



Berkeley Zen Center



November-December 2016 Newsletter

Close Aspects of Practice Sitting Saturday, November 19

Aspects of Practice 2016 will close with a sesshin on Saturday, November 19, led by Denkei Raul Moncayo. Everyone is encouraged to attend, whether signed up for Aspects of Practice or not. This will be a Saturday sesshin schedule — 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. — but there will be the option of a lighter schedule — 8:30-5:40 — for students with significant physical limitations only. The Aspects of Practice closing ceremony will be at 8:40 p.m. For questions, please contact the sesshin director, Gary Artim, at sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com or 510-525-2135.

Rohatsu Sesshin, Led by Sojun Roshi December 4-10

Our annual seven-day session celebrates Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment. This is an opportunity to deepen our practice and bonding with sangha in a joyful silent environment. Be sure to sign up (*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, 11/3, 6:20pm
Friday, 11/4, 6:40am

Half-Day Sitting

Sunday 11/6, 8:00am-noon

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 11/12, 9:40am

Close Aspects of Practice Sitting

Saturday, 11/19

Zendo Holiday

Thursday, 11/24

December

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday 12/4 through Saturday 12/10

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony

Monday, 12/5, 8:30pm

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/10, 11:15am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 12/17, 9:40am

Winter Break

Sunday 12/18 through Saturday 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Saturday, 12/31, 8:00pm-midnight

(Rohatsu, continued from page 1) on the posted list on the community board and fill out a sesshin info form, if you haven't already. Place the filled-out forms in the sesshin director's mail box on the community room porch. Participants are asked to sit at least three full days. If you have questions about scheduling, diet, or physical limitations, please contact Gary Artim at 510-676-9756 or sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com.

Community Fundraising Event

On Sunday, November 20, warm up and Have a Cup of Tea with Ross Blum in the community room, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Ross will conduct an orientation to the World of Tea as he inherited from the teachers at Peet's during his 25-year tenure there. Along with the oral presentation and Q&A, participants will taste a range of teas and leave appreciating the myriad subtleties of this centuries-old beverage — the most popular one on the planet, second only to water. Donation: \$30. Sign up on the patio bulletin board, or contact Mary Beth Lamb at mbethlamb@gmail.com.

Note from the Coordinator

When I asked Sojun Roshi what the role of the Coordinator was he responded, "You're the eyes and ears of the temple." In this role and in weekly consultation with our abbots, I intend to help maintain the harmony and vitality of our practice place. Please share your comments and concerns with me either by email (rossblum@icloud.com) or by telephone (510.306.1964) and together we will.

Cold and Flu Season Is Among Us

At this time of year we encourage all sangha members to get an annual flu shot at either your doctor's office or local CVS or Walgreen's pharmacy. If cost is a barrier, contact your local health department for information on when and where they provide low-cost or free vaccinations.

In an effort to support each other's health, we are asking that sangha members stay home if they are ill. We recommend following the Centers for Disease Control's guidelines: Please don't come to the zendo if you have fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or diarrhea, or anything you equate with viral illness. Please stay home and take care of yourself. You should wait to return until you have not had any of the following symptoms: sneezing, coughing, nose blowing, sore throat, or fever, for 48 hours.

If you realize you are ill after you have arrived on a Saturday or sesshin day, please let the director know and go home. Some of us are not only older, but also have medical conditions which are immune-compromising, so your awareness and self-care is important to us all. Of course, some coughs and sneezes result from allergies. If you are at all uncertain, speak with the Saturday Director or Sesshin Director or contact the Coordinator, who can refer you to a health consultant.

A copy of the BZC Wellness Policy will be posted on the bulletin board. If you have questions, please contact Gerry Oliva at gryoliva@gmail.com.

Position Changes

Greg Denny and Peter Overton have passed their co-leadership of our half-day sittings to Alexandra Frappier and Laurie Senauke. Thanks to all four of you for handling the recent upsurge in attendance for these monthly events.

