



Berkeley Zen Center



May–June 2021 Newsletter

Reopening In-Person Practice

As the Covid-19 pandemic is receding and many more people have access to the vaccine, a committee focused on reopening in-person practice has been meeting to discuss how to reopen BZC safely. We are imagining phasing in in-person zazen with spaced seating and limited numbers as a first step, using a model of “zazen only” (no service or chanting). We anticipate initiating this some time after the practice period.

We want to reopen when everyone is eligible for the vaccine and has had ample time to acquire immunity. The condition for attending BZC in person will be to have been vaccinated and to have acquired immunity, as estimated by the particular vaccine taken. No proof will be required; we rely on sangha members to keep one another safe. We will continue to require masks and keep the recommended social distance. In the meantime, we will continue our Zoom activities on the current schedule.

To prepare for reopening, we need your help. You will receive a survey by email asking you to imagine your life once we move beyond the pandemic’s immediate dangers. What shape do you expect your (Continued...)



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

May

Open Practice Period/One-Day Session
Saturday, 5/8

Board Meeting
Sunday, 5/9

Skit Night
Saturday, 5/29, 7:00pm

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 5/31

June

Board Meeting
Sunday, 6/6

Beginners’ Sesshin
Sunday, 6/6

End Practice Period/Three-Day Sesshin
Friday–Sunday, 6/18–6/20

Shosan
6/20, 3:30pm

Note: BZC continues to offer many other events and activities, but during the pandemic these tend 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 email list.

For detailed information on practice period events, see the calendar on page 11.

(*Reopening, continued from page 1*) practice to take? Would you prefer to practice with the BZC sangha on Zoom, in person, or in some combination? What times work best for you for morning and/or afternoon zazen?

Responses to this survey will shape the decisions that we make as we move forward. Please help us with this process by returning your survey as soon as you receive it. Contact Gerry Oliva, Hozan Alan Senauke, Laurie Senauke, Mary Duryee, Ron Nestor, or Ellen Webb for more information.

Deep bows to everyone for the steadiness of your practice through the pandemic.

Spring Practice Period

BZC's annual spring practice period will take place online this year, beginning with a one-day sitting on Saturday, May 8, and continuing through a three-day sesshin June 18–20. Because Covid restrictions are still in place, we are waiting until we can practice face-to-face to invite a shuso.

Even though we are not yet able to sit together again in the Russell Street zendo, Hozan Sensei encourages everyone to increase their commitment to practice during this period, while continuing to tend to their work, family, and other obligations. We hope to do another practice period in person this coming fall, with a shuso as an example of practice.

There are some requirements for participation in the practice period. These are detailed on the registration form, which is available on the BZC website or at this link: [Practice Period Registration Form](#). The spirit of this practice is expressed by Hozan in the following article.

Our Approach to Practice Period

Since 1989 Berkeley Zen Center has had an annual six-week practice period in the spring or fall. Sojun Roshi regularly offered words of encouragement and perspective for those intending to participate. For our spring 2021 practice period, I offer a similar message, drawing on Sojun's expression and my own.

Practice period has roots in Buddha's time and continues through our Soto Zen tradition. In India and Southeast Asia, the Buddha established a Rains Retreat each year. During the monsoon season, monks and nuns would cease their wandering and gather in monastic centers for collective practice. This tradition migrated through East Asia and continues today. In Japan there is *ango*, which means "peaceful dwelling." Practice period at BZC translates *ango* into our urban setting.

This spring we can concentrate our effort, renewing the practice of beginners' mind. Study will center on zazen and basic Buddhist teachings. The practice period has some minimum requirements, but within these requirements each person should create his or her own realistic schedule. This is the nature of lay practice. According to the demands of our whole life, some will be able to do a minimum, while others can stretch themselves further in formal practice. Sangha members are not required to participate. You are free to come to zazen, even if you are not signed up for the practice period.

The schedule you sign up for should incorporate zazen into your rhythm of life as an intention rather than as a special activity. When we design our schedule for these six weeks, taking into consideration the other factors and responsibilities in our life, we have a foundation for practice, honoring all our commitments.

Sojun Roshi wrote: “I like to think of the spirit of practice period as the wish to do it all, and then narrowing it down to what is practical or possible, rather than simply picking and choosing pieces of it based on preference or convenience. This helps to create an edge; something to push against but not enough to be inhibiting. When we all have this attitude, it creates a strong sangha feeling of mutual support and encouragement. We also manifest the spirit of zazen in our home and work life as continuous, well-rounded practice; not just something we do on the cushion.”

