



# Berkeley Zen Center



January–February 2022 Newsletter

## Reopening

As we have seen for the last two years, BZC's reopening plans are contingent on the volatile course of the pandemic. Once again, as infection rates were diminishing a new variant—this time Omicron—has flared up. It is rampant in Europe and elsewhere. Almost inevitably it will take hold in the U.S. So if or when we do reopen, if the virus and its variants take hold we will have to close down once more. In mid-January (date to be determined), there will be an all-sangha meeting to discuss the reopening process. Thank you for your patience and your practice.

Consulting with the Coordinating Team, the Practice Committee, and the Opening Transition group, we are hoping to open the zendo for 6:00 a.m. in-person zazen Monday through Friday beginning on January 31. Whenever we do open, zendo attendance will be limited to roughly 25 people, socially distanced. Zazen and service will be simultaneously broadcast on Zoom.

Several factors have led us to reconsider our previous plans for an earlier opening date. The infection rate from several variants is still in flux, and it is still not clear how effective the various vaccines and boosters (Continued...)



### Affirmation of Welcome

Walking the path of liberation, we express our intimate connection with all beings. Berkeley Zen Center is a sangha of Buddhist practitioners drawing from the Bay Area's many spiritual and cultural communities. Just as Shakyamuni Buddha welcomed people of all backgrounds to practice, here at BZC our activities embrace diversity, and are available to people of every color, every way of life and ethnic background, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and ability. May all beings practice in safety and equality, realizing our true nature.

## B Z C S C H E D U L E

### January

**Zendo Holiday**  
Saturday, 1/1

**Sojun Roshi Annual Memorial**  
Friday, 1/7, 7:30am

**One-Day Sesshin**  
Saturday, 1/15

**Board Meeting**  
Sunday, 1/16, 9:00-11:00am

**MLK Neighborhood Engagement**  
Monday, 1/17

### February

**Founders' Ceremony**  
Saturday, 2/5

**One-Day Sesshin**  
Saturday, 2/19

**Note: BZC continues to offer many other events and activities, but during the pandemic these have mostly been via Zoom and have tended not to be planned as far in advance as usual. For more complete and up-to-date information, please check the BZC website and subscribe to BZC's community listserv.**

*(Reopening, continued from page 1)*

will prove to be for Omicron. Also, it will take at least two weeks post-holiday to determine whether a surge is created following gatherings and travel, with the resulting risks of exposure and infection. So we will wait at least until January 31.

Our present proposed requirements for attending include:

- Vaccination *and* booster (when eligible). Please send a photo or scan of your vaccination card to Office Manager Helen Cheng at [bzcofficeanager@gmail.com](mailto:bzcofficeanager@gmail.com). When you receive a booster, update this information with the Office Manager.
- Masks are currently required for all indoor activities at BZC, which includes zazen, service, sewing, etc., commensurate with the State requirements.
- A monitor will be at the zendo door, who will check the list of vaccination-registered members and help you find a seat.

The 7:30 a.m. and 5:40 p.m. zazen periods will continue as Zoom-only events. For now, the Monday morning program of 7:30 zazen and 8:00 a.m. student talk will also continue to be Zoom only, as will the Saturday program. We are working out the more complicated technical requirements for hybrid (zendo and Zoom) activities that would apply to Monday morning talks, Saturday lectures, and some ceremonies.

### **One-Day Sesshins**

Abbot Hozan will lead our first two sesshins of the year on Saturday, January 15, and on Saturday, February 19. The January sesshin will be on Zoom and will take place from 7:40 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The February sesshin's format is yet to be determined. Taking the time to

gather body and mind after holiday and year-end activities is a sound way to begin the new year. We encourage sangha members and friends to participate. Please sign up at the BZC website by the Wednesday before the sesshin date.

When paying for either sesshin, please indicate on your check or in the PayPal note field that your donation is for the "January Sesshin" or the "February Sesshin." The suggested donation is \$15 for each sesshin, or whatever you can afford. Mail a check to BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703, or pay through the website using the "Sits/Classes" tab on the Donate page. Please consider a donation to Berkeley Zen Center above the suggested fee to help us maintain our practice.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the sesshin director, Blake Tolbert, at [sesshin@berkeleyzencenter.org](mailto:sesshin@berkeleyzencenter.org).