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.

Write Your Death Poem: A Workshop on New Year's Eve

It's traditional for Soto Zen monks to write a "death poem" at the turning of the year. The idea is to take time to reflect on the fleeting nature of life, not in a depressing way, but in a way that brings forth the truth and joy of each of our lives as they are right now.

On December 31, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Laurie Senauke will offer writing exercises, examples, and time to reflect, create, and share your own death poem. Come for the workshop, bring a bag dinner, and then stay for the New Year's Eve sitting. Sign up on the

bulletin board as usual. For more information, contact Laurie at lauries@kushiki.org.

One-Room Schoolhouse Turns 50!

Next year, Berkeley Zen Center will be celebrating 50 years since the old zendo on Dwight Way opened its doors. Plans are already under way for a party to be held on the evening of September 30 at the Jack London Aquatic Center in Oakland. Details will be coming early next year from the event committee, headed by Jake Van Akkeren.

For now, we want to get a head start on gathering recollections from you — current members and friends, alumni, and everyone else who has been touched by practice inside BZC's gate this last half century. These items will become part of an anthology of BZC's first 50 years. We will also edit this into a smaller booklet for distribution at the 50th anniversary party.

We welcome everyone to contribute stories, favorite anecdotes, poems, photographs, drawings, memories — anything that we can make copies of and print. Please also share our invitation to participate with anyone you know who was once connected to BZC but who may no longer be in touch.

We ask that written pieces be no more than 250 words. All printed materials will be returned. Please submit them by **March 15, 2017**, to andrea.thach@gmail.com or to Andrea Thach, 800 Northshore Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226. Please send her your questions or suggestions for the anthology. Thank you.

Being What's Happening: Family Practice at BZC

In our Zen practice life, we try to create the opportunity to experience something “different” from our usual life. What is that difference? Something like “no gaining idea.” We want to allow an experience that is not limited at the outset by our ideas about what might happen or what it means. We resume our true nature, which is always flowing underneath or within our everyday lives.

For the families who come to Family Practice, we also want to offer something different. As parents, so much of our day is taken up with getting our kids to do the various things we expect of them. Getting them to get up, to eat breakfast, to go to school; to learn specific things, to get along with others, and in general to act in accord with the way others are acting, in accord with expectations coming from the adult world. We expect a lot, actually.

When children come into the circle at BZC, we don't want this to be just another thing we are trying to get them to do — to get them to sing the songs, to get them to prepare the snack, to get them to sit quietly, and so on. Even getting them to come in the first place! How can we create for all of us, children and adults together, a “place to turn around” in the midst of our busy lives? How can we offer something different?

The natural state between parents and children, between caregivers and children, is one of love flowing between us. You might call it the “true nature” of families. When families

join our program, we want to help them resume this true nature, which is always there, flowing underneath all the expectations and challenges.

Just as it's not always easy to sit in the zendo with no gaining idea, it's not easy for us adults to allow this opportunity to unfold — for children to simply be together with their parents, in love and fun. When it happens it feels amazing.

Our Family Practice program is led by BZC member and music teacher Ryk Groetchen. It happens most Saturdays from 9:30-11:15 a.m. (check the website for exact dates). We share songs, dances, stories, poems, social-emotional learning tools, preparing, serving, and eating a snack, discussion, and laughter. We welcome any BZC members to take a taste; we think you'll be glad you did.



Family Practice at BZC

BZC Family Practice on Saturdays

BZC Family Practice is offered on almost all Saturdays (but check the calendar for details, and always RSVP so we can share late-breaking news), from 9:30 to 11:15, led by BZC member and Music Together teacher Ryk Groetchen. See details at our section of the website: www.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 ryk@groetchen.org.

Saturday Morning Supervised Play

Due to the expanded Family Practice program, we are no longer 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 at lauries@kushiki.org.

