



# Berkeley Zen Center



March-April 2017 Newsletter

## Women's Sesshin (Sunday, March 5)

Every year, the women of BZC (and beyond) get together for a day-long sitting. Sometimes we discuss gender issues in our lives and sometimes we just enjoy each other's company. This year's sitting will be led by long-time member and practice leader Karen Sundheim. The day will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m., and will include zazen, lecture, and discussion. Lunch will be bag lunch. Cost is \$20. Sign up as usual on the bulletin board, or send an email to the sesshin director, Laurie Senauke (lauries@kushiki.org), and she will sign you up. Also contact her for more information. We hope to see many of you there!

## One-Day Sesshin (Saturday, March 25)

Hozan Sensei will lead a one-day sesshin on Saturday, March 25, from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. We encourage old and new sangha members to participate. Please sign up on the patio bulletin board by Wednesday morning, March 22, after zazen. If this is your first sesshin *(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

### March

#### Founders' Ceremonies

Thursday, 3/2, 6:20pm  
Friday, 3/3, 6:40am

#### Women's Sesshin

Sunday, 3/5

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 3/11, 9:40am

#### Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting

Tuesday, 3/21

#### One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 3/25

### April

#### Buddha's Birthday

Saturday, 4/1

#### Founders' Ceremonies

Monday, 4/3, 6:20pm  
Tuesday, 4/4, 6:40am

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 4/8, 9:40am

#### 20s & 30s Mountains & Rivers

Friday 4/14 to Sunday 4/16

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 4/16

#### One-Day Sesshin/Open Practice Period

Saturday, 4/29

*(One-Day Sesshin, continued from page 1)* 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 "March sesshin" in the mail slot in the courtyard laundry room door or mail to the BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703.

If you will be attending a BZC sesshin for the first time, you will need to fill out a *Sesshin Information Form* to let us know of health problems, food allergies, or other physical problems requiring accommodation. For this and other questions, please contact the sesshin director, Peter Overton, at [SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com](mailto:SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com).

### **Sangha Potluck & Budget Meeting (Tuesday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.)**

All members and friends are warmly invited to share potluck offerings of delicious food which will be immediately followed by discussion of the Board-recommended 2017 BZC budget. The budget is our treasurer's best effort to project the financial goals and realities for BZC's current year. After discussion, the budget will be submitted for approval by those in attendance. Your presence at this meeting makes a difference. A sign-up sheet for the potluck is posted on the patio bulletin board.

### **One-Day Sesshin: Opening of Spring Practice Period (Saturday, April 29)**

Our annual spring practice period will begin with a one-day sesshin on Saturday, April 29, from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend. If this is your first sesshin at BZC, it is strongly recommended that you first

participate in a full Saturday program and that you speak with the sesshin director. The fee is \$35 and is due by April 26. All details will be on the sesshin sign-up sheet.

Our practice period Shuso entering ceremony will take place at 4:00 p.m. All practice period participants should make it a priority to attend the entering ceremony and support the Shuso.

After you've signed up for the sesshin, please complete a *Sesshin Information Form* and place it in the sesshin director's box. (If you completed one for a prior sesshin, there is no need for another one unless information has changed.)

If you have any questions, contact the sesshin director, Ken Powelson, at [SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com](mailto:SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com).

### **Board Appreciation of Rent Committee: New Policy Adopted**

The Board would like to express great appreciation to members of the rent committee for the time and energy they have given in numerous meetings over the past months to examine the issue of implementing rent increases for our residents. The committee included: Stan Dewey, Mark Copithorne, Paul Ridgway, Tamar Enoch, Bruce Coughran, Ron Nestor, and chairperson Ed Herzog. The Board gratefully acknowledges the special contributions made by Ed. As committee chairperson, he patiently and evenhandedly guided discussions around financial issues that were both complex and at times much charged with emotion. This is not the first time that Ed has headed up an ad hoc Board committee, and his commitment to thoroughness and fairness is seen and appreciated by all of us who serve on the Board.

The rent committee's recommendations

were presented to the Board at its February 5 meeting. After detailed consideration of proposals outlined in the report, the Board moved to adopt a new rental structure. The complete policy will be posted on the patio bulletin board, but here is a summary statement:

The BZC Board has decided on a policy for setting rents for BZC residents. Rents for current rent-paying residents will be increased to the Berkeley Rent Board's lawful ceiling in a two-step process, with half the increases beginning April 1, 2017, and the balance of the increases commencing January 1, 2018. Thereafter, rents will increase yearly by the Annual General Adjustment (usually between 1% and 2%) allowed by the Rent Board. Percentage adjustments will be made for those apartments in which residents occupy only a portion of the full apartment listed with the Rent Board. New rents for vacant apartments — which are not controlled by the Berkeley Rent law — will be set on a case-by-case basis by the BZC Board. This policy also includes a procedure for modification of rents based on individual circumstances of hardship.

If you have any questions regarding the new rent policy, please direct them to Board treasurer Walter Kieser.

