



# Berkeley Zen Center



July–August 2026 Newsletter

## Late Start Saturdays in August

This August we are trying an experiment. We'll not be offering our usual program beginning with 6:00 am zazen and including service and oryoki breakfast on Saturdays in August. This is to give our cooks, servers, and dishwashers a little break, so we can return to oryoki practice in September with fresh enthusiasm. Instead, the Saturday program will begin with 8:45 a.m. work period (except during the one-day sitting August 8).

The general Saturday schedule will be:

8:45 work period

9:30 zazen

10:05 kinhin

10:15 dharma talk

Watch for announcements about possible informal zazen offered at 6:00 a.m.



### 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.

## BZC SCHEDULE

### July

#### Zendo Holiday

Saturday, 7/4

#### Founders' Ceremony

Tuesday, 7/7, 7:00 a.m.

#### Zazenkai

Sunday, 7/12, 8:00 a.m.–4:10 p.m.

#### Board Meeting

Sunday, 7/19, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 7/25, 9:30 a.m.

### August

#### Lay Entrustment

Saturday, 8/1, 3:00 p.m.

#### Founders' Ceremony

Friday, 8/7, 7:00 a.m.

#### One-Day Sitting

Saturday, 8/8, 5:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

#### Shukke Tokudo

Saturday, 8/15, 3:00 p.m.

#### Board Meeting

Sunday, 8/16, 9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

#### Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 8/22, 9:30 a.m.

#### Half-Day Sitting

Sunday, 8/23, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

*For more complete and up-to-date information, please check the BZC website ([berkeleyzencenter.org](http://berkeleyzencenter.org)) and subscribe to BZC's community listserv.*

## **Sesshins and Sittings**

Join us on **Sunday, July 12, 8:00 a.m. to 4:10 p.m., for a Zazenkaï**, a rare opportunity to spend a day of “just sitting.” There will be nine periods of zazen, plus kinhin, bowing, and eating. We will maintain silence throughout, broken only by bells to mark meditation periods, clappers to call participants back to the zendo after lunch, and chanting refuges aloud at 4:00 p.m.

Participants should plan to come for the whole day. A lunch break from 12:10 –12:40 p.m. will allow time for sack lunches to be eaten outdoors.

There will be a 10-minute period of bowing at your own pace prior to the lunch break, and we will have two periods of fast kinhin. Both of these activities can be adapted to harmonize with individual needs and abilities.

The fee is \$15 or whatever you can afford. Please register and pay on the website. If you have any questions, contact the retreat director, Ryushin, at [andrea.thach@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.thach@gmail.com). If you have not sat at BZC before or are new to retreat practice, please reach out to Ryushin.

There will be a **one-day sitting at BZC on Saturday, August 8, from 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** The dharma talk will be given by Sue Oehser. For more information, email [1daysitting@berkeleyzencenter.org](mailto:1daysitting@berkeleyzencenter.org).

There will be a **half-day sitting at BZC's zendo on Sunday, August 23 from 8:00 a.m. to noon.** We will have five periods of sitting and three of kinhin, with a water break in the middle. This is a nice, quiet way to begin the day, and all are welcome. Suggested donation is \$10. You can sign up by emailing the director Gary Artim at [gartim@gmail.com](mailto:gartim@gmail.com). He will also be happy to answer any questions.

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.

## **Departing Monk Ceremony**

Gensan Kristopher Thomson and their family are moving back to their home country of Canada in late July.

Gensan came to BZC in 2022. They have always pitched in when help was needed, especially in our early days sorting through and maintaining our zoom presence, in filling in afternoon doshi roles and always saying “yes!” to being tech host when no one else was available. They were also an important early voice for trans and non-binary visibility at BZC. They will be sincerely missed here.

Please come join us in sending Gensan to the marketplace in Vancouver, BC with our gratitude and well wishes. The ceremony will be after the lecture on Saturday, July 18.

## **Priest Ordination**

On Saturday, August 15th at 3:00 p.m. Zenshin Greg Fain will ordain his student Seifu Steph Revering as a Soto Zen priest in the lineage of Suzuki Roshi in the ceremony of shukke tokudo. All are welcome to join us in this joyous occasion! We would very much appreciate all offers of help in setting up the zendo, helping with refreshments and a small reception afterwards, and of course cleaning up and putting the zendo back together afterwards. Please let us know if you are able.

## **Abbot Linda's Comings and Goings**

Dear BZC Sangha,

When Greg and I arrived back at BZC almost two years ago (!), we had planned to retire to Enso Village in July 2026, when we became eligible for our retirement benefit from SFZC (Greg turns 70 next month). Although much has changed since then, we still need to claim our retirement benefit at Enso in a timely way. Therefore, we arranged with BZC leadership and Enso that we would commute back and forth every week.