### **MLK Neighborhood Engagement**

On January 17 we will be commemorating the MLK holiday again this year by having a special program at BZC. On Zoom, we will have a 7:30 a.m. zazen period followed by a short talk by Hozan on the legacy and Dharma of Dr. King. We will then have the opportunity to reflect on these themes and explore ways BZC can engage in partnership with our neighbors on issues of diversity and inclusion. This part of the program will end by 8:45.

This will be followed at 9:30 by an in-person community service project where we can assist in the upkeep of our neighborhood, particularly focusing, as we have in the past, on the often neglected end of our block. We'll let our neighbors know of our plans and they are welcome to join if they wish. Details of this day's activities will be shared on our listserv.



### Great Congratulations

Four BZC members received jukai from Abbot Hozan and Ikushin Gerry Oliva on Saturday, November 6—our first such ceremony in more than two years. *Jukai* literally means receiving/granting the precepts. In Suzuki Roshi's tradition jukai is synonymous with *zaike tokudo* or lay/home-dweller's ordination. In this ceremony, one receives the sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, a lineage document with a new Buddhist name, and a rakusu or robe, which is the Buddha's clothing.

Gerry gave the precepts to Sandeep Lehil and Kabir Nabi. Hozan gave them to Sam Melton and Jonathan Koltz. Here are our friends' new names:

Sam Melton—Jiryu Ando (Compassionate Dragon/Easeful Way)

Sandeep Lehil—Kyoto Tokushu (Abiding Light/Devoted Practice)

Kabir Nabi—Kosei Gendo (Ancient Spirit/Manifesting the Way)

Jonathan Koltz—Hokai Gendo (Dharma Sea/Profound [or Subtle] Way)

Special thanks to sewing teacher Jean Selkirk and to Hannah Meara for guiding these students through the long process leading to jukai. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas everywhere rejoice!

### Lay Ordination Sewing for 2022

Sewing your rakusu in preparation for Lay Ordination and receiving the precepts at the end of BZC's spring practice period is an opportunity to deepen your practice and relationship with the sangha. Each year, sewing class students engage in the practice of sewing and studying the precepts together. This is how they prepare themselves to receive a rakusu/robe and a dharma name from their teacher. The sangha celebrates and supports these new bodhisattvas, affirming their aspiration for continuous practice.

Sewing classes start in January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher for permission to participate. If you are interested in participating this year, as soon as possible, please speak with Abbot Hozan (in dokusan, by phone, or Zoom) or one of BZC's brown-robe teachers or green-rakusu teachers. After you have spoken with your teacher, contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk ([sewingteacher.bzc@gmail.com](mailto:sewingteacher.bzc@gmail.com)).

### Class on the Three Doors of Liberation

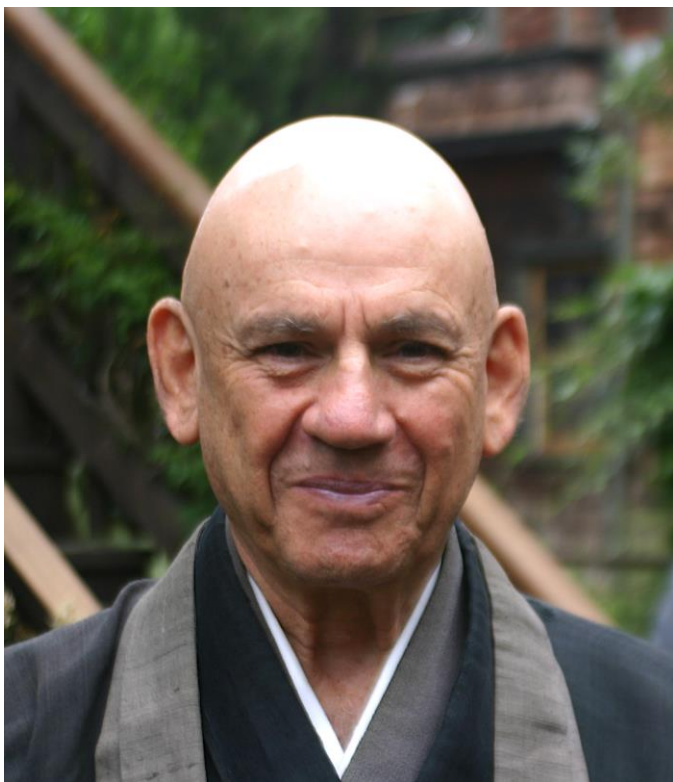
Abbot Hozan will offer a four-session online class on this classic teaching—the Three Doors of Liberation—on Thursday evenings, 7:15 to 8:45, January 13 through February 3. See the BZC website for further information and for class materials.

