



Berkeley Zen Center



January–February 2026 Newsletter

Sojun Roshi Memorial Ceremony

Hakuryu Sojun Roshi, BZC’s Founder and first Abbot, died on January 7, 2021, after leading the sangha for over fifty years. We celebrate his life with a formal annual ceremony. This year’s ceremony will be held on Saturday, January 3, at the time of our usual lecture at 10:15 a.m. The doshi will offer a short talk about Sojun, then we will all have the opportunity to make a flower offering and to express our appreciation for Sojun’s life and teachings.

Mountain Seat Ceremony

Mark your calendars: The Mountain Seat Ceremony, installing Linda Galijan Roshi as BZC Abbot, will be Sunday, March 1, 2026, starting at noon. We are pleased that many elders and friends in our lineage will be able to join us, including Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi from Japan. We anticipate that our zendo will be at capacity, including guests, participants, and BZC members. To allow the broadest participation, we will also create several spaces at BZC for a cozy streaming experience, and easy access to the reception following. We will also provide streaming for those not on site.

We look forward to this joyous occasion at BZC!



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
Thursday, 1/1

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 1/3, 9:30am

Sojun Roshi Annual Memorial
Saturday, 1/3, 10:15am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 1/11, 8:00am–noon

MLK Day Program
Monday, 1/19, 8:30am–1:30pm

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 1/24

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 1/31, 9:30am

February

Board Meeting
Sunday, 2/1, 9:00–11:00am

Founders’ Ceremony
Friday, 2/6, 7:00am

Jukai/Lay Ordination Ceremony
Saturday, 2/14, 3:00pm

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 2/16

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 2/21

Buddha’s Parinirvana Ceremony
Saturday, 2/21, 5:00pm

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 2/28, 9:30am

For more complete and up-to-date information, please check the BZC website (berkeleyzencenter.org) and subscribe to BZC’s community listserv.

Sittings

There will be a **half-day sitting on Sunday, January 11**, from 8:00 a.m. to noon. To sign up or if you have any questions, please contact Gary Artim (gartim@gmail.com).

There will be a **one-day sitting on Saturday, January 24**, from 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., led by Linda Galijan. Gary Artim (gartim@gmail.com) will be the director. The fee is \$35 or whatever amount you can give. An online option will also be offered for a \$15 donation.

There will be **another one-day sitting on Saturday, February 21**, also led by Linda Galijan. The sesshin director will be Dean Bradley (1daysitting@berkeleyzcenter.org). The fee is \$35 or whatever amount you can give. An online option will also be offered for a \$15 donation.

Sign-up information for the two one-days will be posted on the website and the listserv as the dates approach.

You can pay for any of the above by mailing a check to the BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703, or through the website using the "Sits/Classes" button on the "Generosity" tab. In either case, please indicate what you are paying for, so that your payment is not mixed up with dues or donations.

Sewing Buddha's Robe

Sewing a rakusu in preparation for receiving the precepts in the ceremony of Jukai (Lay Ordination) is an opportunity for deepening your practice and strengthening your connections with the sangha. Each year as the sewing class students engage in the devotional practice of sewing and studying the precepts together, they prepare themselves for receiving their rakusu and dharma name. The ceremony

is both a time to affirm aspirations to continue practicing and a joyful celebration with the sangha. If you are interested in participating next year, sewing classes start in mid-January. Classes are open to those who have asked Linda Roshi or their teacher if they may participate. As soon as possible, please speak with Linda Roshi or your teacher. After you have done so, promptly contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk (sewingteacher.bzc@gmail.com).

Martin Luther King Day Neighborhood Engagement Program

Every year since 2017, BZC has had a half-day MLK program to commemorate the life and teachings of Dr. King. This year's program will take place on Monday, January 19. The program will start at 8:30 a.m. and end by 1:30 p.m. We will begin with two periods of zazen, then there will be a talk focusing on one of Dr. King's sermons. Then we will break into small groups to discuss the main takeaways from the teaching, guided by a series of prompts. This will be followed by a full group sharing. We will end the zendo program with another period of zazen and closing service.

We will then take a break with tea and refreshments. The remaining program will take place outside on the front lawn, where we will set up a table and provide cards, pens, markers, and string. We will invite anyone who passes to write a short statement about Dr. King on a card, which they can then hang on the tree in front.

Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Gerry Oliva at gryoliva@gmail.com or Judy Fleischman at judy@sensingwonder.com.

