



Berkeley Zen Center



March–April 2026 Newsletter

Mountain Seat Ceremony

The Mountain Seat Ceremony, installing Linda Galijan Roshi as BZC Abbot, is near at hand – Sunday, March 1, 2026, starting at noon and lasting a bit more than 2 hours. 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. Please join us in the Online Zendo. We look forward to this joyous occasion at BZC!

Priest Ordination

On Saturday, April 25 at 3 pm, a priest ordination (*Shukke Tokudo*) will be held for sangha member Michael Donnoe. Michael will be ordained by Abbot Linda Galijan. It is a joyous occasion when a practitioner chooses this way to deepen their commitment to the precepts and to Suzuki Roshi’s lineage. By shaving his head, re-affirming his commitment to the precepts, and receiving and donning priest's robes, Michael invites us all to support him on the path and to feel his support for us. We look forward to years of practice together, day after day, breath after breath.



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

March

Mountain Seat Ceremony
Sunday, 3/1

Founders' Ceremony
Friday, 3/6, 7:00am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 3/8

One-Day Sitting
Saturday, 3/21

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 3/28

Women's Sitting
Sunday, 3/29

All Sangha Budget Meeting
Sunday, 3/29

April

Founders' Ceremony
Tuesday, 4/7, 7:00am

Buddha's Birthday Celebration
Saturday, 4/11

Shukke Tokudo
Saturday, 4/25

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

All-Sangha Budget Meeting

We will have an All-Sangha budget meeting on Sunday, March 29th, at 7:00pm in the online zendo. Our treasurer Dan Jackson will present the 2026 Proposed Budget for sangha approval. If you have any questions, please contact BZC Board President Colleen Busch at president@berkeleyzencenter.org.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

On Saturday, April 11, from 10:15–11:15 a.m., BZC will join Buddhist sanghas around the world in celebrating the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha, traditionally considered to have taken place in early April. Following a short service and an introductory talk in the zendo, we will proceed to the courtyard for a joyful, kid-friendly ceremony. After the doshi makes an initial offering of flowers and bathes the baby Buddha with sweet tea, we will chant the Heart Sutra and all adults and children will have a chance to use a ladle to bathe the baby Buddha. Children will also be invited to blow bubbles as part of the celebration. We welcome children and others to come for work period at 7:35 a.m. to help decorate the baby Buddha's bower stands. For more information, please email Carol Paul (caroljpaul@yahoo.com).

Practice Period

We are pleased to announce BZC's Spring 2026 Practice Period, led by newly installed Abbot Linda Galijan Roshi. The theme will be Dogen's Genjo Koan, a poetic essay written for a lay disciple. The title can be translated as "The Koan of Everyday Life," or "The Actualization of Enlightenment." We will explore Dogen's sublime metaphors in relation to both wisdom and compassion. How can we perceive the true reality of the world? How might we live out the implications of our practice, in this very

world? As Dogen states, "Here is the place; here the Way unfolds."

The practice period will begin with an opening one-day sitting on Saturday, May 2, and finish with a five-day sesshin and Shuso Hossen on June 14. It gives us great joy to announce that our Shuso will be Colleen Busch, Myoka Eido (Subtle River/Endless Path) and the Benji will be Jeff Kastenbaum. We will have our usual activities, including shuso teas, a practice period class, a mid-practice period dinner and skit night, and more!

Upcoming Class: Practicing the Bodhisattva Precepts

The precepts are as much the foundation of our practice as zazen. In zazen we cultivate a clear mind and the dropping of ego-attachments, while the precepts guide us in our actions off the cushion. While many of us Zen students enjoy the peace of silence and stillness during zazen, we may sometimes find speech and action confusing, filling us with fear or regret.

This class will be more experiential than packed with information, although a short teisho will be offered in the beginning. We will discuss Avowing our Karma, Taking Refuge, the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Clear Mind Precepts. The class takes place Thursdays March 5, 12, 19 and April 9, 16 from 7:15 - 8:30 PM. Hybrid. Cost: \$50 or whatever you can afford. Teacher: Kisei Karen Sundheim.

If you are planning to come to the class be sure to register so you will receive future information and materials for the class. Link: <https://forms.gle/Y38yF4cOYBRiyFGy8>.

Lay Ordination

On Saturday, February 14, two people received the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts in the ceremony of Jukai (“receiving the precepts” or Lay Ordination). For the ordinees, it is a joyous culmination of months of sewing and precept study. For those attending, it is an opportunity to reaffirm our vows. We warmly welcome these friends into the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha and Suzuki Roshi’s family.