Please remember that we are all practicing together. After this strange year of isolation, practice period can prepare us for the renewal of our intimate practice together, and the continuation of our precious inheritance, warm hand to warm hand.

—Hozan

Sesshins in May and June

Our 2021 practice period will begin with an online sesshin on Saturday, May 8 (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), and end with a three-day online sesshin from Friday, June 18, to Sunday, June 20 (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day). If you wish to attend the June sesshin, please commit to at least two full days. Hozan Sensei will lead both sesshins. You may sign up for sesshin when you fill out the application for practice period. If you wish to attend sesshin but not participate in the practice period, please contact the sesshin director, Mary Beth Lamb, at sesshin@berkeleyzencenter.org.

When paying for sesshin, please indicate on your check or in the PayPal note field that your donation is related to sesshin. The suggested donation is \$15 per day, or whatever you can afford. Mail a check to the BZC Office Manager

at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 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.

Council During Practice Period

Council practice, which has become a valuable tool in Buddhist centers around the country, will be offered during the spring 2021 practice period on two Thursday class evenings—May 20 and June 10.

Council is a process developed by the Quakers, resonant with many indigenous communities, where members gather in a ceremonial circle to speak and be heard deeply. The process is intended to be democratic and confidential. By creating a safe container for all, and by not turning away from pain and conflict, council promotes participation and equality. Council can be used simply to share on the basis of equality, and where there are strong feelings and opinions about controversial issues within intentional communities.

Each participant has an opportunity to speak without interruption or cross talk. The point is to listen completely and to speak honestly of our thoughts and feelings.

Over the last few years we have used council as a method of community discourse at BZC. A number of us at BZC have had extensive experience of council in other communities, and see how this can serve the intimacy of sangha and the development of beloved community. We will share more details and materials when the practice period begins, and there will be an opportunity to have some basic training in advance of the class sessions.

Skit Night

Our annual skit night will be held during our upcoming practice period on Saturday, May 29, at 7:00 p.m. It will be broadcast via Zoom live in BZC's Online Zendo. Please contact Ross (rossblum@icloud.com) to submit your skit idea at least two weeks prior to showtime. Please frame your presentation to five minutes. Past offerings have included dramatic theater, poetry reading, storytelling, comical skits, songs, and music. All are welcome to take part.

BZC Board Nominations

Every year the sangha elects up to three at-large members to two-year terms to the BZC Board. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. This year we have three vacancies.

The coming elections will take place in October and the new term will start in January 2022. The Board will present its three nominees at the All-Sangha Potluck on September 19. The nominees' names will then be sent, along with the names of our officers, office manager, and abbot, to the sangha for their approval.

Other nominations to the Board can be made from the floor by sangha members at the All-Sangha Potluck. Some of the various skills the Board seeks in nominees (not all in one person) are: fundraising, engineering, building maintenance, non-profit law, fluency in digital and technical modalities, and experience in non-profits. Nominees should be members of BZC. Board members attend ten Sunday morning meetings a year, including an all-day retreat in the first part of the year, and serve on at least one working Board committee: Finance, Buildings & Grounds, Development, Archives, Electronic Communication & Social Media, and Elections & Nominations.

If you are interested in serving on the

Board, or know someone who you would like to nominate, please contact the Board Recruitment and Elections Committee: Ed Herzog (edherzog48@gmail.com), Carol Paul (caroljpaul@yahoo.com), and Rondi Saslow (rsaslow@pacbell.net). Please include any relevant information about why you think the person would be a good BZC Board member.

Young East Bay Zen Group

Despite the pandemic—or possibly because of it—the Young East Bay Zen group is thriving! Over the past year, we've enjoyed the participation not only of active BZC members, but also people from other sanghas worldwide. We've also had a number of new-to-Zen people join us in recent months, and we've heard that YEBZ has provided them with a meaningful way to engage with other young practitioners during these isolating times. Through our regular group check-ins, dharma discussions, and occasional (socially distanced) outdoor activities, we've cultivated connections and spiritual friendship—even though many have never met in person!