Family Practice Email Group

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

Family Practice Schedule

November 5: Family Practice
November 12: Family Practice
November 19: No program — sesshin
November 26: Family Practice
December 3: Family Practice
December 10: No program — sesshin
December 17: Family Practice
December 24: No program — interim
December 31: No program — interim

Please RSVP for ALL family activities. Thank you.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 am

November 5	Laurie Senauke
November 12	Peter Overton
November 19	Denkei Raul Moncayo
November 26	Sojun Roshi
December 3	Sojun Roshi
December 10	Sojun Roshi
December 17	Sojun Roshi
December 24	zendo holiday
December 31	zendo holiday

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

November 4	Fri 5:40pm	Susan Marvin
November 7	Mon 6:25am	Leslie Batholic
November 14	Mon 5:40am	Shosan w/Hozan Sensei
November 21	Mon 6:25am	Penelope Thompson
November 28	Mon 6:25am	Mike McVey
December 2	Fri 5:50pm	tba
December 5	Mon 6:25am	Suzuki Roshi memorial
December 12	Mon 6:25am	Peter Pfaelzer
December 19	Monday	zendo holiday
December 26	Mondy	zendo holiday

Come and Sit with Us

Monday through Friday

5:40-7:00am : zazen, service, soji

5:40-6:30pm : zazen, service

Tuesday through Thursday

noon-12:30pm : informal zazen

Consider Making a Bequest to BZC

As we say every Saturday after lecture, Berkeley Zen Center is solely supported by our dues and donations. One of the significant ways sangha members and friends have donated is by leaving a monetary gift in their will or their trust.

A gift in your will or revocable living trust, called a bequest, is a wonderful way to donate for people who love the sangha but who may not wish to part with their resources today. Remembering BZC in your estate plan helps ensure the ongoing health and well-being of our teachers, the physical structures at BZC, our sangha, and our practice.

The Board of BZC would like you to know that a number of its members, past and present, have named BZC in their wills or trusts. To ensure a legacy for BZC, the Board invites all members and friends to follow this example and consider making such a bequest. For more information about including BZC in your planned giving, contact Development Committee chair Laurie Senauke at lauriesenauke@sonic.net. You can also contact Laurie if you would like to let us know that you have already provided for BZC in your estate plan.



Susuki grass field
Smell of the mountain
in father's room —
autumn wind.

A haiga by Kazumi Cranney. Haiga is a form of painting that combines three traditional Japanese arts: haiku poetry, Japanese calligraphy, and watercolor painting.

Accept Yourself and Stand on Your Two Feet

As I sit down to write this piece I am two days back from a remarkable two weeks in India, among Ambedkarite (“ex-untouchable”) Buddhist friends and communities. Admittedly, I feel as if part of me is still somewhere about 35,000 feet over the Pacific. The day after tomorrow we will begin our 16th annual Aspects of Practice period, which this year focuses on *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* and Suzuki Roshi’s practice. Reflecting on my journey to Buddhist India and our immersion in Zen at BZC brings to mind some words from Suzuki Roshi: “The most important point is to accept yourself and stand on your two feet.”

Actually, these are two points. Some years ago, Sojun Roshi pointedly offered me a version of this teaching. He said, “You should always know where your feet are.” Of course, I can usually find them at the end of my legs. But he meant: where are you standing? By extension I might ask: Can you accept yourself standing exactly in this place? Let’s switch the word “you” to “I.” Wherever I might be — in India, in Berkeley, in trouble, etc. — am I able to be right in that place, and can I step forward from there to meet the unknown without hesitation?

I have been going to India for the last seven or eight years. My home base there is Nagaloka, a Buddhist school and practice place in Nagpur, the geographic center of India. Nagaloka is a peaceful campus, a little outside the sprawling, dusty city. Its motto is “Reforming Mind and World.” At the center of the campus is a forty-foot golden Buddha in an unusual striding posture. His footsteps are sure and his direction is clear. At dusk local Buddhist families come out to Nagaloka to circum-ambulate and pay their respects. For the eighty or so young residential students, this Buddha is their guide.

