



# Berkeley Zen Center



## January 2013 Newsletter

### First One-Day Sitting in 2013

Whether you are making resolutions or setting new intentions for 2013, the January 20 sesshin is a great way to begin the New Year. The sesshin, led by Sojun Roshi, will be from 5:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Please check the bulletin board for the sesshin sign-up sheet and more information. If you have questions, call the sesshin director, Carol Paul at 510.206.5051 or email at caroljpaul@yahoo.com. Sesshin fee is \$35.



### Sojun Roshi's 2013 Study Group

Sojun's winter/spring study group will run from January through April. This time we'd like to try a twice per month schedule rather than the once a month schedule of the past. Our hope is that this provides more continuity and focus from class to class.

We'll meet on the first and third Fridays of the month from 7:15 to 8:45 pm in the community room when possible. The first meeting will be on January 18. The last will be on April 19. The cost for the seven-session series is \$70. As always, discounts are an option for those in need. Sojun's text is yet to be determined.

A sign-up sheet will be posted on January 2, or you may e-mail class coordinator Ron Nestor at rnestor1@yahoo.com. If you decide to attend, please give serious consideration as to whether this schedule will work for you. All are welcome.



#### 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 Ceremony

Thursday, 1/3, 6:20 pm

Friday, 1/4, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 1/12, 9:30 am

Saturday, 1/26, 9:30 am

#### One-Day Sitting

Sunday, 1/20, 5:00 am – 5:30 pm

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/26, 9:40 am

### February

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 2/3, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

#### Founder's Ceremony

Monday, 2/4, 6:20 pm

Tuesday, 2/5, 6:40 am

#### Kidzendo

Saturday, 2/9, 9:30 am

Saturday, 2/23, 9:30 am

#### Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

Saturday, 2/16

#### Two-Day Sitting

Saturday, 2/16, 5:00 am – Sunday 2/17, 5:00 pm

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/23, 9:40 am

#### Beginners' Sitting

Sunday, 2/24

## January Class with Denkei

Raul Denkei Moncayo will teach a four-week January class entitled "Introduction to Zen Teaching in the Light of Practice at BZC." Meetings will take place on Saturday afternoons from 1:00 - 2:30 pm in the community room. The dates are January 12, 19, 26, and February 9. The cost for the series is \$40. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board December 1. You may also register by e-mailing class coordinator Ron Nestor at [rnestor1@yahoo.com](mailto:rnestor1@yahoo.com).

In this class we will study the history of Zen teaching from Bodhidharma to Hui-Neng, from Baso to Rinzai and Joshu, from Sekito to Tozan, and from Dogen to Suzuki Roshi and Sojun Roshi. As we traverse the length of Zen teaching, we will pay particular attention to how the various teachings manifest in the style of our practice at BZC. We will also explore the Zen teachings of some of the prominent women who figure in the Zen lineage.

Instructor: Raul Denkei Moncayo began Zen practice in the Paris Zendo of Taisen Deshimaru Roshi. He has practiced at BZC since 1978 and received dharma transmission from Sojun Roshi.



Leonardo da Vinci, studies, c. 1488.

## New Study Group Forming

A new study group led by Andrea Thach will start in late January/early February. The meeting time will likely be Tuesday or Wednesday evening, or sometime on Sunday, depending on participant needs. The text won't be Sandokai, since Sojun Roshi is leading a current study of Sekito Kisen's work, but perhaps the Heart or Diamond Sutra or Awakening of Faith, again depending on group interest. If you have questions or to express an interest in the group, contact Andrea at [andrea.thach@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.thach@gmail.com). Thank you.



## Family Activities at BZC

### Saturday Morning Childcare

Childcare is offered free of charge on many Saturday mornings (see schedule below) for 9:40 am zazen through lecture. Currently childcare is being done by Berkeley High student Lihong Chan. We need to know by dinner time Friday if you are planning to avail yourselves of childcare on the following day (so she can sleep in if not!). Phone or e-mail Laurie Senauke, 510.845.2215, or [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org). Childcare for 8:45 am zazen instruction and beginner orientation is offered by special arrangement; contact Laurie for more info.