Class on Appropriate Response: Speech as a Field of Intimate Practice

Words and language have the power to shape virtually every aspect of our lives, from our relationships to our spiritual path and practice to the wider world we live in. As a focus of practice, speech is an inexhaustible—and often complex—field for exploration.

In this class we will look at some of the specific ways speech impacts our own lives and relationships, and how we might deepen our awareness and practice in this area. The class will include talks, discussion, small groups, and readings from the Pali Canon up to the present day.

The class will be taught by Linda Roshi and will meet for four Thursdays: January 15, 22, 29, and February 5, from 7:15–8:30 p.m.

Jukai/Lay Ordination Ceremony

On Saturday, February 14, at 3:00 p.m. in the zendo, BZC will host a special lay ordination ceremony. Students Jeff Kastenbaum and Grace Lee will receive the sixteen bodhisattva precepts from Linda Galijan Roshi and her student, Kodo Conlin. On this joyous occasion, Jeff and Grace will receive inscribed rakusus, dharma names, and lineage papers. This will be a hybrid event, and all are welcome to attend the ceremony as well as the reception afterwards in the courtyard to celebrate!

Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha at the age of 80 announced that he would soon reach Parinirvana, or the final deathless state, and abandon his earthly body. After this, he ate his last meal, fell ill, and died. Each year we celebrate Buddha's transition with a ceremony where we are invited to make

offerings and chant in honor of this occasion. This year the ceremony will take place on Saturday, February 21, at 5:00 p.m., at the end of that day's one-day sitting.

Position Changes

Numerous positions have turned over or are turning over in the new year. Deep bows to all those who have held these positions and those who are taking them on:

Zendo Manager for Ceremonies: Gerry Oliva passes this on to Dave Rutschman. Dave passes on the Priest Group Coordinating to Judy Fleischman.

Zendo Manager for Day-to-Day: Greg Fain has taken this over from a consortium of BZC residents.

Joe Buckner stepped into the Office Manager position in early October, taking that over from Helen Cheng, who is doing some traveling.

Multi-Day Sesshin Director Colleen Busch is stepping into the BZC President role, and passing the SD role on to Mark Copithorne, who passes his role as One-Day Sitting Director on to Dean Bradley.

Debra Callahan passes on the Art Coordinator position to Nancy Suib, who has passed on the Head Chiden role to Juliayn Coleman.

Ken Knabb has been the Newsletter Editor for almost 10 years! He is now passing this position to Marley Alexander, who passes the Bathroom Monitor position to Nathaniel Page.

Thank you all so much! You are the embodiment of enlightened activity.

Want to join the fun? We would be delighted to bring you on board. Please contact the Coordinator at lauriesenauke@gmail.com.

Current Weekly Schedule

Our programs vary between in-person-only, online-only, and hybrid (both at once). See the BZC listserv announcements or the BZC website (berkeleyzencenter.org) for details.

Note: We are no longer checking vax or booster information; but we do encourage everyone to keep their vaxes up to date and recommend masking when indoors to minimize risk to yourself and others.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

January 3:	Linda Galijan Roshi
January 10:	Rev. Lucy Xiao
January 17:	Luminous Heart Penelope Thompson
January 24:	Linda Galijan Roshi
January 31:	Carol Paul
February 7:	Eli Brown-Stevenson
February 14:	Judy Fleischman
February 21:	Linda Galijan Roshi
February 28:	Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

January 5:	Open Discussion
January 12:	Dan Jackson
January 19:	No talk (MLK Day)
January 26:	Lance Shows
February 2:	Open Discussion
February 9:	Jonathan Koltz
February 16:	Zendo closed
February 23:	Marley Alexander

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

January 2:	Kevin Souza
February 6:	Sue Dunlap

More on Mindfulness

Prior to coming to BZC in 1996, I had spent the previous two years sitting a number of week-long Vipassana retreats with Gil Fronsdal and other teachers. The topic for talks at that time was mostly centered around the Satipatthana Sutta (“The Four Foundations of Mindfulness”).

I have always been deeply grateful for the teachings that I received prior to beginning to sit zazen; perhaps especially so because Gil had practiced Zen and received dharma transmission from Sojun, and I experienced the non-dual dharma in and through his teachings.

