



# Berkeley Zen Center



November-December 2018 Newsletter

## One-Day Sesshin

Aspects of Practice 2018 will close with a sesshin on Saturday, November 3, led by Hozan Alan Senauke. Everyone is encouraged to attend, whether signed up for Aspects or not. The sesshin will go from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., with the Aspects of Practice closing ceremony at 8:30 p.m. If this is your first sesshin at BZC, or if you have any questions, please contact sesshin director Gary Artim: SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com or 510-676-9756.

## Rohatsu Sesshin

We will hold our annual Rohatsu sesshin from Sunday, December 2, through Saturday, December 8, led by Sojun Mel Weitsman. The first six days of the schedule will be from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The final day will end around 3:00 p.m., and will be followed by a reception. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board for a minimum of three days, two of which should be consecutive. If you want to request an alternative schedule, please speak to the sesshin director. Sign-up deadline is Wednesday, November 28, right after morning zazen. *(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

#### Founders' Ceremonies

Thursday, 11/1, 6:20pm

Friday, 11/2, 6:40am

#### One-Day Sesshin (Close Aspects of Practice)

Saturday, 11/3

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 11/11

#### Zendo Holiday

Thursday, 11/22

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 11/24, 9:40am

### December

#### Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday 12/2 through Saturday 12/8

#### Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony

Tuesday, 12/4, 8:30pm

#### Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/8, 11:15am

#### Winter Break

Sunday 12/16 through Monday 12/31

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

Monday, 12/31, 8:00pm–midnight

*(Rohatsu Sesshin, continued from page 1)*

If this is your first sesshin at BZC, we request that you first participate in a full Saturday program, have oryoki instruction, and speak with the sesshin director. The fee for the sesshin is \$35 per day, and should be paid in advance. Leave checks marked with the days you are signing up for in the laundry room door donation slot. If you have any questions, contact the sesshin director, Peter Overton: SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com.

### **Position Changes**

Nobuo Iwanaga replaces Mahin Mahdavi as Head Gardener.

Gerry Oliva assumes the role of Coordinator from Ross Blum in January.

Thanks to you all for your dedication! 🙏

### **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.

### **Oryoki Training**

The next lesson in our formal meal procedures ("oryoki") will be Saturday, November 17, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m, in the zendo. If you would like to schedule another time to learn or fine-tune your oryoki practice, contact Sue Oehser at soehser@earthlink.net or 510-339-0243 (voice only).

You can also receive earlier instruction during any Saturday morning program. After first period of Saturday zazen, the director will ask if anyone would like instruction in eating in the zendo. Raise your hand and meet the director on the porch, who will assign someone to give you oryoki instruction in the community room before service and breakfast.

### **Winter Break and New Year's Eve Sitting/Party**

Our winter break will begin Sunday, December 16. During this interim all formal practice activities are suspended until our New Year's Eve sitting and celebration on the evening of December 31. During the break we will be offering informal zazen in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the patio bulletin board for volunteers to open and close the zendo, as well as to help out with at the New Year's event. May you relax, restore, and renew!

### **Report on Building Fund Appeal**

The Development Committee and the Board of Directors express deep appreciation to the many sangha members who contributed to our appeal last July. The results exceeded expectations and will allow us to do significant infrastructure repair to our venerable buildings.

First on the list: replacement of old, crumbling windows with double-pane energy-efficient ones. This is a long-term project, as we go room by room, building by building, over the next five or six years. Simultaneously with this project, we will begin a complete upgrade of the electrical system, including panels, for the 1933 Russell buildings (front and back). This will prevent unnecessarily exciting power outages and emergency repairs like we had

earlier this year.

In the longer term, expect to see some changes, little by little, in the front landscaping.

Sangha support is an abiding source of inspiration and a visible manifestation of our practice together. Thank you for your offering, and for your practice.

Maria Winston, Chair,  
Development Committee  
Mary Duryee, Board of Directors

### Family Practice at BZC

Family Practice is on a hiatus until January 2019. We look forward to seeing you then!

### Early Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit articles for the BZC newsletter is *usually* the third Friday of the month before each issue. However, due to the winter break, the deadline for the January–February 2019 issue will be *Wednesday, December 12*. Note that Rohatsu sesshin takes place the previous week (December 2–8), so if you have any substantial article to contribute, please try to submit it *before* that sesshin, so that there is as little as possible to take care of in the brief period afterwards.