Zen Master Yoka Genkaku's *Shodoka/Song of Enlightenment* begins with this verse:

There is the leisurely one,  
Walking the Way, beyond philosophy,  
Not avoiding fantasy, not seeking truth.  
The real nature of ignorance is the Buddha-  
nature itself;  
The empty delusory body is the very body  
of the Dharma.

These Zen verses remind us of the Three Doors

of Liberation: Emptiness, Signlessness, and Wishlessness. While we have never studied these practices in detail, Sojun gave a rich lecture on them toward the end of his life. They feature prominently in the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh and others in Theravada and Mahayana lineages. More to the point, the Three Doors of Liberation help us see the whole of our life as practice that is easeful, fluid, and ever-changing. Please join us for these classes, which will include study and reflection on our own embodiment of freedom.



### **Sojun Memorial**

On Friday morning, January 7, at 7:30 a.m. we will observe the one-year memorial for our late teacher Hakuryu Sojun Daiosho. This first annual memorial ceremony will follow the form of our annual Suzuki Roshi Memorial, which takes place on December 4.

The simple form is ten minutes of zazen, bowing, making an offering, and chanting the

Sandokai. Following that, Abbot Hozan will offer memorial verses, and all members present (on Zoom) will have an opportunity to speak to or about Sojun Roshi, or just to bow in respect.

In time, we will offer an in-person formal memorial ceremony for Sojun. As you know, the field of Sojun Roshi's teaching and the number of people who felt close to him is vast. Because of pandemic restrictions, we have not been able to find a space that could accommodate the numbers who will want to attend such a ceremony. We have been in touch with the abbots of San Francisco Zen Center and the staff at Green Gulch, and we are thinking about when and how to do this safely. Meanwhile, we hope to see you on January 7.

### **Hear! Hear! HEAR Is Here**

The Harmony, Ethics, and Reconciliation (HEAR) Committee wants to remind you that we are still here to help you deal with any rifts in the relationships among sangha members. Yes, even in a Zen community there may be disagreements, conflicts, unethical behavior, and grievances. However, the Bodhisattva Precepts, on which the BZC Ethics Guidelines are based, serve as our guide back toward right conduct, right speech, and right relationships. You can read the Guidelines on the BZC web site ([berkeleyzencenter.org/ethics-guidelines/](http://berkeleyzencenter.org/ethics-guidelines/)).

A major focus of the HEAR Committee is conflict resolution by offering sangha members a means of dealing with the inevitable disagreements that can arise when people work closely with one another.

Another purpose of the committee is to receive and hear complaints about possible violations of the ethics guidelines.

To initiate a process, you can contact any HEAR Committee member. Our initial con-

versations can be quite informal, such as a consultation about whether HEAR is the correct medium for addressing the problem, including whether there might be other steps to take first, whether one wishes to engage with the other person, and whether a formal or informal process is more appropriate. The conversations with a HEAR Committee member and the grievance processes are confidential.

As part of our mission to promote harmony, the HEAR Committee sometimes initiates interventions when we see that conflict or discord loom. We have also initiated councils or discussions in which sangha members gather to listen deeply to each other about important issues within the community. For instance, we helped facilitate the various Zoom “councils” in 2020 addressing BZC members’ concerns and hopes about the transition from Sojun as Abbot to Hozan as Abbot. In 2021 we were involved in the revision of the guidelines having to do with the BZC listserv.

The current members of the HEAR Committee are Stan Dewey (Chair), Penelope Thompson, Phillip Sherard, Gerry Oliva, Tom Painter, and Karen Sundheim. Feel free to connect with any of us if you want further information.

### Online Informal Tea with the Abbot

Beginning on Sunday, January 9, 7:00–8:00 p.m., Abbot Hozan will be offering small informal “tea gatherings.” If you are interested in participating, please email Hannah Meara: [hmeara@gmail.com](mailto:hmeara@gmail.com).

