



Berkeley Zen Center



July-August 2019 Newsletter

Sojun's Birthday Party

On Saturday, July 20, we're having a party to celebrate Sojun's 90th birthday!

The party will begin at 11:30 a.m. (right after the lecture), with food, live music, and a few offerings of appreciation and humorous reminiscing about our beloved abbot.

BZC will provide main dishes, birthday cake, and beverages. If you would like to bring a signature side dish to round out the offering, please contact Maria Winston (mariawinston@yahoo.com) or Laurie Senauke (lauriesenauke@sonic.net).

Note that we will not be having the usual early program that Saturday — rather, we'll start with work period at 8:30. (There will, however, be informal zazen at 6:00 a.m.)

The party will also feature exhibits at various locations around BZC representing aspects of the Thousand Hands History Project (see article on page 2).

We will also be offering an all-new, long-sleeved BZC logo T-shirt and everyone's favorite BZC aprons (see illustrations in our previous newsletter) for \$25 each. If you would like to preorder a T-shirt and/or an apron, please contact Laurie Senauke for details.



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

July

Zendo Holiday
Thursday, 7/4

Founders' Ceremonies
Friday, 7/5, 6:40am
Friday, 7/5, 6:20pm

Zazenkai (Just Sitting Day)
Sunday, 7/7

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 7/13, 9:40am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 7/14

Sojun's Birthday Party
Saturday, 7/20, 11:30am

Lay Entrustment Ceremony
Monday, 7/22, 5:40am

August

Mountains & Rivers Sesshin
Thursday 8/1 through Sunday 8/4

One-Day Sesshin
8/3

Founders' Ceremonies
Monday, 8/5, 6:20pm
Tuesday, 8/6, 6:40am

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 8/17, 9:40am

Zendo Holiday
8/31

Thousand Hands History Project

The Board has set a \$20,000 fundraising goal this year to cover the initial costs of preserving an archival record of BZC teaching legacy and history. Many of you recently received a letter detailing this exciting project.

We are taking on the task of making this legacy widely available: digitized, indexed, searchable, and archived so that it may encourage and enlighten future Zen students. The first step is digitizing more than 2000 of Sojun Roshi's talks (and the BZC talks of other teachers) at an estimated cost of \$26,000. We invite your contributions and participation.

Lay Entrustment

On Monday, July 22, beginning at 5:40 a.m., Sojun Roshi will confer Lay Entrustment on Seishi Tetsudo Ross Blum and Sentei Kokyo Susan Marvin. The ceremony will include informal dharma inquiry with Ross and Susan, and a celebratory reception in the community room will follow.

[This ceremony, originally announced for May 6, has been rescheduled to the above date.]

One-Day Sesshin

Sojun Roshi will lead a one-day sesshin on Saturday, August 3, 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, July 31, 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 "August 2019

sesshin" in the mail slot in the courtyard laundry room door or mail to the BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703.

Those attending for the first time will need to fill out a Sesshin Information Form to let us know of health problems, food allergies, or physical issues requiring accommodation. Please request this form by contacting the sesshin director, Gary Artim, at SesshinDirectorBZC@gmail.com.

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin

Signups for BZC's annual Mountains & Rivers Sesshin are live and we're looking for participants. The sesshin, led by Andrea Ryushin Thach, will take place Thursday, August 1, through Sunday, August 4. A mandatory orientation meeting will be held the preceding Tuesday (July 30) and payments, signups, and cancellations are all due by July 20.

The sesshin will take place at Point Reyes Coast Camp and will include alternate routes to the campsite to accommodate varying needs. The format follows BZC sesshin forms to the extent possible, including long periods of silence, sitting zazen, shared responsibilities and sesshin positions. If you are new to backpacking or to sesshins, please speak with the director, Kelsey Hermann. People new to zazen are encouraged to attend a Saturday morning at BZC to get a feel for our forms.

This sesshin is a wonderful way to connect with other practitioners and experience practice in the wilderness. If you or someone you know is interested in attending, please fill out an application at the following link: <http://bit.ly/2JVZimG>. You may also email the director at backpacksesshin@gmail.com. We hope to see many old and new faces there!

Nominations for the BZC Board

Every year the sangha elects three of six members-at-large to two-year terms to the BZC Board. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Elections take place in October and the new term starts in January 2020. The Board will present its three nominees at the all-sangha potluck on Tuesday evening, September 24.

This year the BZC Board is pleased to announce that three current at-large Board members will be running for second terms. They are: Rondi Saslow, Gary Artim, and Tom Painter.

