



# Berkeley Zen Center



January-February 2020 Newsletter

## First Sesshin of the Year

Sojun Roshi will lead our first sesshin of the year: Saturday, January 11, 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. 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.

Sign up on the patio bulletin board by January 8. Please write legibly, using your full name, email, and phone number. The fee is \$35.00. You can pay online (<https://berkeleyzencenter.org/support-bzc/>) or by cash or check to Berkeley Zen Center (marked "January Sesshin"). Drop check or cash into the laundry door payment slot or mail to BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. *Please pay the fee before or upon your arrival to the sesshin.*

If this is your first sesshin, the best preparation is to come to BZC's Saturday program from 6:00 to 11:30 a.m. The Saturday schedule gives you a feel for the sesshin activities, and there are also short training periods to which all are invited (to learn oryoki, etc.). For further information, contact the sesshin director, Mary Beth Lamb, at [sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com](mailto:sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com).



### 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

#### Founders' Ceremonies

Thursday, 1/2, 6:20pm

Friday, 1/3, 6:40am

#### One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 1/11

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/11, 9:40am

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 1/19

#### MLK Neighborhood Engagement

Monday, 1/20

#### Beginner's Sesshin

Sunday, 1/26

### February

#### Founders' Ceremonies

Tuesday, 2/4, 6:20pm

Wednesday, 2/5, 6:40am

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 2/8, 9:40am

#### Two-Day Sesshin

Saturday 2/15 through Sunday 2/16

#### Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony

Saturday, 2/15, 9:40am

## Foundations of Buddhism

Ikushin Gerry Oliva and Karen Sundheim will be teaching a four-week class on the fundamental practices and concepts of Buddhism. Classes will take place in the community room on Thursday evenings 7:15–8:45 on January 16, 23, and 30 and February 6. Beginners will be introduced, and more experienced students stimulated to go deeper, in understanding the Buddhist view and experience of reality. Discussion and questions are strongly encouraged. In Zen we often say “just sit.” This is true; but the accompanying aspects of study, concept, and insight are also necessary.

Subjects will include the life of the Buddha, the historic development of Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the three marks of existence, the role of karma, dependent co-arising, zazen, and the skandas.

Copies of readings will be provided prior to each class and will be on the bulletin board shelf under the sign-up sheet. The cost for the series is \$40.

## Two-Day Study Sesshin

Ikushin Gerry Oliva will lead this year’s study sesshin on Saturday, February 15 (5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and Sunday, February 16 (5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Each day will include zazen, oryoki meals, soji, and two study and discussion sessions. Our study subject will be posted on the bulletin board. Readings will be available on the bulletin board shelf in advance of the sesshin. The sesshin fee is \$35 per day. Place checks marked “2020 Study Sesshin” in the slot in the laundry room door or mail to BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. The last day for sign-up will be February 12. For more information, please contact the sesshin director, Kika Hellein (sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com).

## Women’s Sesshins

BZC will offer two women’s sesshins in 2020. The first will be on March 1, led by Reigetsu Susan Moon. Susan has been practicing in the Soto tradition since 1976, at BZC, SFZC, and Everyday Zen Center. She is the co-editor, along with Zenshin Florence Caplow, of *The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women*. She is also the author of *The Life and Letters of Tofu Roshi* and *This Is Getting Old: Zen Thoughts on Aging with Humor and Dignity*. She received Lay Entrustment from Zoketsu Norman Fischer.

This sesshin is a half-day devoted to exploring women’s experiences and understanding of the Dharma, and the integration of Zen practice in the daily life of women. It will be from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and will include 30-minute sitting periods; walking meditation; lecture, with discussion; and lunch. An orientation to zazen will be offered. For more information, please contact Karen Sundheim (ksundheim@gmail.com).

The second women’s sesshin will be October 18, 2020.

## Beginner’s Sesshin

Though Zen practice has no beginning or end, new people sometimes find the forms daunting, and more experienced students can value refreshment and learn about forms in greater detail. This sitting, led by Karen Sundheim and Penelope Thompson, is an opportunity for new and old practitioners to invigorate our beginner’s mind. The focus will be on the basics of Suzuki Roshi’s practice: zazen, kinhin, and bowing. There will be two short talks followed by discussion: one on Dogen’s “Fukanzazengi” and another on a topic related to practice.

