



Berkeley Zen Center



January-February 2016 Newsletter

First Sesshin of 2016

Saturday, January 16, 5am - 9pm

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 2016, led by Sojun Mel Weitsman, will take place on Saturday, January 16, 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 16th sesshin" in the slot in the laundry room door or mail to BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703.

The deadline for signing up and payment is Wednesday morning, January 13 after zazen. If you have questions, call the sesshin director, Gary Artim, at 510.676.9756 or email at gartim@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

Founder's Ceremonies

Monday, 1/4, 6:20pm

Tuesday, 1/5, 6:40am

One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/16

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/23, 9:40am

Beginners' Sitting

Sunday, 1/31

February

Founder's Ceremonies

Thursday, 2/4, 6:20pm

Friday, 2/5, 6:40am

Study Sesshin

Saturday - Sunday, 2/13 - 2/14

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/20, 9:40am

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 2/21, 8:00am - noon

March

One-day Sesshin

Saturday, 3/19

Women's Sitting

Sunday, 3/6

Half-day Sitting

Sunday, 3/20, 8:00am - noon

Sojun's Winter Koan Class

Sojun will present a koan class series in January and March. Taking off from our recent Aspects practice period, he'll select cases from our Chinese Ch'an ancestors and the three main koan collections: the *Blue Cliff Record*, *Book of Serenity*, and *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)*. Across these collections he'll focus on multiple koans all relating to a particular teacher, and cover a limited number of teachers in this fashion as time permits. Not only will we focus on the meaning of the case, but we'll also get a feel for the character and style of the koan's central teacher.

The series will cover six Monday evening dates over the two months. All classes begin at 7:15 pm and end at 8:45 pm. These will be the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Mondays of the month – on 1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 3/14, 3/21, and 3/28. The sign-up is posted on the patio board or you can send an email to Ron at rnestor1@yahoo.com. Cost is \$60/series, but if you want to attend for just one month @ \$30, that will be okay. This is not a drop in class and as always discounts are available by talking to Ron.

Beginners' Sesshin **Sunday, January 31 8:30am – 4:30pm**

On Sunday, January 31st, BZC will offer our annual Beginners' sitting from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. BZC priests Gerry Oliva and Judy Fleischman 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 will be \$15 for the day. Please see the zendo bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and further information. Contact Gerry Oliva at sesshindirectorBZC@gmail.com or 510-652-7217 with any questions.



Buddhist Perspectives **On the Climate Emergency** **Thursday evenings in February with** **Hozan Sensei**

The earliest story of Buddha's awakening has him calling on the Earth itself to serve as his witness. Today, as temperatures rise, droughts rage, coastal areas flood, we need more than ever to be witness to the planet we live upon. The emerging climate crisis touches every one.

On Thursday evenings in February, Hozan Sensei will lead a class and discussion about Buddhist perspectives on climate change, drawing from traditional Buddhist texts, analysis by Bhikkhu Bodhi, and the ground breaking reflections of Pope Francis's recent encyclical "Laudato Si."

Class sessions will be on the 4th, 11th, 18th, & 25th of February, from 7:15 to 8:45pm in the community room. The class charge is \$40/series. No one is turned away for lack of funds. Materials will be available in advance of the class.





Hozan Senauke - February Study Sesshin February 13 - 14

Hozan Alan Senauke will lead us to a deeper understanding of our practice through a two-day sesshin where the Dharma subject will be forthcoming (please check the bulletin board for details). On Saturday, February 13th we will sit from 5am to 9 pm with a lecture in the morning and a study period in the afternoon. On Sunday, February 14th we will sit from 5 am until 3 pm and have two study periods. We encourage old and new sangha members to participate. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board by Wednesday morning, February 10 after zazen. 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. The fee is \$35 per day and should be paid in advance (a discounted fee is possible for those in need; please speak to the director). Leave checks marked "Study sesshin" in the mail slot in the courtyard laundry room door or mail to the BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. If you have any questions, contact the sesshin director, Ken Powelson at powelson@earthlink.net or 510.326.3752.

Come and Sit with Us

The weekday zazen schedule includes informal zazen at noon.

Monday through Friday

5:40am - 7:00am		zazen, service, soji
12:00pm - 12:30pm		zazen
5:40pm - 6:30pm		zazen, service

Half-Day Sitting Sunday, February 21, 8:00 am - noon

Half-day sittings include five periods of zazen, kinhin (walking meditation) 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 Greg Denny at greg@techperience.org or 510.559.8831.



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.