If you have any questions about this, please contact the newsletter editor, Ken Knabb: [knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

### Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

November 3	Hozan Alan Senauke
November 10	Shinshu Roberts
November 17	Sojun Roshi
November 24	Hozan Alan Senauke
December 1	Sojun Roshi
December 8	Sojun Roshi
December 15	Ellen Webb
December 22	Zendo closed
December 29	Zendo closed

### Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

November 2	Fri 5:50pm	Ellen Webb
November 5	Mon 6:25am	Open discussion
November 12	Mon 6:25am	Sam Melton
November 19	Mon 6:25am	Raul Moncayo
November 26	Mon 6:25am	Jake Van Akkeran
December 3	Monday	Sesshin (no speaker)
December 7	Friday	Sesshin (no speaker)
December 10	Mon 6:25am	Open discussion
December 17	Monday	Zendo closed
December 24	Monday	Zendo closed
December 31	Monday	Zendo closed

### *Come Sit with Us*

#### **Monday through Friday:**

5:40–7:00am: zazen, service, soji

5:40–6:30pm: zazen, service

#### **Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday:**

Noon–12:30pm: informal zazen

### Friday Tea Time

Our Friday Tea begins every Friday at 4:45 p.m. It takes place on the patio or in the community room (depending on the weather) and is open to everyone. Please join us as we discuss and question Dharma practice while sipping tea and opening our body and mind to harmony and lightness of being.

## Closing Chant, All Together

May all awakened women extend with true compassion their luminous mirror wisdom. We bow in abiding gratitude to all the women ancestors, who have followed their hearts' yearning: to find the dharma and to embody it, transcending with courage personal challenges, social or religious exclusion, or persecution.

We dedicate this sesshin to women teachers and practitioners, known or unknown, who have transmitted the dharma light throughout the world over millennia, with the desire to help end suffering for all beings, with a compassion born of our own suffering and steady practice.

We hold in heart all those women who are starved for the dharma.

We hold in heart women and men separated from their children and children from their parents.

We hold in heart our sisters who are incarcerated anywhere in the world; those sisters who are without homes; those sisters who have been abused.

We hold in heart the deep desire to heal the earth.

We hold in heart the prayer that all women everywhere will come to know their true value and strength and that each will find her own ways to express it in the world . . .

All buddhas throughout space and time,

all beings, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas,

maha prajna paramita.

*(Closing chant from BZC Women's Sesshin (October 21, 2018), composed by Penelope "Luminous Heart" Thompson.)*

## Stages

Although in the Soto school we don't talk about stages of practice or striving for enlightenment, this doesn't mean that there are no stages. Master Issan said that it's like walking in a fog: reaching down you realize that your clothes got wet unawares.

I sometimes think of our practice as like a persimmon. Not the Japanese persimmon, which is best eaten while still hard, but the Western persimmon. It starts out hard and slowly gets soft as it ripens. While it is hard it is extremely astringent, making your mouth pucker up, and you feel like you have been poisoned. But when over time it becomes soft and ripe, it is the essence of sweetness. For us students this process of ripening is essential. Through the daily practice of zazen, over time the ripening process takes place and the fruit becomes soft and fragrant.

Suzuki Roshi once said to us while we were sitting, "You are like loaves of bread slowly baking in the oven." In the Buddhist I-Ching there is a passage: "To change things, nothing compares to the cauldron; this is the vessel used to refine the wise, forge sages, cook Buddhas, and purify adepts. How could it not be very auspicious and developmental?"

While thinking about this, the word "purgatory" came to me. Purging, purifying, pain/pleasure, wholeness, light, lightness, light-hearted.

Just this. Maturity means that when you become you, Bodhisattva becomes Bodhisattva.

– Sojun Roshi

## Senjo and Her Soul Are Separated

Long ago in the lake district of Tang Dynasty China, in the village of Koshu, a man named Chokan was the father of two daughters. After the elder daughter died, he lavished all his affection on Senjo, his beautiful younger daughter. Chokan's handsome nephew Ochu was close to Senjo from childhood. They often played together, running in and out of each other's home. Chokan enjoyed seeing them play, and one day he said, "Ochu, you two are so close that clearly I will have to marry you to Senjo." From then on the two children believed they had been promised to each other.