Other nominations can be made by sangha members at the all-sangha potluck from the floor. Some of the various skills the board seeks in nominees (not all in one person) are: oral and written communication, organization, information technology, money management, fundraising, engineering, building maintenance, and nonprofit law. Nominees should be members of BZC. Board members attend ten Sunday morning meetings a year and an all-day retreat in the first part of the year, and serve on at least one of the working Board committees: Finance, Buildings & Grounds, Development, Electronic Communication & Social Media, Archive, and Elections & Nominations.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, or know someone who you would like to nominate, please contact a member of the Elections and Nominations Committee: Ed Herzog (edherzog@comcast.net), Carol Paul (carolpaul@yahoo.com), or Rondi Saslow (rsaslow@pacbell.net). Please include any relevant information about why you think the person would be a good BZC Board member.

Prison Chaplaincy Book Event

On Friday, August 2, at 5:40 p.m. in the zendo (the time of our usual First Friday talk), we will have a special presentation and book signing event with Buddhist teacher, scholar, and writer Cuong Lu. His book *The Buddha in Jail* is a collection of 52 vignettes—stories and teachings about Cuong Lu's six years as a prison chaplain. Cuong discovered that when the men inside allowed themselves to feel their pain—including remorse from committing crimes—knowing and feeling the truth became a source of strength for them. And when the inmates felt listened to, understood, and not judged, it transformed their sense of who they are, and as a result changed their attitudes and their behavior.

This book is not just about the prisoners. It's about all of us. We're each caught in distorted and limiting ideas of ourselves. We don't believe freedom and happiness are attainable. But when we come to believe in ourselves, we discover the freedom and happiness already within.

Cuong Lu will give a short presentation, answer questions, and be available to sign books. If you would like to preorder a book, email Laurie at lauriesenauke@sonic.net.



Abbot Sojun Mel Weitsman (preceptor), Ellen Levin, Alex Roehrkasse, Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke (preceptor), Jean Selkirk (sewing teacher), Ryushin Andrea Thach (jisha), Hannah Meara (sewing assistant/jisha).

Lay Ordination

On Saturday, June 15, two members of the Berkeley Zen Center sangha received Lay Ordination (*Zaike Tokudo*) from Sojun Roshi and Hozan Sensei.

This ceremony takes place once a year at BZC and is a significant rite of passage for each participant and for the whole sangha. We have the feeling that we are all together witnessing and participating as the ordinees receive Buddha's precepts. We welcome these ordinees into the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha and Suzuki Roshi's family.

Hozan Sensei's student:

Ellen Levin

Myô Getsu Shô Dô

Wondrous Moon Illuminates the Way

Sojun Roshi's student:

Alex Roehrkasse

Kai Ki Jun I

Open Vessel Pure-hearted Intention



Congratulations to our 31st BZC shuso/head student, Carol Paul (Shiken Seigetsu: Clear Intention/Serene Moon), shown here with Sojun Roshi and Hozan Sensei following her shuso hossen on June 23, 2019.

Up a Tree

The faithful girl left home at night to search
in the forest
for the tallest tree; from the top she would see
all the world clearly and things as it is.

Thorns bloodied her arms and legs, rocks
pierced her feet,
she struggled until she found the tree.
Her limbs useless, she climbed with her eyes,
her ears, her nose, her lips, her tongue,
her teeth, her heart, her lungs, her breasts,
her loins

all the way to the top. Then she saw things
clearly as it is and heard
a voice down below, a monk in brown robes,
calling up to her,
"Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?"

The faithful girl laughed when wings sprouted
from her shoulders and lifted her into the sky,
she called to him as she flew higher,
"Because they could!"

— Benji poem by Maria Winston
at Shuso Ceremony for Carol Paul

Caregivers Support Gathering

Sangha Support is offering a gathering for caregivers (whether helping someone nearby or at a distance) on Sunday, August 11 4:00–5:30 p.m. in the Senauke home at 1933 Russell St. at BZC.

For our gathering, there will be the usual (unusual!) guided meditation by Laurie Senauke, time for checking in, and space to share ideas for how your caregiving practice can be met with kindness for all, including yourself.

Thank you for helping another person do things that they used to do for themselves; we recognize your courage in navigating this challenging practice.

For more information, please contact Debbie: DebbieResearcher@gmail.com or 503-505-4282.

Oryoki Training

Oryoki training is available with Sue Oehser by appointment during July and August. Please contact her at 510-339-0243 (voice, not text) or soehser@earthlink.net to schedule a time to learn or fine-tune your oryoki practice.

Briefer oryoki instruction is also offered before breakfast at all full Saturday morning programs, except during sesshins.

Friday Tea Time

Every Friday at 5:00–5:30 p.m. (just before the afternoon zazen period) BZC welcomes members and friends for tea, tasty treats, and informal discussion, hosted by a rotating team of BZC senior students. Weather permitting, we meet in the garden; otherwise, in the community room.