We have regular meetings and open discussion twice a month: on the first Mondays and third Thursdays. On the last Saturday of each month we have our dharma discussion facilitated by a practice leader. In 2021 we are exploring *The Hidden Lamp*, a collection of "stories from twenty-five centuries of awakened women." Thus far we have investigated "Chiyono's No Water, No Moon" with Gerry Oliva and "Maurine Stuart's Whack" with Susan Marvin.

We encourage participants to join us as much as they feel comfortable—all group activities are drop-in and no advance signup is required. While the group consists primarily of people in their 20s and 30s, anyone who

identifies as “young” is welcome.

To encourage participation in the spring practice period we will pause YEBZ activities after May 3 until June 26. To receive email updates, please visit the BZC website, where a link is available to join the YEBZ Google Group.

Upcoming meetings: Monday, May 3, 6:30–7:30pm (check-ins and open discussion); and Saturday, June 26, 11:30am–1:00pm (*Hidden Lamp* discussion).

Anti-Racism at BZC

Last fall we invited anyone who wished to participate in a self-led group of BZC members to explore how to address racism in our sangha and the larger community. We warmly welcome any BZC members to join us for meetings, which happen approximately monthly. The next meeting is May 2. If you would like to attend, please contact the group facilitators (see emails below). Please watch the calendar for upcoming meetings beyond May.

Racism touches our lives in innumerable ways. It can take the form of systemic racism—such as the policies that shape people’s access to education, home ownership, community safety, food, and economic opportunity. It can also take the form of overt and subtle forms of racism at the personal level. Our society is designed to perpetuate racism at every level, from national policy to cultural norms.

Berkeley Zen Center, like all organizations, is not immune to/from these dynamics. Even with the best intentions, any of us can still act and talk in ways that harm or exclude others. Many of us struggle with knowing how to respond if we see racist acts. Sometimes we do not even know if what we say or do is causing harm. The purpose of this work group is to see what can be done about this, on the individual

level and on the interpersonal level, and how BZC can respond and work with the community and other faith-based organizations.

For more information, please contact Heather Sarantis (heathersarantis@gmail.com), Karen Sundheim (ksundheim@gmail.com), or Mary Duryee (maduryee@icloud.com).

Bequest from Sojun

We recently learned that Sojun Roshi included Zen centers in his immediately dharma “family” in his will. Berkeley Zen Center is the largest beneficiary, followed by San Francisco Zen Center and his disciples’ sanghas with non-profit status.

Liz Horowitz, Sojun’s widow and the executor of his will, is working with Hozan on the details of the bequest for BZC, which focuses on two projects. The first is to build out our digital infrastructure so that we can live-stream some activities and continue our online events even after we can meet in person. The second project is the front landscaping and gate that Sojun had been working on with several people in the sangha.

This bequest has the feeling of Sojun continuing to support us in tangible and intangible ways, by extending our reach to sangha members, quite literally—and by the ongoing expression of his love and aesthetic sensibility, evident in the zendo and grounds of Berkeley Zen Center. The total bequest is \$50,000, including \$32,000 for BZC.

Sojun’s short poem, late in life, comes to mind: *Gratitude. Gratitude. Gratitude.*

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We would also like to note that BZC received a generous bequest of \$5000 after the death of Moffett Hall, one of our earliest and longest-running steady members. There’s more

about Moffett in the January–April 2021 newsletter, including a link to her obituary and artwork. Deep bows to Mike and Moffett Hall!

HEAR Committee News

The BZC Harmony, Ethics, and Reconciliation (HEAR) Committee welcomes a new member: Phillip Sherard. In addition to Phil, the committee now includes Gerry Oliva, Tom Painter, Karen Sundheim, Penelope Thompson, and chair Stan Dewey. The committee members are all appointed by the BZC Board.

Previously, Hozan Alan Senauke was on the committee, but when he became abbot, he stepped away from this responsibility. The abbot has never been on the HEAR committee. A committee separate from the abbot affords a safe space for people who have grievances or ethical concerns involving our temple's leadership to confidentially bring such concerns without having to confront the leadership directly. People would otherwise be reluctant to address such issues. We also think that the authority of the abbot—and indeed of all those in leadership positions within the sangha—is enhanced by there being an available check on inappropriate interactions within the community and a way to address ethical and disharmony problems that arise. Hozan has certainly added much to the operation of the committee, among other things because of his prior work in formulating the BZC ethical guidelines, and because of his broader connections in the Buddhist communities. The committee will miss his insights, but we know he will be available as abbot for help and guidance when we need him.