### Kidzendo Expands!

BZC's Saturday program for children three and up is expanding beginning January 2013. Our new Toolbox and Mindfulness for Families program will be offered two days per month, typically meeting on the second and fourth Saturdays, from 9:30 am to 11:15 am. We hope this will support more continuity and cohesiveness. (We are always open to feedback from parents about our program.)

BZC resident Tamar has been trained in offering the Toolbox materials. Nancy Suib, a longtime practitioner at BZC, will be co-leading this program using The Mindful Schools Curriculum. See details on our website or in the September 2012 newsletter. Check the calendar online or below for exact schedule. As always, RSVP if you plan to attend ([lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org)).

January 5	Childcare
January 12	KIDZENDO
January 19	Childcare
January 26	KIDZENDO
February 2	Childcare
February 9	KIDZENDO
February 16	Sesshin – no program
February 23	KIDZENDO
March 2	Childcare
March 9	KIDZENDO
March 16	Sesshin – no program
March 23	KIDZENDO

### Family Practice E-mail Group

To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We only send, at most, ONE e-mail per week—just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, e-mail Laurie at [lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie at [marie\\_hopper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

## The Tragedy in Newtown

Comments from Sojun Roshi

January, 2013

**W**hen I was a boy I acted like a boy. I loved playing with guns. Cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers. It was the era of the cowboy movie, and cowboy movies had a great influence on our lives. The more realistic a toy gun, the more it promoted a boy's romance with it; the weight of it, the feel of it in your hand. I remember taking it to bed with me when I went to sleep and laying it next to me on the pillow. We were always making up plays and scenarios to fit our love affair with the guns. The influence of our soldier-play in the thirties was the First World War. But there was a psychological barrier that kids understood and didn't go beyond. I remember finding my dad's 32 Smith and Wesson short barreled pistol in the closet and carefully putting it back and not touching it again. It was unheard of for a kid to bring a gun to school, much less shoot someone with it. Long before I grew up I let go of that childish play and followed more mature pursuits. Too many never grow out of it.

It is not hard to see how grown men are easily seduced by the gun industry and its front, the NRA, to cherish such ugly and beautiful weapons. The beauty of ugliness. The trademark, Glock, brings forth an image of someone whose throat is filled with blood, taking their last breath. The mystique can be fascinating; holding in your hand the power over life and death. The arms industry since the end of World War Two has swelled to enormous proportions and its insidious and corrupting influence on our society is hardly questioned. Both children and adults are subject to continuous 'round the clock free advertising for mayhem on television, not to mention the obscene brutal video games. How could this not influence behavior?

Sometime between the 70's and the 80's the line between playing with toy guns and real gun-play on our streets was crossed, and continues to escalate at the alarming rate we see today. There is an old saying that when the rulers are kind, generous, and benevolent, the populace follows this role model and there is peace in the land. When the opposite is true, there is untold suffering. One significant result of our offensive mistake in violently upsetting the Middle East has been the emergence of the suicide bomber. If you hit a hornet's nest with a stick, watch out. Just as we called forth Ben Laden through our careless aggression, we have been a contributing cause to the new phenomenon known as the suicide bomber. Pushed up against the wall, in a seemingly helpless situation, you sacrifice your life with honor. The suicide bomber does not simply kill people. The suicide bomber must also kill him/herself as well. Although this phenomenon may be discussed somewhere I have never been privy to that discussion. Most people just shake their heads and think about something else. (Many Tibetan monks are immolating themselves to protest Chinese oppression, but they are not taking others with them.)

I don't think we should underestimate the influence of the suicide bomber on those in our society who perpetrate mass murder/suicides. Suicide bombings happen every day and are so common that it is now the norm in some parts of the world. There are of course different reasons for mass murder, but this pattern of suicidal behavior could be a kind of self-justification or twisted atonement or an escape. For some this can be a kind of role model. The leadership of government should provide a role model for the populace. The mayhem in the streets is a reflection of what goes on at the top. The stranglehold of the NRA on the Congress and its influence on our children must be addressed. This is a difficult time we are in right now. People kill people with guns, which are an extension of our hand, and a bullet is a messenger of our intentions. Our emotions must be under the control of our reasoning.

