiday (President's Day)

Monday, 2/16

Half Day Sitting

Sunday, February 2, 8:00 am - noon

Half -day sittings include five periods of zazen, kinhin, 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 Peter Overton peterovrtn@gmail.com or 510.848.5239.





Young in Winter
 Oh to be young again! ...
 to do midair flips
 on a snowboard.

-Haiga by Kazumi Cranney

Beginners' Sitting

Sunday, January 25, 8:30am - 4:15pm

On January 25, BZC will offer a beginners' sitting from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. Hozan Alan Senauke will offer instruction in the basic forms of our practice—zazen, kinhin, service—while maintaining our ground in meditation throughout the day. There will be a lecture on zazen and plenty of time for discussion. This is a good opportunity to ask questions about our practice.

Participants should bring a bag lunch, which we will eat informally in silence at midday. Newer people are particularly encouraged to take part, but we welcome longtime students who can enjoy a day of sitting and model the richness of our practice. The cost is \$15. Please see the bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and further information. Contact the sesshin director Gerry Oliva at sesshindirectorBZC@gmail.com or 510-652-7217 with any questions.

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:

January 3	Supervised play
January 10	Theater Games
January 17	Sesshin - no program
January 24	Kidzendo
January 31	Supervised play
February 7	Supervised play
February 14	Sesshin - no program
February 21	Theater Games
February 28	Kidzendo
March 7	Supervised play
March 14	Sesshin - no program
March 21	Theater Games
March 28	Kidzendo

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!

Roofs and Fences

January 2015

Dear Sangha,

As we begin the New Year let us take it as an opportunity to acknowledge the past while totally engaging the present. On the last day of 2013 Abbot Myogen Steve Stuckey passed, and this year came the sudden passing of Abbot Kyogen Carleson of Portland Zen Center. There were three wonderful dog people, Samantha, Ananda, and Chulo, who also left us, and of course the tragic death of Nancy McClellan. My old teacher Suzuki Roshi used to say that within the wintery blanket of snow you can see tiny green shoots poking up here and there. For us, instead of snow, it comes down as the all nourishing rain, a gigantic bath washing away our tears and sadness as a harbinger of unknown opportunities.

While I was at Rohatsu sesshin my wife Liz sent me a photo without text, of a young white cat negotiating the obstacle course of buddhas and arhats atop our mantle. In other words she went out and got a cat. The cat is a young prima-donna, pirouetting and leaping with great determination in all directions and suddenly stopping still as if nothing had happened. Such untaught, un-self conscious perfection makes me marvel at the abundance of life unfolding around us and within us. Suzuki Roshi liked the example of the frog sitting still on the rock and catching the fly without blinking an eye (then blinking). He also liked the fish moving lazily along while opening and closing its mouth seemingly without purpose, effortlessly allowing the little ones to swim in.

As humans our lives are so much more complex. We tend to think of ourselves as spiritual beings and animals as only animals. But the frog and the cat know how to sit still. They seem to know how to commune with their self-nature. American Indians respected the uniquely perfected qualities of each member of the animal world, recognizing that as humans we too embody those qualities, and calling on all creatures in the natural world including grasses and trees to teach them the art and science of bringing the human animal to maturity.

One meaning of the term Bodhisattva is one who has matured or is on the path to maturity. How can we act in accord with our surroundings as ourselves, and respond to each situation appropriately, treating all creatures with dignity and respect. When I would walk with my dog I was always aware of how many and how varied the trees are in Berkeley, especially at night when they are dark silhouettes.

In a sutra it says "Walls, tiles, roofs and fences are all preaching the Buddha Dharma." Who can hear it? Sometimes we think that our real practice is in the zendo, and then we have something called our



ordinary life outside. But there is no inside or outside in the continuous dharma. As a device, think of your ordinary life as something wondrous, and zendo life as simply nothing special. At some point you can drop both. The main thing is that we are practicing zazen with all beings.

2015 promises to be a difficult year both at home and abroad. May the spirit of your continuous practice be a positive force for unfolding peace in the world.

-Sojun

Changing Hands

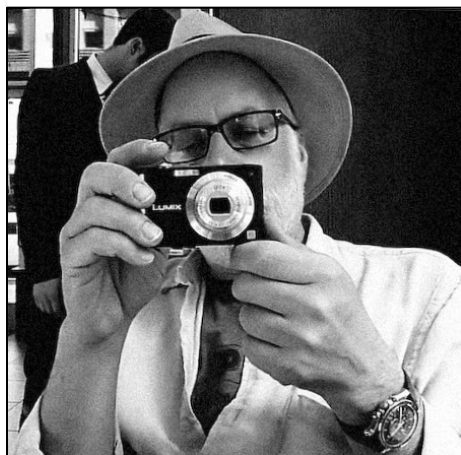
The New Year brings several transitions in positions at BZC. We offer our deep gratitude to the following people who have held these positions, and welcome those stepping into these roles.