As she grew older and more beautiful, many men desired Senjo. There was a man of rank who sought her hand, and without consulting Senjo, Chokan decided to wed her to him. The girl was distraught at her father's choice. Ochu was so angry and full of grief that, with no farewells, he prepared a boat to sail away to a distant province.

That night, after dark, he set sail on the river, making slow headway against the tide. Later, in the midnight moonlight he saw the form of a woman running alongside his boat on the near bank. She called out, "Ochu, wait, please wait! Don't leave me behind." To his amazement, it was Senjo. Ochu steered for the shore and made fast. The two lovers embraced, laughing and crying all at once. In the morning they resumed the journey upriver, and ultimately arrived in the province of Shoku.

Senjo and Ochu were married by the river in Shoku and made a happy home there for six years. Senjo bore two girls. But she missed her parents and longed to be with them again. She kept this yearning to herself until it stood like a wall between her and Ochu. Finally Senjo admitted: "Because I loved you and felt the promise we had made to each other, I left my parents and home. But still I owe them respect and affection, and I wish their forgiveness. After all these years, I'd like to set things right."

Ochu said, "I have been thinking the very same thing. We should go together." He prepared his boat, filling it with gifts and provisions for the journey, and the whole family set sail for Koshu.

When they arrived, Ochu had Senjo and the children stay with the boat, while he went alone to his father-in-law's house. Seeing him, Chokan rejoiced and threw his arms around his nephew. The old man said, "Ochu, these last years I have often wondered where you were, and whether you were safe."

Ochu said, "I am touched by your kindness, uncle, but I have come to beg forgiveness."

Chokan was confused. "Forgiveness for what? You've done nothing to hurt us."

"But you must be angry with me for running away with Senjo."

Chokan said, "Which Senjo are you speaking of?"

"Your daughter Senjo, of course," said Ochu.

"My daughter Senjo has been ill since the day you went away," said Chokan. "She has never left her bed, nor has she said a word."

Now Ochu became angry. "Senjo and I have been wife and husband for six years. We have two wonderful girls. She's never been sick, not for a single day. We have returned for her sake—to pay respects and seek forgiveness. Now you are mocking me."

"No, Ochu, that can't be." Chokan gestured toward the family home. "Come with me." The men entered the house and came to a darkened inner room where a young woman lay in bed with her face to the wall. She turned as the men approached and Ochu saw that it was Senjo. She was pale and wasted away from illness, yet unearthly beautiful.

Chokan said, "When we speak to her, she understands, but doesn't respond." He turned to his daughter. "Senjo, look who has come to visit after all these years. Ochu insists you have been with him all along, and that now I have two granddaughters. What do you make of that?" Senjo turned her eyes to Ochu and a smile played across her face.

Ochu was befuddled, unable to reconcile his eyes and mind. "Uncle, let's go to the river. Despite what I am seeing here, I know that Senjo is back at the boat, waiting for me."

And she was there, resting by the boat, the two girls playing in the tall reeds that lined the shore. She bowed deeply to her father, and begged for his forgiveness. "Father, I am sorry for any dishonor I may have brought on our family. Can you pardon me?"

The old man took a long breath. "You seem to be my daughter Senjo. If so, I have only love to share with you. But this is all very strange. Let's go home. I want to show you something there." The three of them walked up the path from the river, with the two little girls following behind. Near Chokan's house, they saw a woman in white coming toward them. It was the Senjo who was ill, who had not left her sickroom for years. Now she walked easily, smiling with delight. As the two Senjos came close, each reached out toward the other, embraced, and inexplicably merged. Now there was just one Senjo, one body, radiant and whole. Her beauty betrayed no trace of sorrow or disease.

This Senjo spoke quietly to her husband and father. "Long ago I saw Ochu fleeing, heartbroken. That night I dreamed of running after him and making a new life. And right now I don't know who was really Senjo—the girl who stayed home or the girl who sailed away."

#### *The Case:*

In a collection of teaching tales called the *Mumonkan*, Case 35, old Zen master Goso asked a monk, "The woman Senjo and her soul are separated. Which is the true Senjo?"