Alienation, criticism without compassion, feelings of ostracism and marginalization are a basis for destabilizing people to indiscriminately take it out on the public by getting even. (Now you know how I feel!)

In addressing this situation I realize how overwhelmed we all are given the latest tragic event of the murder of twenty children and six teachers in a public school. Given our collective and personal feelings of helplessness and frustration, what can be done? A not-crazy person when provoked can, in an unguarded emotional moment, reach for the most convenient response: a nearby gun. Gun control can be addressed. Emotional control is more difficult. It is not an either- or-situation, but making firearms unavailable and out of reach is a good and possible beginning. When one wheel is addressed the other wheel will also be turning.

Without forgetting all this, I am wishing you a New Year full of wisdom, compassion, composure, and deep joy.



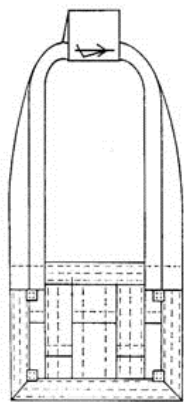
*Drawing by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1855.*

## Sewing Buddha's Robe

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination next year, sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

Please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman or Hozan Alan Sensei before the sewing class begins (and preferably before the winter break).

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



## Library News

I have recently taken over as librarian for the BZC library. I am enjoying getting to know the library and I encourage all BZC members to take advantage of the fine collection. Members are welcome to check out a total of two books for one month. Instructions for checking out books and tapes are posted in the library. The one change I have made is to ask for your e-mail address on the book card, instead of your phone number. I will be in the library after Saturday programs when possible, if you have any questions about library procedures or the collection.

Currently there are quite a few books "out" of the library. Most have been checked out recently, but quite a few of these overdue books date back several years. All of them are important to the library collection. In this new year, please check through your books at home and return any BZC books you might find. This will save me sending a lot of individual e-mails trying to track books down and or asking you to replace them. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at: [elweb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elweb@sbcglobal.net).

- Ellen Webb

## Sojun Roshi's 20's and 30's Drop-in Discussion Group January – March

Sojun Roshi invites students in their 20's and 30's to join him, usually once a month, for a short period of zazen and open discussion about Zen, Buddhism, meditation, and/or your own practice. We may also discuss selected Buddhist texts. Meetings start at 11:30 am in the zendo on Saturdays following the morning schedule and lecture. People new to BZC are welcome along with continuing students.

Coming dates are January 26, February 23, and March 30. For more information, e-mail Ron Nestor @ [rnestor1@yahoo.com](mailto:rnestor1@yahoo.com).



*Painting of Manjusri Bodhisattva.  
Sanskrit Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra manuscript  
written in the Ranjana script. Nalanda, Bihar, India.  
Circa 700-1100 CE.*

## January Sounding Board

This past November the Board met in executive session, without Sojun and Hozan, to discuss the recent Abbot succession council meetings, which considered the eventual transition from our founder, Sojun Roshi, to a new Abbot. We focused on how to communicate the results of these meetings to the sangha. The Board then held its own lively council meeting in early December, featuring a variety of viewpoints. Gradually we are making progress towards creatively responding to sangha concerns and at the same time honoring Sojun's leadership and the traditions of our Soto Zen practice. In January the Board will hold its annual all-day retreat and in that format go into more depth concerning our next steps. We'll also have an opportunity to hear in detail from both Hozan and Sojun. At this point, based on Sojun Roshi's intention and the sangha's response, the question is not whether Hozan will succeed Sojun as Abbot, but rather how the process of him doing so will work in both short- and long-term time frames. While there are various paths we may take to leadership transition in the big picture, the Board strongly affirms its support for Hozan as Sojun Roshi's successor. A full report back to the sangha will follow the January Board retreat.

### Changing Hands

We thank Laurie Senauke and Tamar for co-holding the position of Zendo Manager, especially for Tamar's good humor and wonderful way with the bulletin board. Laurie has taken up coordination of our Sanhga Support Network in place of Alexandra Frappier. We welcome our new zendo managers, Christy Calame and Ross Blum.