Our plan is to be here at BZC from Tuesday midday through the Saturday program, and then be at Enso from Saturday afternoon through Tuesday morning. Of course, I will be here for any significant events, ceremonies, sesshins, etc. that fall outside of those days/times. The July dokusan calendar reflects these changes in my availability. If you are not able to find an open slot to meet with me in a timely way, please email me to set something up outside of zazen times.

In addition, I will be sitting a Vipassana retreat with Gil Fronsdal (one of my teachers, who is also one of Sojun's dharma heirs), at the Insight Retreat Center in Santa Cruz in September. I will be away on retreat from August 30 to September 26. I am deeply grateful that I am supported to take this time away. Aspects of Practice (led by BZC senior students) will be happening during much of the time I am gone. I will miss you, and I completely trust the strength of your individual and collective practice. I know that you all will take very good care of one another.

I am full of gratitude for this opportunity to turn the light inward to deepen and nourish my practice. I greatly enjoyed doing the recent practice period with all of you, and I look forward to sharing the fruits of my time away when I return in late September.

— Abbot Linda

## **Lay Entrustment Ceremony**

Longtime student Jumyo Seishin Sue Oehser will receive recognition as a lay entrusted teacher on Saturday, August 1 at 3 p.m. Sue will receive a green rakusu to acknowledge the maturity of her practice leadership from BZC teacher Ryushin Andrea Thach. Sue will then offer a short talk to express her Dharma understanding and respond to questions.

Please join us to witness this joyous event, hear her encouraging humor and wisdom, and celebrate her 36 years of dedicated, continuous practice and all of our good fortune to share this practice together. Everyone is welcome.

## Spring Practice Period

This spring Colleen Busch, Myoka Eido (Subtle River/Endless Path), served as shuso (head student), sharing our new Abbot's seat for BZC's thirty-fifth practice period. We all came together for many sangha-joy events, including dinner and skit night, work day, and a five-day sesshin with the shuso ceremony to close.

Congratulations to Colleen and to all the BZC sangha for an inspiring, effortful, and joyous practice period.



**Shuso Hossen Benji Poem**  
**Myoka Eido, Colleen Busch**

The Subtle River winds through  
the white canyon walls of Shogaku-ji.  
She weathers loss,  
erodes grief, and  
flows tears.  
We splash our faces and find only love  
along her Endless Path.

Like Chiyono, we attempt to fetch water.  
Where does the moon go when  
the bottoms of our buckets  
drop away?  
No trace remains, for  
neither the moon  
nor the water  
make their own light.

They reflect the sun's light,  
the other's light,  
our light —  
just ask the astronauts  
who see us all in the Moon's shadow.

Let us hear the Shuso

—Jeff Kastenbaum  
(Benji, Practice Period 2026)



**Sound and Movement Performance**

Berkeley Zen Center will be hosting a rare performance of sound and movement by Margaret Coad (ZETI) and Eric Larsen, who was a resident of San Francisco Zen Center for many years. The event is on Saturday, July 18, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Eric will present movement stemming from training in modern and butoh dance. ZETI material will be new work on accordion, synth, field recording and spoken word and invites us to explore stillness, negative space and the vibrancy that comes from releasing one's grip and flowing with the stream. Together, they will present a site-specific duet that reflects on nonduality, interconnectedness and water. Tickets are by donation and proceeds will go to charity. Tickets here:

<https://oceansong.eventbrite.com>

## **Call for Nominations: BZC Board of Directors**

The BZC Board is seeking three new members to serve two-year terms starting in January 2027. Responsibilities include:

**Meetings:** Attending approximately 10 two-hour Sunday morning meetings per year.

**Retreat:** Attending one all-day retreat in early 2027.

**Service:** Participation in at least one committee (for example, Finance, Buildings & Grounds, Development, or Recruitment) and assistance on ad hoc projects.

Nominees of all ages and practice levels are welcome, provided they have been BZC members for at least one year. We are particularly seeking individuals with experience in building construction and maintenance, fundraising, and financial planning.

Board elections take place in October 2026, and the current Board will present its nominees at the All-Sangha Meeting in September. Nominations can also be made by sangha members at that meeting.

To apply or nominate a fellow member, please email a member of the Board Recruitment & Elections Committee: Rob Walker, Chair ([rkwalker3@gmail.com](mailto:rkwalker3@gmail.com)), Sue Oehser ([soehser@earthlink.net](mailto:soehser@earthlink.net)), or Rich Freitas ([freitas.rich@gmail.com](mailto:freitas.rich@gmail.com)). In your email, please include any relevant information about why you or your nominee would make a good BZC Board member.