A bit of information about the HEAR Committee. One of our major focuses is conflict resolution by offering sangha members a

means of dealing with the inevitable conflicts that can arise when people work closely with one another. Another key purpose of HEAR is to receive and hear complaints about possible violations of the ethics guidelines. (You can find the BZC Ethics Guidelines on the BZC website: berkeleyzencenter.org.)

To initiate a process, you can contact any HEAR Committee member. The initial conversation can be quite informal, even as informal 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 or how one wishes to engage with the other person, and whether an informal or formal process is most appropriate. Initial conversations with a HEAR Committee member are confidential, as are the informal and formal grievance processes.

As part of our mission to promote harmony, the HEAR Committee sometimes initiates interventions when we see that conflict or discord looms. 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” last summer addressing BZC members’ concerns and hopes about the transition from Sojun as abbot to Hozan as abbot.

Feel free to contact any members of the HEAR Committee if you want further information.

—Stan Dewey

Tuesday Morning Chanting Services

On Tuesday mornings right after zazen, there is a half-hour chanting service (from 8:15–8:45 a.m.). Copies of each chant are posted during the service.

This is a practice of action meditation, a holding in heart and mind and an intentional accompanying of all those who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. The repetition of each of the chants creates a powerful field.

Everyone is most welcome to join.



Visit with Reverend Ryoko Osa, Berkeley Higashi Honganji Temple

Early in our period of quarantine, Abbot Hozan and I received an invitation from Reverend Ryoko Osa to visit her Jodo Shin Buddhist Temple at 1524 Oregon Street in Berkeley. The temple was built in 1926 to serve the Japanese immigrant community, and continues to do so.

The temple is affiliated with the prominent Higashi Honganji Temple in Kyoto. Reverend Osa, a warm, lively, and articulate teacher, trained in Kyoto and in Los Angeles before she became the Minister of the Berkeley temple.

The Jodo Shin tradition is lay-oriented; its core practice is chanting the name of Amida Buddha and seeing how Dharma is revealed in

everyday life. Services on Sundays are in English, with a short talk in Japanese. During the Covid pandemic, services and classes have been held via a Facebook link (available on their website).

As a young woman, Reverend Osa was deeply interested in Buddhism. She wanted to come to the United States to practice. The three of us had a lively conversation about mutual acquaintances and practices in each of our traditions. She was delighted with our zendo and grounds and plans to return.

The temple community is predominantly Japanese-American, with some Chinese-Americans and Caucasians. Members have understandably been concerned about violence against Asian-Americans and are being mindfully cautious about safeguarding themselves.

—Hannah Meara

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After Looking at a Photo of Someone Bowing

*A person's hands together in gassho, in front of
ceramic bowls*

maybe a monk

maybe some body

becoming a nobody

no body no mind

an eternal moment

with bird chirps

in the distance.

—Ellen Levin



Devotedly Do
(Remembering Maylie Scott)

Incredibly, on May 10 our beloved teacher and great friend Maylie Scott will have been gone for twenty years. She was such a strong force of leadership and practice at Berkeley Zen Center for the twenty-nine years that she practiced here, many of us still feel her influence and wisdom. When she retired from social work at Alameda County, she could be relied on to ride her bicycle down to the zendo twice a day for zazen. She was ordained in 1988, was the first BZC shuso in 1989, received dharma transmission from Sojun Roshi in 1999, and served as co-tanto with Hozan Alan Senauke until she moved to Arcata to lead the Zen community there.

Although she didn't consider herself an activist "until late in late life," she is often remembered for her weekly vigils to protest the shipments of uranium for nuclear weapons in Livermore, and for her unflagging participation and leadership in action on all issues of social justice. She was one of two mentors for the Buddhist Peace Fellowship's six-month practice periods in the world—the Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement (BASE) program which several BZC members participated in.

We continue to feel her practice in the weekly way-seeking mind talks, which she helped start, in the men's shelter dinners and the women's retreats that she helped to organize, and of course in the Metta Prayer that she composed. She is truly one of our contemporary ancestors. Though her practice echos throughout, we still miss her.

On May 8, as we open our spring practice period, our morning service will be a commemoration of her.