The sesshin will be Sunday, January 26, and

will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Though shorter than usual, the rhythm of sitting will be similar to our regular schedule. Plan to attend the entire day. Please bring a bag lunch—we will not be cooking a meal or doing oryoki. The sesshin fee is \$25. Place checks marked “Beginner’s Sesshin” in the slot in the laundry room door or mail to BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703. For more information, please contact Karen (ksundheim@gmail.com) or Penelope (penelopethompson9@gmail.com).

### **MLK Neighborhood Engagement**

We will be commemorating the MLK holiday again this year by having a special program at BZC on Monday, January 20, from 8:30 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. This practice day is a way to honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, to further explore his dharma, and to consider how the BZC sangha can support it. Our program will begin with sitting, followed by a short talk on the legacy and dharma of Dr. King. We will then have small group dialogues to reflect on these themes and explore ways BZC can engage in partnership with our neighbors on issues of diversity and inclusion. Our time together will include tea and treats as we continue our conversation. This will be followed by a community service project.

The project will be setting up a table on Russell Street to invite passersby to create peace prayers and memorial messages honoring those who have died through violence. We then will invite and assist in placing these messages on our streetside Peace Tree. The MLK Day program will be led by Hozan Alan Senauke in partnership with Gerry Oliva and Judy Fleischman.

### **Chabana Workshop Led by Barbara Strauss**

Barbara Strauss was introduced to Zen in the 1990s through reading *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*. She continued her exploration of Zen through study of Ikebana and tea ceremony. She now leads workshops in these arts.

On Saturday afternoon, February 22 (exact time to be announced later) Barbara will lead a workshop for BZC chidens on Chabana, the way of tea flowers. The workshop will teach our chidens Zen traditions of flower arranging. If you would like to become a chiden and attend this event, please talk to the head chiden, Mark Copithorne.

For years we have turned to Barbara when we want our best flower arrangements for our high ceremonies and she has been generous with her art and expertise. We are grateful for her contribution.

### **Position Changes**

Over the past few months and moving forward we want to appreciate the efforts of departing position holders and welcome their replacements.

Mira Queen is replacing Nabuo Iwanaga as head gardener.

Mary Beth Lamb and Kika Hellein are replacing Gary Artim as co-sesshin directors.

Helen Cheng is replacing Heiko John Lake as work leader (for both Saturdays and sesshins).

Dan Jackson is replacing Tim Lane as bathroom attendant.

Deep gratitude to all of you for your dedication! 🙏

## Caregiver Support Meeting

Sangha Support is offering a gathering for caregivers (whether helping someone nearby or at a distance) on Sunday, February 2, at 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 with doing 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

If you would like instruction in learning or reviewing oryoki practice (how we use our bowls, utensils, and cloths to eat our formal meals in the zendo), please contact Sue Oehser: (510) 339-0243 (voice, not text) or text (510) 541-3264 or soehser@earthlink.net. Upcoming dates: Saturdays, January 25 and February 29 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

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

If you have eaten several meals in the zendo using guest bowls, consider purchasing your own oryoki set. They are available for \$55 at the book table after the regular Saturday morning program. If you want to purchase just the cloths for \$30, contact Ellen Webb (ElWeb@sbcglobal.net).

## 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.

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### *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

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

January 4	Susan Marvin
January 11	Sojun Roshi
January 18	Hozan Sensei
January 25	Laurie Senauke
February 1	Ron Nestor
February 8	Sojun Roshi
February 15	Gerry Oliva
February 22	Ryushin Andrea Thach
February 29	Hozan Sensei

### **Friday and Monday Talk Schedule**

January 6	Mon 6:25am	Open Discussion
January 10	Fri 5:50pm	Raghav Bandla
January 13	Mon 6:25am	Judy Fleishman
January 20	Monday	MLK Neighborhood Engagement (no early program)
January 27	Mon 6:25am	Patrick McMahan
February 3	Mon 6:25am	Open Discussion
February 7	Fri 5:50pm	Sojun Roshi
February 10	Mon 6:25am	Andrea Henderson
February 17	Monday	Closed for holiday
February 24	Mon 6:25am	Blake Tolbert

## President's Letter

In the deep stillness of Rohatsu, gratitude rises. Permeates the zendo. Shosan ceremony is joyous. Lightness and sorrow both present.