### Sewing With Heart

On Saturday, December 11, BZC’s sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk—Mountain Moon/Virtuous Path—completed her time as shuso for the first Sewing With Heart practice period. Sewing With Heart was a six-month virtual practice period for Soto Zen sewing teachers across the country and abroad. It was co-sponsored by Zen Buddhist Sewing Teachers and Everyday Zen, and organized by Shosan Victoria Austin, honoring the fifth anniversary of Blanche Hartman’s death.

Jean’s *Shuso Hossen*—a formal dharma question-and-answer ceremony—took place in the BZC zendo, with Jean taking the shuso seat and clearly meeting each question and questioner with full attention and heart. Great congratulations to Jean and to all Sewing With Heart participants!



*Jean receives a rakusu stitched by all members of the practice period*

## Remembering Peter Pfaelzer

We have lost a friend and dharma brother, Peter Pfaelzer. We grieve his passing and his absence, even as we celebrate his life and the gifts we experienced with him and hold in our heart. He was a long-time member of BZC and he valued highly the community and the practice.

Peter was deservedly proud of his professional accomplishments as an engineer and professor at SFSU. He played a central role in inventions, one of which was the creation of high-quality and affordable wheelchairs in Third World countries, using locally sourced materials. Another was a project to improve and extend the life of the San Francisco cable cars.

He dearly loved his family—his wife Coille, his stepchildren Molly and Matthew, his daughter Johanna, his son-in-law Russell, and his grandson Jasper. Peter was gifted in making heart connections with others. I remember times walking with him along Shattuck Avenue, delivering sandwiches to unhoused persons. He had a way of making contact, finding his way to connect with many. He was a great laughter and storyteller, with a curious, active mind and a very kind heart.

I also have fond memories of simply walking around Berkeley with Peter—his appreciation of the beauty of gardens and trees and architecture, and his wry gratitude for the resting benches he knew along the way as the neuropathy in his legs worsened. And I remember afternoon teas, to which he always brought six Nabolom pastries, managing each time to work his way through three or four of them.

In the last period of time, Peter's long-term struggles with depression became exacerbated, despite the courage he showed in seeking help and in experimenting with various medications and treatments. Near the end of his life, his depression seemed to block out light. As Hozan wrote in his poem for Peter: "The light of joy rises in the same heart as dark sorrow."

We hold this dear man in heart and in mind, and pray for his peaceful transition. As Hozan ends his poem, "A single pure precious drop. Welcome to the wide ocean." May it be so.

—Penelope Luminous Heart Thompson

## Parent/Guardian Dharma Study and Support Group

New in 2022! We're launching an online parent dharma group (to become in-person with childcare when Covid allows). The idea is for us to support each other in holding and growing our parenting as an expression of practice. The group will meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. The meetings are on a drop-in basis—it's not necessary to commit to coming to all meetings. Upcoming dates:

Wednesday, January 12

Wednesday, February 9

Wednesday, March 9

The theme for our first meeting is "Taking Refuge in Buddha."

If you are interested in joining us, please email Laurie Senauke at [lauriesenauke@gmail.com](mailto:lauriesenauke@gmail.com).

## Transitions

Carol Paul is replacing Gerry Oliva as BZC Coordinator.

Karen Sundheim is replacing Mary Duryee as BZC Board President.

Hannah Meara is replacing Carol Paul as BZC's Vice President.

Hannah is also replacing Carol as co-zendo manager in charge of directing ceremonies.

Genpo Alex Senauke is now the other co-zendo manager, in charge of overseeing onsite memorial and well-being services and managing the Zoom doans.

Karen Sundheim is stepping down from her role as scheduler for Saturday lecturers, Monday speakers, and zazen instructors. Ross Blum will take over the scheduling of speakers and lecturers, and Marie Hopper will take over the role of coordinating zazen instruction.