—Andrea Thach



Maylie Scott (front center) with other BASE members in 1997

**For Maylie
Kushin Seisho
(Vast Mind, Clearly Shining)**

*A tall tree
Standing firm
A touchstone
Falls in the forest
The forest heart sings
A lament
And weeps
Too soon
Yet
Who can argue
Turning on its axis
The one-sided moon
Illuminates your path
Vast mind your
True body
Pure and shining
Your wisdom
Compassionate action
Your work
Though teaching in
Another world
There is no place we
Do not meet
Just like this!
No regrets
Go my disciple
Ka!!!*

—Sojun Mel Weitsman
(May 10, 2001)

**Giving Precepts
(for Maylie Scott)**

*Twenty years have passed
and still the staccato cadence of your voice
lightly insists that we exclude nothing from this
life—
not 9/11 or nuclear meltdowns,
not hunger, or famine, or hope.
Your steady, clear-eyed confidence
in the utter rightness of even this
still is.
Serendipity, the tenacious wren tit's song.
I met you like this, and gave up my job the next
day.
You saw it in each of us,
direct, quick, straight-spined bull's eye to our
Truth.
Lofted on a rock in full lotus moving through
space, you dreamt and
gave us everything that fit through an
unmended pocket hole.
Just do each thing with devotion, the granite
sang.
Twenty years have passed.
The shadow of the bamboo has not stirred in
the wind.
Your message is just as fresh, and vital, and
needed.
Vastly Seen
The Way
Clearly Illuminated.
Dear teacher, dear friend,
in gratitude,
we light your ancient lighthouse beacon
and make it our own.*

—Yakuso Ryushin Andrea Thach
(April 2021)

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—and then click the “Enter the Zendo Now” link.

Zazen Monday–Friday:

7:30–8:10 a.m. and 5:40–6:20 p.m. (See Calendar for special Monday morning schedule, which includes student talks.)

Earlier Zazen Tuesdays and Thursdays:

5:40–6:40 a.m. (This is *in addition* to the usual 7:30 a.m. zazen on all weekdays. Take your pick or do both!)

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, but via a different link. Go to the BZC website and click “Zazen Instruction.”

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

May 1:	Zenju Earthlyn Manuel
May 8:	Hozan Sensei
May 15:	Hozan Sensei
May 22:	Laurie Senauke
May 29:	Hozan Sensei
June 5:	Hozan Sensei
June 12:	Peter Overton
June 19:	Hozan Sensei
June 26:	Ellen Webb

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

May 3:	Open Discussion
May 10:	Hozan Sensei
May 17:	Karen Sundheim
May 24:	Susan Marvin
May 31:	Zendo closed
June 7:	Ross Blum
June 14:	Ron Nestor
June 21:	No morning program
June 28:	Andrea Henderson

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:50 p.m.

May 7:	Judy Bertelsen
May 14:	Zazen Instruction with Hozan
June 4:	Bansan

Practice Period May/June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>May 2</u>	3	4	5	6	7	May 8— <u>Sesshin</u> PP Open Lecture: <u>Hozan</u>
9 Abbot Tea 7pm	10 AM talk: <u>Hozan Sensei</u>	11	12	13 Class 7:15pm: <u>Hozan</u>	14 Zazen Instruction 5:40pm	15 Lecture: <u>Hozan</u>
16 Abbot Tea 7pm	17 AM talk: Karen <u>Sundheim</u>	18	19	20 Council 7:15pm	21	22 Lecture: Laurie <u>Senauke</u>
23 Abbot Tea 7pm	24 AM talk: Susan Marvin	25	26	27 Class 7:15pm: <u>Hozan</u>	28	29 Lecture: <u>Hozan</u> Skit Night 7pm
30 <u>ZENDO HOLIDAY</u>	31 <u>ZENDO HOLIDAY</u>	<u>June 1</u>	2	3 Class 7:15pm: <u>Ryushin</u> Andrea <u>Thach</u>	4 <u>Bansan 5:45</u>	29 Lecture: <u>Hozan</u>
6 Beginner <u>Sesshin</u>	7 AM talk: Ross Blum	8	9	10 Council 7:15pm	11	12 Lecture: Peter Overton
13 Abbot Tea 7pm	14 AM talk: Ron Nestor	15	16	17 Class 7:15pm: <u>Hozan</u>	18 <u>Sesshin</u> Lecture: Gerry Oliva	<u>June 19/20</u> <u>Sesshin-PP</u> close <u>Shosan</u> —3:30

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

for the July–August 2021 issue is
Friday, June 18.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703