During this last year, 2019, much has happened and we have done our best to “tend and befriend” each as they arose. Several of our brick walkways were reworked, smoothed, made safer. The zendo roof was mended. An archive committee was formalized and is working on bringing together early records – photos, newsletters, videos – of the long history of BZC. A large-scale digitization project is under way of thousands of Sojun’s (and others’) talks, currently existing only on ancient audiotape. Even more ancient electrical panels were replaced on two of our buildings, fixing a fire hazard that had led to several power outages in our buildings.

2019 was a year of change. Sojun began a sabbatical in January, and ended it recently. We celebrated his 90th birthday in July. Hozan reduced his teaching commitments in sister communities. In the fall, at Tassajara, Hozan was assisting Sojun in two dharma transmission ceremonies when Sojun faced a health crisis and was hospitalized. Hozan stepped in to help continue a ceremony, until Sojun was on his feet again.

We are very fortunate in this way – having a “deep bench,” as the saying goes. We met these changes with flexibility, as we have learned to do from practice. We are blessed that Sojun is feeling well now and facing his health situation with optimism. We are lucky to have people whose long practice and dedication to BZC give us the ability as a community to adapt to all these changes.

Looking ahead to 2020, the Board asked Hozan to increase his position at BZC from 75% time to 100% time. He accepted and will step into this change beginning in January, centering his focus and teaching at BZC. Sojun and Hozan harmonized their activities to create continuity, as was so beautifully manifested during Rohatsu.

This is our practice for 2020: befriending change; tending to harmony in the community; and enjoying one another completely.

– Mary Duryee  
BZC Board President

## Meeting with a Teacher at BZC

The stable platform of Zen practice rests on four strong legs: zazen, work practice, study, and meeting with a teacher. Down through the centuries, meeting with a teacher has offered an opportunity to deepen practice, reflect on studies, and apply Zen practice to your everyday life. It is an essential part of the teachings as you develop an understanding of yourself. Master Dogen writes:

Visiting teachers to ask about the way is practicing Zen.

This state of fine simplicity is transmitted from the ancients.

In the Zen tradition, dokusan (sometimes called sanzen) is a private, formal meeting between a student and an authorized teacher. At BZC, Sojun Roshi, Hozan Sensei, and dharma-transmitted teachers regularly offer dokusan, and authorized senior students – lay people and priests – offer “practice discussion,” which is similar in form and content to dokusan. Additionally, you may meet with teachers and seniors for an informal conversation over tea, or coffee, or sitting under a tree.

But what happens at this meeting? Whether formal or informal, this intimate space belongs to the student. Student and teacher – face to face. Bring yourself completely into the interview room. Sit down, establish your breath and posture. When you are ready to speak, bow and begin. You may come with a particular question about practice, or with an inquiry that is not yet clear in your mind. Sometimes you may not know what to say. In that case, sit together and pay attention to what arises in body and mind. A Zen teacher writes:

The best way to go to sanzen is simply to look into your heart, to present your practice to the teacher and trust the process. How are you practicing? What is most alive for you? What do you notice? What are your obstacles, your insights? . . . Open up to new points of view.

BZC teachers welcome the opportunity to meet with you and potentially to build relationships that support students and the sangha as a whole. Feel free to talk with any of the senior students, with Sojun Roshi, or with me. Our schedules and contact information are available on the main bulletin board.

– Hozan Alan Senauke

Dear Sangha,

Toward the end of our Rohatsu sesshin I got this warm and fulfilling feeling beyond words, which I often do when looking around the zendo; sharing the radiant light so palpable that fills the room. It helps me to appreciate the various shades of color, temperament, and background that have come together in this simple and profound way to celebrate and express the Buddha's and our own enlightened nature.

I look forward to meeting you in the zendo in 2020, and wish to express my appreciation for all you have done in 2019 to support our shared practice.

—Sojun

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**Year of the Rat**  
(Sumi-e by Kazumi Cranney)

2020 is the year of Rat. The Rat is the first in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. This year is auspicious for all new beginnings. The Rat symbolizes wisdom and intelligence. People born in this year are intelligent, charming, quick-witted, practical, ambitious, and good at economizing as well as at social activities. (From a book on the Chinese zodiac.)

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

for the March–April 2020 issue is  
*Friday, February 21.*

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

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