Great thanks to Sewing Teacher Jean Selkirk; to Judy Fleischman for directing the ceremony; to Mary Duryee for baking beautiful plum tarts; to Jim Erb who coordinated all the setup and cleanup; and to all the many sangha members who helped to make this ceremony happen.

Here is the list of this year’s ordinees with their new dharma names and preceptors. This year two lay-entrusted teachers were also part of the ceremony, and are included in the list below along with their ordinees.

Jeff Kastenbaum — Torai Gangetsu

Winter Thunder, Cherish the Moon

Grace Lee — Yuryu Konju

Courageous Stream, Source Abides

BZC Tassajara Sangha Work-Study Weeks

Every year Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, a monastery located in a remote part of the Ventana Wilderness east of Carmel Valley, provides an opportunity for sanghas from the Suzuki Roshi lineage to practice together as part of the Summer Practice Program. This is a wonderful way to study together with dharma friends and experience the rich experience of a monastic setting.

There will be four groups from BZC attending this year:

Ryushin Andrea Thach: April 28 – May 1
(Tuesday – Friday)

Linda Galijan and Greg Fain: June 30 - July 5
(Tuesday – Sunday)

Susan Marvin and Ellen Webb: August 4 – 9
(Tuesday – Sunday)

Gerry Oliva and Mary Duryee: August 26 – 30
(Tuesday – Sunday)

If you are interested in participating, please let the group leaders know by the end of March or sooner if you can, so that you can register with Tassajara. (Registration for Tassajara is done separately with the SFZC registration office, and spaces do fill up.)

Contact information for all the teachers is on the BZC website (under the Teachers tab) if you would like more information or are interested in participating. Ryushin, leading the first week, would like to hear from interested participants by March 15.

The groups usually plan to drive down together if possible. There is also a stagecoach from Jamesburg to Tassajara.

Sangha members join the Tassajara daily program for the morning: 5:50 a.m. zazen; 6:50 service; 7:15 soji (short work period); 7:30 breakfast; 8:30–12:00 work assignments; and noon lunch. The afternoon is structured by each study group. All students rejoin the Tassajara schedule for dinner and sit the final zazen period of the day.

On behalf of the sangha week leaders,

Bowing,

Mary D

2026 Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

Once again BZC is excited to be offering this unique sesshin. Mark your calendars for a three-day Mountains & Rivers sesshin at Point Reyes National Seashore, co-led by Ellen Webb and Susan Marvin.

This is a wonderful opportunity to practice together in an outdoor environment, close to the ocean. The sesshin (for BZC folks only) will be Friday–Sunday, July 3--5 (three days and two nights). In the event we cannot get a permit for the 4th of July holiday time, it will be rescheduled.

The sesshin will include a moderate hike in silence from the Bear Valley headquarters to a group campsite on the morning of Day 1, and back again in the afternoon on Day 3. We'll set up our tents at a site near the ocean, do periods of zazen and kinhin, study together, cook and serve meals, and have free time for hiking, ending our days with zazen on the beach facing the ocean.

Be prepared for significant hiking, along with carrying a backpack, tent, shared equipment, and food.

Stay tuned for details!

Sesshins and Sittings

There will be a **half-day sitting** at BZC's zendo on **Sunday, March 8** 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.

To sign up or to ask any questions, please contact the director, Gary Artim (gartim@gmail.com).

Saturday, March 21, we will have a **One-Day Sitting** from **5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** led by Dave Rutschman. Suggested donation is \$35 or whatever amount you can give. For more information, please contact the director, Dean Bradley (zdbradley@hotmail.com).

Sunday, March 29, we welcome Rev. Kristin Diggs to lead a **half day Women's Sitting** from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

Diggs, a Soto Zen priest in the Suzuki Roshi lineage, trained residentially for ten years at all three San Francisco Zen Center temples. She was lay-ordained by Tenshin Reb Anderson in 2017 and ordained as a priest by Eijun Linda Cutts in 2021. She served as Shuso for the spring 2025 practice period at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. She is currently serving as an Adjunct Teacher in the Valley Streams Zen Sangha.

All women and women-identified beings are welcome. Sign-ups will be out mid-March. Contact Mary Duryee if you have questions: maduryee@icloud.com.

Saturday, May 2, there will be a **One-Day Sitting** from **5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** to open our Spring Practice Period, led by Linda Galijan Roshi. For more information, please contact the director, Dean Bradley (zdbradley@hotmail.com).

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.