Much gratitude for Ellen Webb's stewardship of our oryoki practice (as instructor), she has stepped into Veronica Reilly's shoes as librarian. Thank you Veronica, for taking care of our collection!

And there's more! Andrew Corson steps down this month as board secretary since he was elected as a member at large. Maria Winston will become the new board secretary. Also, Peter Pfaelzer has handed off the responsibilities of Health and Safety Coordinator to Margaret Wotkyns.

Much appreciation for everyone's service to the sangha, and your willingness to find a way to pitch in.

- Your coordinator, Peter Overton

*Elder Zhang Guo "decanting" a horse;  
late 19th to early 20th century.*

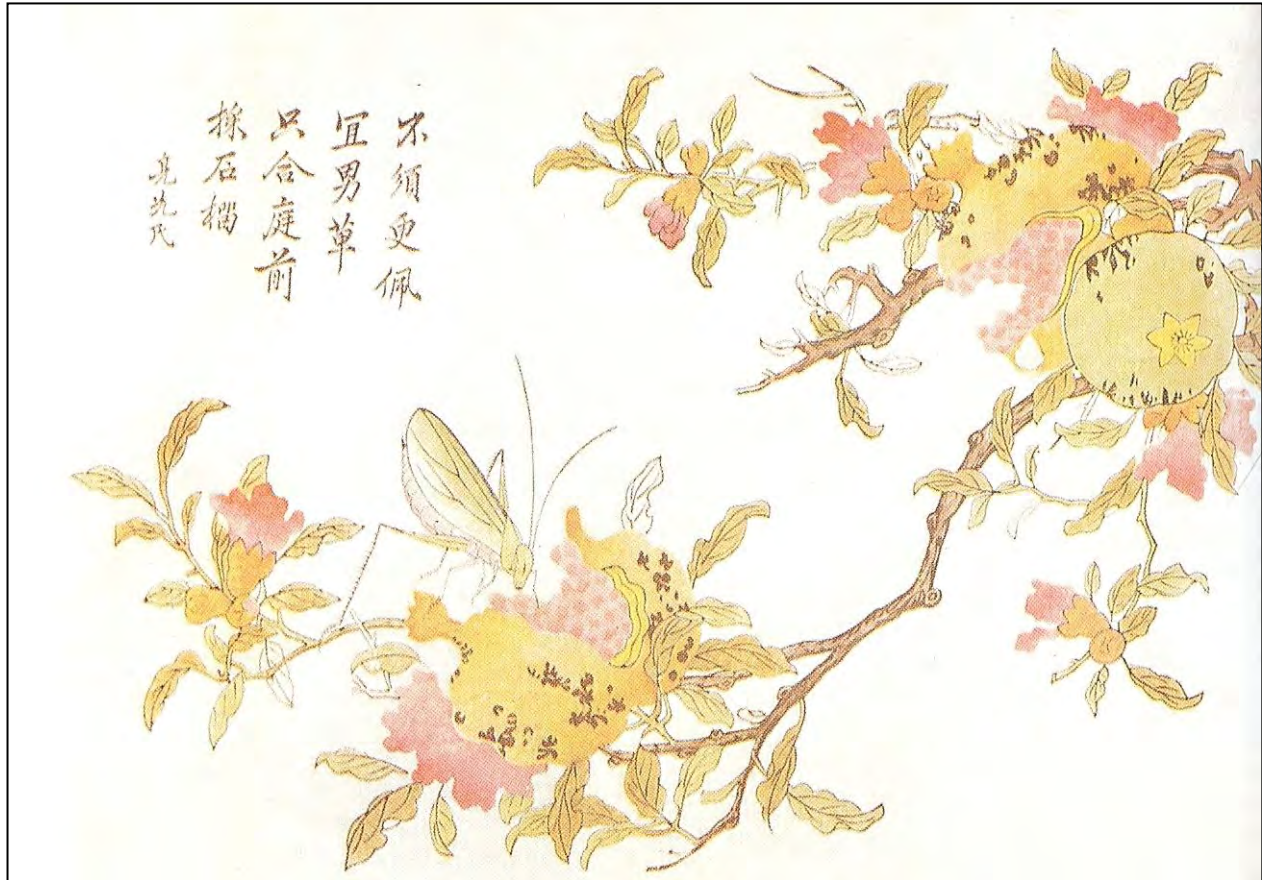


## To Chiden Is To Walk through a Door, Bowing, with Your Hands Full

Care of the altars at BZC is a quiet, meditative, and mindful way to deepen your own practice while supporting the practice of all. It is also a way to become familiar with the forms of our practice, including the details of the altar, the secrets of the keys, the locations of supplies, and many other wonderful bits of lore. This means, among other things, that you can volunteer to chiden on Saturday morning or during sesshin, or step up like an expert to keep things going when our community practice gives a little hiccup. It's great to have these tools in your kit!

To stay up to date, you commit to a week of daily altar care, usually twice a year. The checklist of tasks can be completed in about 30 minutes, at a time of your choosing, Monday – Friday, whenever the zendo is not in use. Some chidens add a few minutes private zazen for the perfect break in a busy week.

If you'd like to be included on the 2013 roster, call Catharine Lucas, head chiden, at 510.526.3100, or e-mail to [clucas@earthlink.net](mailto:clucas@earthlink.net).



*Pomegranates on a branch, a color woodblock print on paper,  
17th century, Ming Dynasty of China.*

### Note From a New Chiden

Dear Catharine,

So glad my first essay into chiden practice passed muster. Thank you for your gracious reception of my beginner's effort and for patient, clear instructions. Yes, I'd like to take another turn... to refresh, deepen and refine the practice. I appreciate your offering the opportunity.