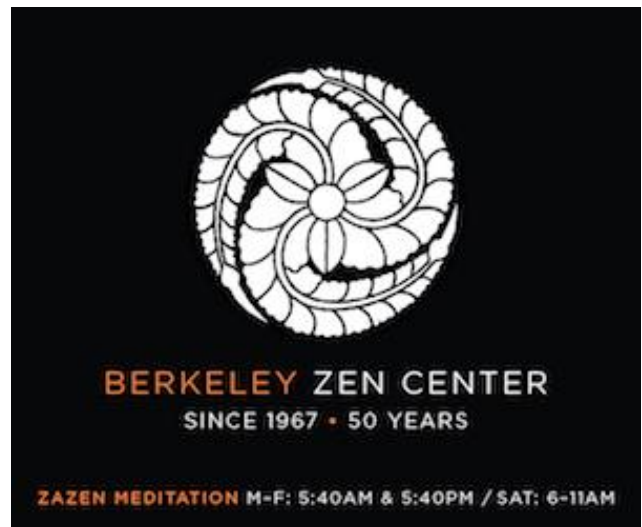
### **A Class on *The Buddha's Teachings on Social and Communal Harmony***

Suzuki Roshi said: "When the whole cloth is woven completely in various colorful threads, what you see are not pieces of thread; what you see is one whole cloth." The respected translator and editor Bhikkhu Bodhi recently published *The Buddha's Teachings on Social and Communal Harmony* (Wisdom, 2016), a collection drawn entirely from the Pali suttas. Hozan Alan Senauke worked on this with Bhikkhu Bodhi, contributing a prologue and epilogue to the book.

In these difficult days, social and communal harmony have never been needed more. Hozan Sensei will lead a five-session class on selections from this book on Mondays from March 20 to April 17. The class will be held in the BZC community room, from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m. The class fee is \$50. Materials will be available in advance and books will be available from the BZC book table.

### **BZC Publicity**

The BZC Board approved a purchase of advertising on the online newspaper, *Berkeleyside*. The ad (see below) will run for six months from March through August at about 40,000 page views a month — a fraction of their total traffic. Readers who click on the ad will be taken to BZC's homepage. Feedback or questions about the advertising can be shared with Mark Copithorne (copithorne@hotmail.com).



## 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 a.m., led by BZC member and Music Together teacher Ryk Groetchen. See details (*including a handy new sign-up form!*) at our section of the BZC website:

[www.berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice](http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org/family-practice). You may use that website form, or send an email to [ryk@groetchen.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 Hopper ([marie\\_hopper@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net)) or Laurie ([lauries@kushiki.org](mailto:lauries@kushiki.org)).

### Family Practice Schedule

March 4:	Family Practice
March 11:	Family Practice
March 18:	Family Practice
March 25:	No program — sesshin
April 1:	<b>Buddha's Birthday</b>
April 8:	Family Practice
April 15:	Family Practice
April 22:	Family Practice
April 29:	No program — sesshin

**Please RSVP for ALL family activities. Thank you.**

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

March 4	Sojun Roshi
March 11	Meghan Collins
March 18	Raul Moncayo
March 25	Hozan Sensei (sesshin)
April 1	Hozan Sensei
April 8	Sojun Roshi
April 15	Daijaku Judith Kinst
April 22	Mary Mocine
April 29	Sojun Roshi (open practice period)

### Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

March 3	Fri 5:50pm	zazen refresher w/Sojun
March 6	Mon 6:25am	open discussion
March 13	Mon 6:25am	Amy Leung
March 20	Mon 6:25am	tba
March 27	Mon 6:25am	Karl Shoenberger
April 3	Mon 6:25am	open discussion
April 7	Fri 5:50pm	tba
April 10	Mon 6:25am	Charlie Ware
April 17	Mon 6:25am	tba
April 24	Mon 6:25am	Maria Winston

### Friday Tea Time

The Friday Tea now begins 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 question and discuss dharma practice while sipping tea and opening our body and mind to harmony and lightness of being.

### 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

## Cutting the Cat

According to Buddha Dharma there is something called the law of circularity. Here we might call it the law of action and reaction, or the swing of the pendulum. To illustrate the law of circularity we have the children building their “sand castles,” their dream societies. Then all at once a giant demon blows in on the wind and destroys everything, all their hard work. When the demon is gone they come out of hiding and build it up all over again, when along comes a demon and so on, over and over. . . . In a dualistic world every action has an opposite, equal reaction. Theoretically actions of these two sides can be held in equilibrium because they are the two sides of one thing and cannot exist without each other. This is why war is futile. We cut off our nose to spite our face. As much as we would like the other side to just go away, it will not because it (the enemy) is us. The right exists because of the left. The left exists because of the right. The pendulum has swung to the right and the children of the left are begging for their lives.

One day Master Nansen came across the monks on two sides of the monastery arguing about which side had the rights to the cat. He said that if someone could come up with an appropriate word he would save the cat, otherwise he would cut it in two. Nobody could say anything, so he cut it in two. (We are not convinced that he actually did that.) Much later Master Dogen said, “If I was there I would have said: Why don’t you try cutting it in one?” People, rightfully distressed, ask me what we can do with our feelings bordering on despair. How do we practice with this?