Ross Blum has served the past two years as zendo manager, the first year sharing the position with Christy, the second year holding the position on his own. Ross has taken care of the zendo and all the activities that occur there, including ceremonies, with his careful eye for detail and warm encouragement for practice. Sue Oehser and Bruce Coughran will be our new co-zendo managers. We welcome them to these positions.

Andrea Thach has been co-tenzo this past year. She was instrumental in setting up the new kitchen, and shared her enthusiasm and skill for kitchen practice with new cooks. Susan Marvin will continue heading kitchen practice in the new year, being our sole tenzo.

Alexandra Frappier has been our bathroom attendant during most of 2014. Her care with keeping our bathrooms clean and well-stocked has been much appreciated by all of us. Peter Carpentieri has taken on this key position for which we are grateful.

For two years Carol Paul has served as sesshin director, organizing our sesshins and taking good care of us all. We welcome Gary Artim to this position, which he will share with Gerry Oliva, who continues in this role.



BZC Event Photos

Photos of Deborah's ordination and Nancy's memorial service are now online. In addition, a 'pictorial remembrance', a 5-minute presentation that was shown at Nancy's memorial service, is up on the site for viewing. Contact Ko Blix (KoFotoFactoryATme.com) if you are not yet privy to our BZC Photo Site.



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. The cost is \$50 for the series, with discounts available. For questions or to sign up by e-mail, contact class coordinator Ron Nestor at rnestor1@yahoo.com.

Sitting Still

my needs
are dry sticks

I light them and they burn
like torches
They snap with a crack, I write
with their jagged points
Use them to stab myself awake

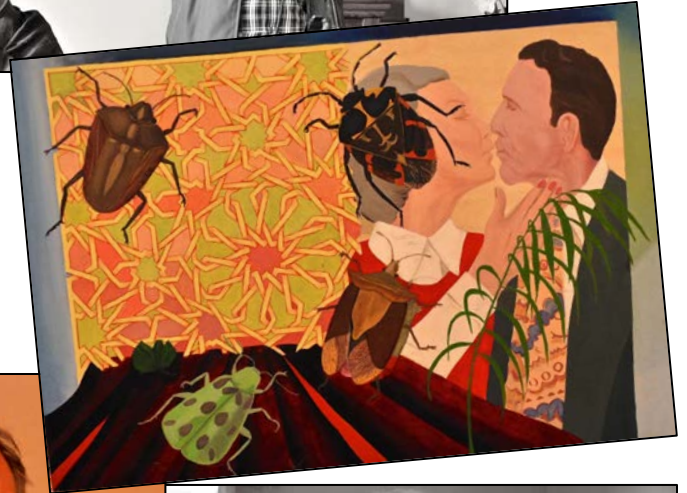
my wishes
are flowers

tender hued, opening
like surprises, then
wrinkling dry, drooping
abandoned in rancid vases
I blame myself for not emptying

breath
is water

flowing past or pausing
like a welcome home
wherever it is, I drink it in
without effort, it leaves me
undisappointed, free of dread

- Catharine Lucas



Photos by Ko Blix. Paintings by Nancy McClellan.

For Nancy McClellan

Calloused fingers drape crimson shell,
steadfast lover of the lemon tree —
skittery, diligent, late and constant,
nests of words brush redwood beam.

Creases gathered at furrowed brow,
now lie flat beneath resting sparrow.
A boy after your old green Honda
cut your neck and let you bleed.

Now there is silence, your tongue hangs still.
Only the sound from the densho bell
sings your entry into the mountain's heart,
swelling the field in which you're gone.

- Karen Sundheim
October 18, 2014

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

Jan. 3 – Sojun
Jan. 10 – Hozan
Jan. 17 – Sojun (One Day Sesshin)
Jan. 31 – Vickie Austin

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

Jan. 2 Friday 5:50 pm – Heather Burns
Jan. 5 Monday 6:25 am – Open Discussion
Jan. 12 Monday 6:25 am – Mary Mocine
Jan. 19 Monday 6:25 am – Heather Garnos
Jan. 26 Monday 6:25 am – Kika



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

**February deadline:
Friday, January 16, 8:00 pm**

Clear Water Zendo Happy Fifteenth Birthday! Saturday, January 31, 2015

Come celebrate Clear Water Zendo's
Fifteenth Anniversary
Ceremony at 2:00pm
Reception to Follow
607 Branciforte Street, Vallejo, CA
www.vallejozencenter.org
Facebook: [clearwaterzendo/events](https://www.facebook.com/clearwaterzendo/events)

Berkeley Zen Center
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