Family Practice at BZC

Our Family Practice program is dormant at this time. Please direct inquiries and suggestions to Laurie at lauriesenauke@sonic.net.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

July 6	Hozan Alan Senauke
July 13	Meghan Collins
July 20	Sojun Roshi
July 27	Denkei Raul Moncayo
August 3	Sojun Roshi (sesshin)
August 10	Gerry Oliva
August 17	Penelope Thompson
August 24	Peter Overton
August 31	Zendo holiday

Friday and Monday Talk Schedule

July 1	Mon 6:25am	Open Discussion
July 5	Fri 5:40pm	Mary Beth Lamb
July 8	Mon 6:25am	Dean Bradley
July 15	Mon 6:25am	Karen Sundheim
July 22	Mon 5:40am	Lay Entrustment
July 29	Mon 6:25am	David Copithorne
August 2	Fri 5:40pm	Cuong Lu (book event)
August 5	Mon 6:25am	Open Discussion
August 12	Mon 6:25am	Helen Cheng
August 19	Mon 6:25pm	Ryushin Andrea Thach
August 26	Mon 6:25am	Margret Wotkyns

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

There Is Nothing Like Satori

Linda Hess & Co. at BZC Skit Night

To the tune of "There Is Nothing Like a Dame" from Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*.

Video of the skit night performance: <https://www.facebook.com/linda.hess.1460/videos/10161915104145374/?t=0>

We got bells and we got drums,
we got mudras for our thumbs,
we got zabutons to prostrate on and zafus for our bums,
we got full moon ceremonies and we know how to
repent.

What ain't we got? Enlightenment.

We got altars, we got flowers,
we sit motionless for hours,
all those Theravada meditators can't believe our powers,
we are free of most attachments and we hardly ever
cling.

What ain't we got? Awakening.

Our tatami mats and buddha statues are exquisite.
But there is something because of whose absence we
remain discontent. What is it?

There is nothing like kenshō,
nothing in the world,
there's no thrill in the zendō
that is anything like kenshō.

We do lots of perfect bows,
we take lots of noble vows,
we leap up for morning zazen and we try hard not to
drowse,
we hang by our teeth from treetops, we admit we don't
have souls.

Zen master says: Go wash your bowls.

We gave up incense so no sentient being would have to
breathe air that was smoky.
Yet we didn't attain *anuttara samyak sambodhi* despite
our incredible skill at oryoki!

There is nothing like satori,
nothing in the world.
There's no mountaintop of glory
like a certified Zen satori.

Stand forever in gassho,
Buddha's not impressed.
Even if you are shuso,
you are nothing without kensho.

You have got a rakusu,
it is green or it is blue.
All I've got to say to you
is mu mu mu mu mu.

You have studied all the koans and you understand
causation.

What ain't you got? Illumination.

You may have an okesa brown or black and a ton of
compassion.

But without that one unsurpassable, ungraspable,
ineffable thing all your traditional costumes are
nothing but fashion.

There is nothing to be gained,
nothing in the world,
it will never be explained
even after you get ordained.

There is nothing you can know,
nothing in the world,
there is no place you can go
to acquire a Zen kensho.

There are no teas like kensho,
no dharanis like kensho,
you can't squeeze a kensho,
and this is not always so.
You can tell a Zen story,
but that ain't no satori.

So just keep counting one to ten,
Then count from one to ten again.
Forget your greed, you'll never succeed at Zen!

Spring Practice Period, 2019

*By the Serene Moon's light,
High in the tree,
Hanging by her teeth,
The Shuso – Shiken Seigetsu –
Speaks the Dharma
And falls into Buddha's Arms.*

The Berkeley Zen Center community completed our 31st practice period with a joyous shuso ceremony at the close of a five-day sesshin on Sunday, June 23. For six weeks we sat zazen, studied, drank tea, and worked with the support of shuso Carol Paul – Shiken Seigetsu/Clear Intention, Serene Moon. Carol's steadfast sitting and excellent talks showed us the path.

Along the way we studied the Great Matter of birth and death, digging into pertinent writings by Zen Master Dogen, koans, and our personal experiences – our joys and sorrows.

I am deeply grateful to all of you who threw yourselves into this undivided activity. Deep thanks to Carol. Also to her benji/assistant Maria Winston. And I am particularly grateful to Sojun Roshi for inviting me to lead the practice period. It is always an honor to practice with all of you here.

Hozan Alan Senauke

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
is the Third Friday of the month before each
issue. Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

September–October 2019 deadline:
Friday, August 16.

Berkeley Zen Center
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