We have been handed a whopper of a koan. Dogen’s Genjo Koan, the koan of our daily life, confronts us moment by moment. Most koans are about the duality of oneness and the oneness of duality. Both Nansen and Dogen are telling and asking us something. So how do we cut the cat in one?

—Sojun

## Who Am I? What Will I Do?

Since I last gave a Way Seeking Mind talk, three years or so ago, work subsuming my life is probably the biggest change in my life. It begs several good guiding questions, some of them are: What is balance? How is time made? What is time, and how do I practice when I miss time with the sangha?

Seeing, just seeing, hearing, just hearing, the precepts arise and follow intent. Time on the cushion, just sitting. Shikantaza. As Sojun Roshi instructs: Know where my breath is. I take refuge in sangha by seeing you, hearing you in my mind’s eye, by seeing Sojun Roshi, by being available to big mind, and recognizing and letting go of small mind. All too easy to say.

It seems I get my behavior back so quickly now. I’ve been coming since 2008. I originally came as I was being diagnosed with one of the blood cancers. I sat with Sojun Roshi as a beginner wrapped in seas of ignorance and said, “I want to come sit and drain my cancer cells.” Sojun Roshi replied, “We don’t do that” (and said nothing more). I asked him, “Are you sure?” I thought, there are so many books in the library . . . surely . . . In the end I asked permission to return anyway, sure that I would

at least learn something, and so practice began for me.

In the current state of government, in the current circumstance, how do I practice? What does 45 (He may not have a name with me) mean to me? I'm quite emotional about this. So many things I value so deeply are threatened in ways I've not seen before. Organized malevolence is seemingly everywhere. I'm acutely aware of the parts of me that want them to lose, to be exposed, to get their behavior back and to suffer. I'm overwhelmed that so much that is true and right is in danger. I weep for all of us.

I loved the talks by Vicki Austin on beloved community and Susan Marvin on the Genjo Koan (my favorite), and their talks help me in all this and remind me:

—Stick close to the precepts and carry an intent for them, curate compassion and compassionate acts, watch my level of anger, which leads me to verbal violence (I am very, very angry about all this).

—Carry a focus on helping others, committing acts of kindness and compassion and working to resist. This too is refuge in sangha for me.

As I said, the Genjo Koan has captured me and is one koan that has followed me in practice. And I'm not a good koan student. I can't say I understand them much at all, though I do listen as often as I can.

I have always been captured by "Self arises and passes away in each moment." I am different in this moment, and this . . . and this. What does that mean? You can't stay in the absolute. To me, the meaning is in how do I not drag my entire history from moment to moment. If each moment ripens to liberation or attachment, what ripens? What is liberation?

In each moment, Who Am I, What Will I Do?

Each moment is both conditioned and unconditioned. It is conditioned by my history, by my emotional landscape, by everything. Each moment too is unconditioned. It arises from nothing, it is empty.

Who am I? What will I do? Each moment is fresh, except when burdened by the conditioned self, by *manas*. In each moment, every freedom in the universe exists, every potential in time is right now. What will I do? What will you do?

So how do I know what to do? I don't know how to know that.

—Action unfolds in each moment.

—I carry intent, I practice behaviors, and the way unfolds. I actually don't know to know what I'm going to do, but I always do something.

Remember the koan where the guy is hanging from a branch by his teeth? Along comes the inevitable annoying person who says something like "What do you think about Bodhidharma coming from the west?" (Disclaimer: I most often sit in Sojun's koan classes saying "Whut?")

Well, my question is what happened just before he's hanging from the branch. I've asked a lot of people and an answer that resonated deeply is "We don't know. He awakened there, hanging." That is so much like my life. I find myself in situations. I awaken in action which is my interest in an experiential Zen, which is kind of redundant, Zen IS experiential. What will you do?

I was once referred to as a "lost and wandering Zen student." It's true I should always show up more and study more. My words are full of heresy. Watch out!

Finally, a story. I recently traveled to Las Vegas, and what was an easy trip turned when my cab driver wanted to be aggressive about 45 being confirmed by the Electoral College. I proceeded to

verbally work him over. It really was verbal assault. I was angry and righteous. I said something particularly nasty to him as I exited the cab . . . and left my backpack in his cab. My entire life was in that bag, and I left it with someone I had just assaulted. In the end I got it back, but the lesson here is that I'm not proud of my violence. I tied myself to that person with my violence, I behaved with a small mind as if I had no practice. I showed no compassion for someone suffering enough to put us all in danger by voting for 45.

Wiping my mirror would mean apologizing to him, face to face, to acknowledge my actions in front of others and cleanse that. My intent forward is to feel that ache of poor choice and to be upright for my life and in my breath in each moment. After all, Who am I? What will I do?

—Way Seeking Mind talk by Jeff Taylor (February 2017)



*Black coffee*

Feeling sleepy on a spring day —  
black coffee  
biting your tongue.

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

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

Third Friday of the month before each  
issue. Submit items to  
[knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

May-June deadline:  
Friday, April 21

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