Margret Wotkyns has been our Health and Safety Coordinator for almost three years, with the assistance and support of Walter Kieser. Together they kept BZC stocked with first-aid supplies, organized the CPR classes, maintained the air filter, and consulted on various health and safety issues. Nancy Suib will step into this key position for which we are grateful.

For two years Gerry Oliva has served as Sesshin Director, carefully organizing our sesshins and offering her warm support to all of us. We welcome Ken Powelson to this position, which he will share with Gary Artim, who continues in this role.

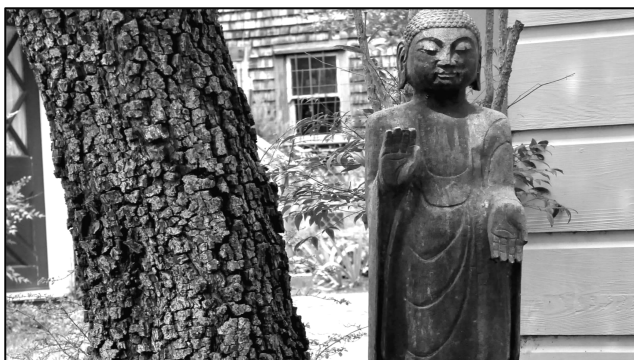
Ken Powelson and Kika have been our Saturday Directors these past two years. With great care they have facilitated the Saturday

program each week. Ed Herzog and Mary Beth Lamb will be our new Co-Saturday Directors. We welcome them to this position.

Susan Marvin has been our Tenzo for two years. She shared this position the first year, then managed it alone in 2016. With skill and enthusiasm, Susan organized our meals, trained new cooks, and supported our vital kitchen practice in so many ways. We are very grateful to her and to Kika who will step into this key role.

Stephanie Seaborg has been our Head Chiden these past two years. She has graciously agreed to continue as Co-Head Chiden with Jeanne Courtney sharing this position with her in 2016. We welcome Jeanne to this role and are grateful to Stephanie for continuing.

Jake Van Akkeren has been our Head Server Trainer this past year and a half. He has trained a number of new head servers and kept all the head servers up-to-date on serving forms. We will resume having a Head Server overseeing the serving schedule and activities as we've done in the past. We are grateful that Carol Paul has agreed to be our new Head Server.



2015 Tax Letters

BZC will not be automatically mailing year-end tax letters to all friends and members. In the past we have found that only a minority of friends and members need them for their returns, and we save a substantial amount of time, labor and postage by not mailing them out in mass. Instead, after the letters are generated, we keep them in a secure file on the office computer and make them available to individuals upon request. Letters will be available beginning February 15th. We will also be able to provide your information in an unofficial form beginning on January 15th. Please email the office manager at bzcoffice manager@gmail.com or call 510.845.2403 to receive either form of information.



Board Transitions: A Note from the President

With the conclusion of 2015, Stephanie Solar and Shelley Brock have stepped down from their positions as Member-at-Large on the Board, and we welcome both Mary Beth Lamb and Katy Guimond who will now be serving the Sangha in this important role.

In her two years on the Board, Stephanie first served on the Development Committee, proposing ideas for fundraising projects and helping to make the 2014 September fundraising party a huge success. More recently, she has been an integral part of the Board Nomination and Election Committee, speaking with Sangha members about the work of the Board and encouraging them to consider serving in that capacity. She has

graciously agreed to continue on that committee. During Board meetings, Stephanie's voice was always one of even-keeled, calm reflection, and that was most appreciated.

Shelley has served four years on the Board, and from the very beginning she made valuable contributions in her role on the Project Management team. Early on she was very involved with seismic upgrade projects around the property, including the zendo, the community room porch and the garage. For many months, Shelley devoted a huge amount of time managing the community room kitchen remodel project, actually spending large chunks of her days on site working with the contractor, dealing with an assortment of surprises, and ably responding to concerns and questions about the project from the Board and Sangha members. Shelley's wholehearted dedication to the success of the kitchen remodel has resulted in a lovely and very functional kitchen space. Thank you, Shelley, for all that you've done for the BZC community during your two terms on the Board.



Sounding Board BZC Board Harvest and Planting

As we head towards the turning of the year, the Board took note of our accomplishments and reflected on some of the big issues still to

be explored.

We appreciate the sangha's generosity in response to our Fundraising efforts this year on behalf of the Building Fund: Between our June letter appeal and the fundraising party, we've raised over \$28,000 - well over our goal for the year (thank you, development committee). AND, we've not only raised the money, but at this writing, the work on the 1929A apartment kitchen is almost complete (thank you, project managers!). Look for pictures and details future newsletters. We are also close to finalizing plans to switch solar power for our electricity (thank you, Mark Copithorne).