I found the chiden practice intriguing, centering, detailed, demanding and utterly reflective of whatever mind I brought to it. Slowing down to provide detailed care for flowers, altar and candles, matches, water bowls, etc., slowed down my thoughts as well, to reveal an underlying transparency where intuitions and synchronicities appear and disappear on their own. It was luxurious to simply give myself over to the practice to see what would happen. And yes, the traceless stamp of that mindful activity followed me outside the gate. ~ Leavenworth Jackson

## Plum hunting in December

dogged silver Poppy walks with purpose  
on the brick path, bright in pre-rain gloom,  
back past the hostas  
dying down for winter, past the fanning sedge,  
irises, fescue,  
to the corner against the fence, deep in ivy  
under the plum tree  
planted so long ago now by these typing hands.  
She is one-pointed in her focus, standing  
hock deep in the lovely leaves, sniffing,  
peering, rooting. Minutes pass. A statue beneath a tree,  
wading in green waves.

Then—triumph! She trots high, prancing, quick,  
quick, all the way to the edge of the deck,  
where she drops her treasure—a purple fruit  
entirely out of season, gleaming, perfect,  
her jewel found hiding underneath oceanic ivy.

*Look! Mine! Captured! Beauty!*

And now it's gone, with only a moving jaw to mark its passing.

- Kate Gilpin



## Office Manager's Corner

### Please Check Your Contact Info for the 2013 Directory

Sangha members are asked to look in the community room for the draft edition of our 2013 directory, starting on New Year's Eve, going through January 12. We need your help verifying and correcting addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc. We plan to ask you to check off your name, and to tell us whether you would be willing to get the final Directory as a pdf attachment to an e-mail, for printing out yourself. "Going greener" is a stepwise process, and this is one possible way for the sangha to explore.

## Dharma Dialogue Overheard At Rohatsu

The sesshin director noticed one of the participants offered back a cinnamon stick found in his bowl during the head server's kentan rounds. The director later engaged him with the comment, "I thought cinnamon was vegetarian." After a pause the participant responded, "It is, but its bark is worse than its bite!"

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**  
Third Friday of the month before each issue

**February deadline:**  
**Friday, January 18, 8:00 pm**

**Berkeley Zen Center**  
**1931 Russell Street**  
**Berkeley, CA 94703**