Once I asked Sojun about the difference between instructions for sitting practice in Vipassana and Zen. He said, “In Zen, everything is included in our awareness, but we just stay with the breath.” Now, that makes perfect sense to me. But at that time, the early teachings were anchoring for me in ways that the simplicity of following my breath was not.

Having directly experienced the Satipatthana Sutta as offering a deeply grounded framework for intensive practice, I chose it as the theme for talks during our recent Rohatsu Sesshin. My intention, particularly in this time of so much suffering and change, both in the world and close to home, was to support silence, stillness, and settledness as a way to deeply nourish and refresh our practice. The teachings of the Satipatthana have continued to be very much with me in the days since sesshin ended, and I thought I would share a few things that I am finding supportive in daily practice, both on and off the cushion.

“Satipatthana” could be translated as “establishing and abiding in full awareness of the present moment.” The Satipatthana Sutta is often presented in terms of its description of the four foundations (i.e. body, feelings, mind, and objects of mind), which are the areas of focus for the practice of awareness.

But here I would like to highlight the passages of the sutra regarding the *quality* of mindful awareness that should be aroused and maintained, and *how* the practitioner should observe the object of awareness.

The Buddha states that “the direct path (*ekayano*) . . . for the realization of *Nibbana*” is the Four Foundations. *Ekayano* (Pali, literally “one path”) is translated as “direct path” (to Nirvana). This is the same as *ekayana* (Sanskrit), translated as “one vehicle” in the Lotus Sutra, though the path is that of the Bodhisattva, not the arhat. The Buddha continues:

“Monks, a practitioner abides contemplating the body, **diligent, clearly knowing, and mindful**, free from desires and discontent in regard to the world.” (This sentence is repeated for each of the other three foundations, i.e., feelings, mind, and objects of mind.)

“Diligent” indicates sustained exertion or energy; it is related to *Virya*, Right Effort. Such effort is a form of wholesome desire that supports one’s path of practice, until the point where every form of effort is released and abandoned as no longer necessary. This sustained effort is not forced or slack, neither too tight nor too loose, as in the simile of tuning a stringed instrument. The Latin root of “diligent” is “love,” and points to the possibility of meeting each moment as it arises in an intimate, warm-hearted way.

How do you recognize when your effort is too much, too little, or well-balanced? What do you notice in body and mind in each of these states? How do you encourage yourself to sustain your practice of awareness?

“Clearly knowing” is vivid or lucid knowing, as when something is utterly clear and unmistakable. It is the ability to comprehend what is taking place. What one “knows” ranges from the simplicity of the in- and out-breath to knowing the Four Noble Truths “as they actually are.”

What is it like when you clearly know something? How does it differ from when you do not? What do you notice in body and mind?

“Mindful” in this context can be understood as presence of mind, as opposed to absent-mindedness. The Satipatthana never instructs the practitioner to interfere with whatever is happening in the mind, but only to be fully present and aware of it. Thus we can practice present-moment mindfulness with all manifestations of our bodily experience, as well as all experiences of the mind, from the Hindrances to the Seven Factors of Awakening to the Four Noble Truths.

What is easy for you to be mindful of? And where do you notice aversion or ignorance of more challenging states of body and mind? What is the felt quality of each of these?

“Having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life” is to be free from desires and discontent in regard to the world, which is related to freedom from the Five Hindrances. This has the feeling of both the intentionality of “abandoning” and the allowing, dropping off, or letting go.

After each instruction of increasingly subtle objects of awareness, there is a repeated section, like a “refrain.” One of the phrases is “The practitioner abides contemplating the nature of arising in the body, the nature of passing in the body, or the nature of both arising and passing away in the body” (and similarly for each of the objects of awareness, e.g., feelings, mind, objects of mind, throughout the rest of the sutra). The refrain concludes with, “And she abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world.”

Thus, the intention of the practice is to *clearly observe*, to *clearly know* impermanence and no-self in each of the five skandhas (i.e., forms, feelings, perceptions, formations, and consciousness). This is the direct path to freedom from suffering. This resonates with the Heart Sutra, which

begins: "Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing the prajnaparamita, perceived that all five skandhas in their own being are empty and was saved from all suffering."

In this time of the turning of the year, and always, may you be safe, well, loving, and peaceful. May all beings be safe, well, loving, and peaceful. May we all continue our practice for the benefit of all beings.

Bowing with gratitude,

Linda

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the March–April issue is
Friday, February 13.

Please submit items to
newsletter@berkeleyzencenter.org

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