Students at Nagaloka come from rural villages all over India. Coming from Dalit (untouchable) communities, poverty, oppression, and violence are common experiences. But Nagaloka is a “caste-free” zone. When students come to live there, they set aside their old identity and learn to accept their true selves, to stand on their own two feet. Practicing meditation for two or three hours each day, attending classes in Buddhism and social thought, working, serving, playing together they become bright, joyful, and dedicated to the awakening of Indian society, not just for their own community but for the sake of all. To stand on their two feet is to be on the Bodhisattva’s path.

It is no different for us. I believe this was Suzuki Roshi’s vision, which he tirelessly transmitted from his arrival in 1959 to his passing in 1971. “To accept yourself and stand on your two feet” means to loosen the grip we have on habits from which we concoct identity, and to wake up right where we are. When we sit zazen, when we do *soji*, when we carry Zen practice into our daily lives, then our feet are on the ground even as we hurry along on our appointed rounds.

The ground we stand on may be a pleasant green meadow. Often, however it is the muck and mire of our sorrows and conflicts. Or the difficulties of a world scarred by fear and degradation — personal, interpersonal, environmental. For my sisters and brothers in India it is the ground of poverty, caste, and gender discrimination. On such ground we must step carefully but firmly. The irony is that we begin by sitting down. That is accepting ourselves. Then we stand up. That is extending ourselves. Such is our way.

—Hozan Alan Senauke, October 2016

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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

**January-February deadline:
Friday, December 16**

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703



Berkeley Zen Center 2017 Calendar

Sesshins

January 14	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin
January 29	Sunday	Beginners' Sesshin
February 11-12	Saturday-Sunday	Two-Day Sesshin
February 19	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
March 5	Sunday	Women's Sesshin
March 12	Sunday	Family Sitting
March 25	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin
April 14-16	Friday-Sunday	20s & 30s Mountains & Rivers
April 16	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
April 29	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin/Open Practice Period
May 7	Sunday	Sangha Work Day
May 21	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
June 7-11	Wednesday-Sunday	Five-Day Sesshin/End Practice Period
July 9	Sunday	Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)
July 16	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
July 27-30	Thursday-Sunday	Mountains & Rivers
August 5	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin
August 13	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
September 2	Saturday	One-Day Study Retreat
September 10	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
October 7	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin/Open Aspects
October 15	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
October 29	Sunday	Sangha Work Day
November 4	Saturday	One-Day Sesshin/Close Aspects
November 12	Sunday	Half-Day Sitting
December 3-9	Sunday-Saturday	Rohatsu Sesshin

Ceremonies and Events

Buddha's Parinirvana	Saturday, February 11
Sangha Potluck – Budget Meeting	Tuesday, March 14
Buddha's Birthday Celebration	Saturday, April 1
Spring Practice Period	April 29 – June 11
Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night	Saturday, May 20
Lay Ordination/Zaike Tokudo	Saturday, June 3
Shuso Hossen	Sunday, June 11
New Member Entering Ceremony	Monday, September 11
Sangha Potluck – Board Nominations	Tuesday, September 12
50th Anniversary Dinner Celebration	Saturday, September 30
Jizo Ceremony	Saturday, October 14
Aspects of Practice	October 7 – November 4
Sejiki Ceremony and Celebration	Saturday, October 28
Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial	Monday, December 4
Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony	Saturday, December 9
Winter Break	December 17 – December 31
New Year's Eve Sitting and Party	Sunday, December 31

Zendo Holidays: New Year's Day (January 1) | President's Day (Feb. 20) | Memorial Day, (May 29) |

The day after close of Practice Period (June 12) | Independence Day (July 4) | Labor Day (Sep. 4) | Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23)

Saturday Program starts later, at 8:30 a.m., on: Buddha's Birthday (April 1) | Sejiki (Oct. 28)| The day before Rohatsu (Dec. 2)