There was a good response to the changes we instituted in our Board election process, launched on October 1. For the first time we had an electronic ballot (thank you, Troy DuFrene). About half of eligible voters have responded, similar to the old paper ballot response rate. This was also our beta test of only offering as many candidates as there are open positions (see past Sounding Boards and newsletter articles for details). The Board will be continuing to evaluate this new election procedure (thank you, Recruitment and Election Committee). This year we also launched a new state-of-the-art website (thanks again, Troy).

This past year some thorny issues have surfaced or continued to nag. The Board plans to take these up at its annual retreat in February 2016. These include: resident rents; continuing to raise funds to take care of our property and provide a cushion for leadership transitions; and how best to express appreciation for major gifts of money and labor.



Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

January 2	Sojun Mel Weitsman
January 9	Hozan Alan Senauke
January 16	Sojun Mel Weitsman
January 23	Greg Denny

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

January 4	Monday 6:25am	visiting priests from Germany
January 11	Monday 5:40am	Jed Appelman
January 18	Monday 5:40am	Tamar Enoch
January 25	Monday 5:40am	Ken Knabb
February 1	Monday 6:25am	open discussion
February 5	Friday 5:40pm	Sue Dunlap
February 8	Monday 5:40am	tba
February 15	Monday 5:40am	tba
February 22	Monday 5:40am	zendo holiday
February 29	Monday 5:40am	Carol Paul

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

March-April deadline:
Friday, February 19, 8:00 pm

Family Practice at BZC

BZC Family Practice on Saturdays

BZC Family Practice is offered on almost all Saturdays (still check the calendar for details, and always RSVP so we can share late-breaking news), at the usual time, from 9:30 to 11:15. BZC member and Music Together teacher Ryk Groetchen will be taking the lead. See details on our section of the website: berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice.

New Sign-up Form

Check out our handy new sign up form on the website (berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice) - you may use this form, or send an email to lauries@kushiki.org.

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Due to the expanded KidZendo program, we will not be offering supervised play. We want to serve the needs of parents keeping the flame of practice alive, so don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, concerns, and wish list. Direct inquiries to Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org).

Family Practice E-mail Group

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

Family Practice Schedule

January 9:	No program (teacher training)
January 16	No program - sesshin
January 23	Family Practice
January 30	Family Practice
February 6	Family Practice
February 13	No program - sesshin
February 20	Family Practice
February 27	Family Practice

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



Hard Knocks Buddha

From Sojun Roshi, December 2015

There are many wonderful representations of Buddha in this world. Among them paintings, statues, and mandalas. They appear in temples, homes, and monasteries. Their postures, noble bearing, and beautiful features instill inspiration and higher levels of possibility in us. Back in the early 70's when the San Francisco Zen Center acquired Green Gulch Farm and turned it into the Green Dragon Zen Center, there were a lot of small buildings in the long green valley that extends to Muir Beach. Many of them were cow barns that little by little were converted to other uses. One of those buildings became the electric and auto shop. Being so close to the ocean, it was always a bit dark and somewhat grimy and damp. It is customary within Zen Center for most buildings to have an altar, and on each altar for there to sit a Buddha figure or some representation. The shop at Green Gulch is no exception. Every morning the shop crew meets at the altar and has a short service; 3 bows and a chant before going to work. I would like to describe the unique qualities of this particular shop Buddha, as I remember it. He was not very high, maybe 10 inches or so and was made of clay. If I remember correctly, he had a white glaze. He seemed to be made by a talented artist but probably not a professional. He was no doubt originally a handsome figure. But for one reason or another he had fallen to the floor a couple of times and been put back together rather awkwardly. The head was a little off center. The nose was flattened and some of the limbs were chipped. He seemed to have the look of an old auto mechanic or a longshoreman, or maybe a carpenter or fisherman. He gave off a feeling of someone who had grown up on the street, in the school of hard knocks and had the scars to prove it. His slightly bent posture expressed the mature humility of someone who had seen through the veils and was not fooled by anything. He also seemed to have been adjusted by auto mechanics before they washed their hands. At the same time there was an unmistakable beauty that drew one to him as if the hardships he had endured only made him glow more brightly, lighting up that dark corner. I went looking for him recently but he didn't seem to be around. No one knew where he was or even remembered. To me he was an archetype, the real thing, and I miss him.



Berkeley Zen Center
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