Current Weekly Schedule

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

- March 7: Linda Galijan Roshi
- March 14: Karen Sundheim
- March 21: Dave Rutschman
- March 28: Mushim Patricia Ikeda

- April 4: Gerry Oliva
- April 11: Linda Galijan Roshi
- April 18: Rhonda Magee
- April 25: Linda Galijan Roshi

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

- March 2: Open Discussion
- March 9: Jeff Taylor
- March 16: Taryn Elliott
- March 23: Margaret Coad
- March 30: Paolo Costa

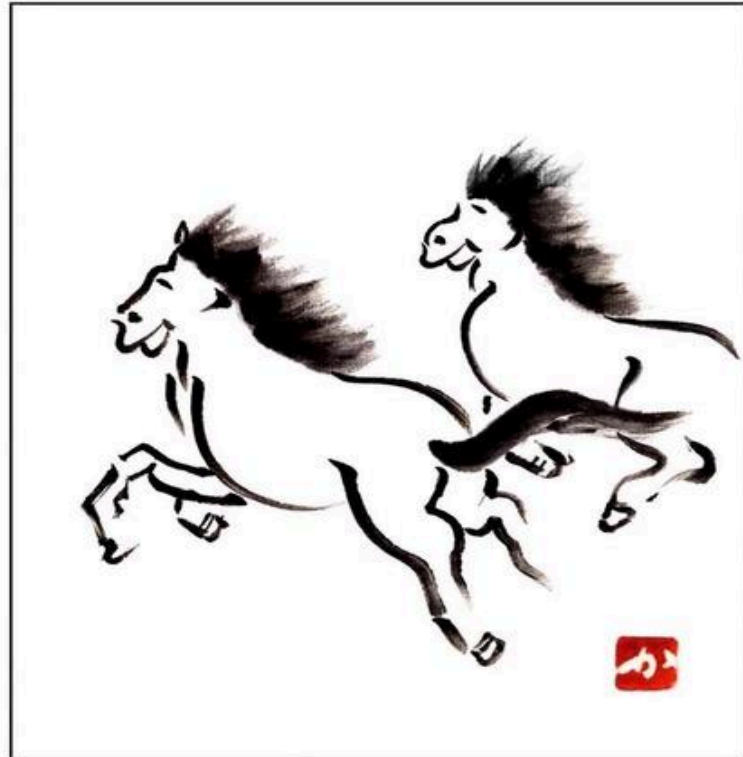
- April 6: Open Discussion
- April 13: Ed Herzog
- April 20: Pauline Kerschen
- April 27: Nick Robinson

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

- March 6: Don Hughes
- April 3: Mira Queen

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.



Sumi-e by Kazumi Cranney

2026 is the Year of the Fire Horse: characterized by energetic movement, enthusiasm, and individual drive.

Strive With Earnestness

Yesterday we celebrated Buddha's Parinirvana, when he intentionally let go of his physical body and entered into his final nirvana, completely free of the cycle of rebirth. Because the Buddha was aware that the time of his death was approaching, he wanted to point to the teachings that he considered most important. So when all the bhikkhus who were dwelling nearby were assembled, he said:

Now, O bhikkhus, I say to you that you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practice the teachings I have taught you, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men.

The Buddha's final words were:

Behold now, bhikkhus, I exhort you:

All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness.

There is a well-known chant in Pali, based on these words. *Anicca vata sankhara, uppadaavaya-dhammino; uppajjitva nirujjhanti, tesam vupasamo sukho.* It translates as, "All conditioned things are impermanent; they are of the nature to pass away. Those who understand this completely, will find true happiness."

Our lives have come into being through innumerable causes and conditions, including the coming together of our mother and father, our ancestors, our opportunities and limitations, our choices and affinities, our fears and aversions, going back infinitely through time and space. How might the practice of being mindful and aware of impermanence and the limited nature of life – your own life and that of others – support and "advise" you in your life and practice?

The time of death is unknown. How would it be to lean into the not-knowing in a positive way? What might you choose to do with this one precious life you are given? What is it that is most important? Where do you want to place your care and energy while you are alive and capable as you are now? Have you made peace with yourself, just as you are? Can you look with kindness, compassion, generosity, tenderness, and honesty, and find a way to be in this very life, exactly as it is?

As I reflect on these questions in my own life, it is clear that being here with all of you is exactly where the deepest part of my being calls me to be. This unexpected invitation to re-immense myself in intensive practice, in this remarkable community, and to be of service in the role of abbot, has become a wellspring of profound joy and gratitude in my life.

With deep humility and appreciation for the many gifts of your practice,

Linda

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the May–June issue is
Friday, April 17.

Please submit items to
newsletter@berkeleyzencenter.org

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