Thanks to you all for your dedication! 🙏

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

January 8:	Abbot Hozan
January 15:	Abbot Hozan
January 22:	Hannah Meara
January 29:	Ryushin Andrea Thach
February	All February lectures TBA

### Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

January 3:	Open Discussion
January 10:	Nick Robinson
January 17:	MLK Day program (see p. 2)
January 24:	Jim Erb
January 31:	Dean Bradley
February	All February talks TBA

### Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

January 7	Mauro Sifuentes
February 4	TBA

## Sheltering-in-Place Schedule

BZC is continuing to offer all programs on the Zoom platform. To take part in any of these public programs, go to the BZC website—[www.berkeleyzencenter.org](http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org)—and then click the “Enter the Zendo Now” link.

### Zazen Monday–Friday:

- 6:00–6:40 a.m.
- 7:30–8:10 a.m.
- 5:40–6:20 p.m.

(See Calendar for special Monday morning schedule.)

### Chanting for All Who Are Suffering:

Tuesdays, 8:15–8:45 a.m.

### Well-Being Service:

Wednesdays, 8:10 a.m.

### Wednesday Night Drop-In:

See BZC website for details.

### Saturday Program:

Zendo opens: 8:30 a.m.

Zazen: 8:40–9:20

Service: 9:20–9:30

Kinhin/break: 9:30–9:40

Zazen: 9:40–10:10

Lecture: 10:15–11:15

**Zazen Instruction** is offered every Saturday from 8:40–9:20 a.m., but via a different link. Go to the BZC website and click “Zazen Instruction.”

# The Dharma of Listening and Speaking

## (Part 2)

*Who is the person who desires life, who seeks days of goodness?  
Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from deceitful speech.  
Shun evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

(from Psalm 34)

*The meaning is not in the words,  
yet it responds to the inquiring impulse.*  
(from Master Tozan's "Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi")

As I wrote last month, in such contentious times our public and private words can wound or heal. When we speak unskillfully our words can be like an arrow loosed. Once released, this arrow cannot be called back. Where it strikes, there is a wound. Even where there is healing between people, and even where the best of intentions are at play, there can also be scars. Intention and impact fit together "like front and back foot in walking." We see this in our relationships, in society, and in sangha. Last month I addressed hearing and listening. This month I speak about speaking.

Buddhism has clear practices of Right Speech—*samma vacca*—the third step on the Eightfold Path. In the Pali Canon (SN 45.8), the Buddha mentions four qualities of Right Speech:

What is right speech? Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, and from idle chatter: This is called right speech.

Three of the ten Bodhisattva Precepts warn about harmful speech—Precepts 4, 6, and 7:

I vow to refrain from false speech.

I vow not to slander.

I vow not to praise self at the expense of others.

Thich Nhat Hanh folds these into his Fourth Mindfulness Training: "Deep Listening and Loving Speech":

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and to relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I vow to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain, and not to criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break. I will make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.



Arising from the silence of zazen, inevitably we have to say something. We will say something, even if we write it in a note or speak with gestures. Again, the Buddha instructs us about what kind of words are appropriate. He says we should speak words that are true, useful, timely, and beneficial or motivated by lovingkindness.

Now, a Buddha, with powers of omniscience, would not have to guess about these qualities—his or her insight would be sufficient. But for those of us aspiring to the Buddha Way here in saṃsāra, these four conditions of speech can be elusive. If I know my friend well, I might be able to make a good guess about what she might receive as true, useful, timely, and beneficial. And I might guess wrong. If I am speaking with someone I don't know or with whom I already have conflict, it is likely we will disagree on one or more of these points.

So, is there ever a right time to speak? Are words ever completely true? When we speak, we take a leap into the unknown, and that is okay. It is no different from anything else we do. It is important to clarify our intentions as best we can. Still, we cannot know the impact of our words until they have been spoken and heard. Intention and impact are interdependent. Perhaps silence is better. But there is so much joy and connection in the play of words. I can't easily give up such human pleasure.

I leave you with a recommendation. We can learn to ask questions before making assertions. Sometimes I might lose myself in the assertion of "my truth." I'm not alone in that habit. Better to ask questions and create dialogue, remembering that the meaning "responds to the inquiring impulse." Try it out.

—Hozan Alan Senauke  
December 2021

*(Part 1 is in the previous newsletter.)*

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

for the March–April issue is  
*Friday, February 18.*

Please submit items to  
[knabb@bopsecrets.org](mailto:knabb@bopsecrets.org).

Berkeley Zen Center  
1931 Russell Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703