#### *Mumon's Verse:*

The moon and the clouds are the same;  
Mountains and valleys are different.  
All are blessed, all are blessed.  
Is this one? Is this two?

#### *Mumon's Comment:*

When one understands this, he will know it is possible to come out from one shell and enter another, as if one were stopping at a transient lodging house. But if he cannot understand, when his time comes and his four elements separate, he will be just like a crab dipped in boiling water, struggling with many hands and legs. In such a predicament he may say: "Mumon did not tell me where to go!" but it will be too late then.

\* \* \*

*(Traditional Chinese folk tale, adapted by Hozan Alan Senauke from the writing of Lafcadio Hearn and from Zen commentaries on Case 35 in The Gateless Barrier/Mumonkan by Robert Aitken, Koun Yamada, Zenkei Shibayama, and Subhana Barzaghi.)*

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

is *usually* the Third Friday of the month before each issue (but see below). Submit items to [knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

January–February 2019 deadline:

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

*(Note earlier deadline due to winter break.)*

Berkeley Zen Center  
1931 Russell Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703





## 2019 Berkeley Zen Center Calendar

### Sesshin

<i>One-Day Sesshin</i>	Saturday, January 12
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, January 20
<i>Beginner's Sesshin</i>	Sunday, January 27
<i>Two-Day Sesshin</i>	Saturday - Sunday , February 16 - 17
<i>Women's Retreat</i>	Sunday, March 3
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, March 17
<i>One-Day Sesshin</i>	Saturday, March 23
<i>Hills &amp; Streams</i>	Friday - Sunday, April 12 - 14
<i>One-Day Sesshin/Open Practice Period</i>	Saturday, May 11
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, May 19
<i>Sangha Work Day</i>	Sunday, May 26
<i>Five-Day Sesshin/End Practice Period</i>	Wednesday - Sunday, June 19 - 23
<i>Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)</i>	Sunday, July 7
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, July 14
<i>Mountains &amp; Rivers</i>	Thursday - Sunday , July 25 - 28
<i>One-Day Sesshin</i>	Saturday, August 3
<i>One-Day Study Retreat</i>	Saturday, September 7
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, September 15
<i>One-Day Sesshin/Open Aspects</i>	Saturday, October 5
<i>Women's Retreat</i>	Sunday, October 20
<i>Sangha Work Day</i>	Sunday, October 27
<i>One-Day Sesshin/Close Aspects</i>	Saturday, November 2
<i>Half-Day Sitting</i>	Sunday, November 10
<i>Rohatsu Sesshin</i>	Sunday - Saturday, December 1 - 7

### Ceremonies and Events

<i>MLK Neighborhood Engagement</i>	Monday, January 21
<i>Buddha's Parinirvana</i>	Saturday, February 16
<i>All-Sangha Potluck &amp; Budget Approval</i>	Tuesday, March 12
<i>Buddha's Birthday Celebration</i>	Saturday, April 6
<i>Spring Practice Period</i>	May 11 - June 23
<i>Practice Period Dinner &amp; Skit Night</i>	Saturday, May 25
<i>Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo</i>	Saturday, June 15
<i>Shuso Hossen</i>	Sunday, June 23
<i>New Member Entering Ceremony</i>	Monday, September 9
<i>All-Sangha Potluck &amp; Board Nominations</i>	Tuesday, September 24
<i>Jizo Ceremony</i>	Saturday, October 12
<i>Aspects of Practice</i>	October 5 - November 2
<i>Sejiki Ceremony &amp; Celebration</i>	Saturday, October 26
<i>Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial</i>	Wednesday, December 4
<i>Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony</i>	Saturday, December 7
<i>New Year's Eve Sitting &amp; Party</i>	Tuesday, December 31

### Zendo Holidays

New Year's Day: January 1
President's Day: February 18
Memorial Day: May 27
Day After PP: June 24
Independence Day: July 4
Labor Day Weekend August 31 & September 2
Thanksgiving: November 28
Winter Break: December 15 - 30

### Sat. Program Starts at 8:30 am

Buddha's Birthday: April 6
Sejiki: October 26
Day Before Rohatsu: November 30

Please see website / newsletter / bulletin board for changes