## **Two-Koan Class: Rhinoceros and Radishes**

In this short class, we will be covering Case 30 and Case 91 of the Blue Cliff Record, using both Thomas Cleary's and Yamada-Roshi's translations.

Come and work through these koans and see how they may inform your practice and illuminate our tradition of Zen. Copies of the koans will be provided both electronically and in hard copy form on the bulletin board shelf. Dates: July 30, 2026 and August 6, 2026. Suggested Donation: \$20, or what you can afford. Please use the generosity link on our website.

This is an in-person only class. Feel free to contact Gary / Enzan with any questions at (510) 676-9756 or email him at [gartim@gmail.com](mailto:gartim@gmail.com). Register here: <https://forms.gle/2Mo4bdf64tFPCewRA>

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

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| July 4:    | Zendo Holiday  |
| July 11:   | Lucy Xiao      |
| July 18:   | Greg Fain      |
| July 25:   | Laurie Senauke |
| August 1:  | Linda Roshi    |
| August 8:  | Sue Oehser     |
| August 15: | Marie Hopper   |
| August 22: | Dana Takagi    |
| August 29: | Linda Roshi    |

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

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| July 6:    | Open Discussion |
| July 13:   | Tonia Howick    |
| July 20:   | Karen Sundheim  |
| July 27:   | Nathaniel Page  |
| August 3:  | Open Discussion |
| August 10: | Laura Moriarty  |
| August 17: | Gary Artim      |
| August 24: | Rob Burns       |
| August 31: | JoAnn Gong      |

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

|           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| July 3:   | Charlotte Shoemaker |
| August 7: | Yoni Ackerman       |

### **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](http://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.

## Practicing Genjokoan

Dear good friends in the Dharma,

During the six weeks of the Spring Practice Period, we have been exploring Dogen's fascicle, Genjokoan. Translating "genjokoan" is not a simple task; it has been translated as "the koan of everyday life," "actualizing the fundamental point," "manifesting enlightenment," "manifesting suchness" and "manifesting absolute reality."

I continue to play with different ways to express genjokoan in more immediate and accessible ways. I can feel or sense the simultaneity of relative and absolute, but the liveliness of our actual lives seems to resist being pinned down in words, or any other way.

Nonetheless, the effort to express our understanding in words is a good practice. As Katagiri Roshi says, "You have to say something," even if it (inevitably) falls short. So here is my expression of genjokoan right now: "The koan of our life is how we actualize absolute reality, here and now, moment after moment, for the benefit of beings and the well-being of the world."

Rather flat and two-dimensional, isn't it?

On the other hand, Dogen takes a poet's approach, pointing first here, now there, offering us one metaphor or simile after another, until we are swimming in a sea of moons and mirrors, birds and fish, firewood and ash, birth and death. And after surfing the waves of ungraspability, he says:

When you find your place where you are, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point.

When you find your way at this moment, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point.

I had an "aha" moment recently when I realized that "actualizing the fundamental point" is just a particular translation of "genjokoan." So what Dogen is saying is: "When you find your place where you are, genjokoan. When you find your way at this moment, genjokoan."

That's it! Finding your place, your way, here and now, not some other time in the past or future, not some other place than right here — that in itself is "the practice-enlightenment of the buddha way." This utterly extraordinary thing that we've been chasing, and try so hard not to chase, is exactly what is happening right in the midst of each moment — if only we can wake up to it completely.

For the place, the way, is neither large nor small, neither yours nor others'. The place, the way, has not carried over from the past, and it is not merely arising now. Accordingly, in the practice-enlightenment of the buddha way, meeting one thing is mastering it; doing one practice is practicing completely.

Here is the place; here the way unfolds. The boundary of realization is not distinct... Although actualized immediately, the inconceivable may not be distinctly apparent. Its appearance is beyond your knowledge.

So here's another attempt to express how we can practice genjokoan: "The koan of our life is how we manifest our practice through what we think, say and do, together with all beings, for the benefit of beings and the well-being of the world."

By myself, I can do so little. But together with all of you, so much is possible. Let's continue walking the path, in love and in dharma.

Warm bows,

Abbot Linda

PS: I would love to hear your own personal expressions of genjokoan. How do you phrase it to yourself? What images come to your mind? What's still alive and cooking for you?

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

for the September–October issue is  
*Friday, August 21.*

Please submit items to  
[newsletter@berkeleyzencenter.org](mailto:newsletter@berkeleyzencenter.org)

Berkeley Zen Center  
1931 Russell Street  
Berkeley, CA 94703