



Berkeley Zen Center



May–June 2026 Newsletter



Mountain Seat Ceremony

On March 1, 2026, BZC held a rare and historic event—the Mountain Seat Ceremony for Shinchi Linda Galijan. It was BZC's third Mountain Seat in its 60-year history, and the first for a woman abbot. It was both a detailed, formal ceremony and a joyous celebration for all who attended, in person or online. Our beloved elder Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi played his formal role (he also gave the Dharma talk in the zendo the day before).

Among the guests were abbots and former abbots from SFZC, Sotoshu officials, and many senior practice leaders and friends of Linda Roshi.



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

May

One-Day Sitting/Open Practice Period
Saturday, 5/2

Founders' Ceremony
Thursday, 5/7, 7:00am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 5/17, 8:00 a.m.

Mid-Practice Period Dinner and Skit Night
Saturday, 5/16, 4:00 p.m.

Board Meeting
Sunday, 5/17

Lotus Sutra Chanting
Monday, 5/25, 8:00 a.m.

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 5/30, 9:30 a.m.

Sangha Work Practice Day
Sunday, 5/31, 8:00 a.m.

June

Board Meeting
Sunday, 6/7, 7:00am

Founders' Ceremony
Monday, 6/8, 7:00am

Five-Day Sesshin/End Practice Period
Wednesday–Sunday, 6/10–6/14

Shuso Hossen
Sunday, 6/14, 3:00 p.m.

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 6/27, 9:30 a.m.

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

The ceremony procession started at Wat Mongkolrataranam, the Thai temple down the block. The program included a formal request to serve from the Board President and the signing and sealing of an official document. The incoming Abbot made numerous statements honoring various ancestors throughout. After a wonderful question and answer ceremony, Abbot Linda gave a Dharma teaching and dignitaries, family, and friends offered formal congratulations. We gathered in the courtyard for a bountiful and festive food extravaganza. Together our sangha has begun something deeply meaningful and auspicious.



Buddha's Birthday Celebration

On a rainy April 11, the BZC sangha celebrated Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday with a ceremony in the zendo, bathing the baby Buddha with sweet tea under a bower of beautiful flowers. A reception followed in the community room with delicious chocolate cake. A wonderful occasion! Deep bows to the many hands and hearts that helped make the day possible.

Spring Practice Period

It's that time of year! A time when we take six weeks to put our Zen practice front and center as much as possible. In this newsletter, you will find the Practice Period calendar and details about various programs and events.

We register for the Practice Period as a way to express our commitment, and then we also register for each event we are able to attend.

As Linda Roshi says, "Even a small intensification of practice, repeated regularly, is beneficial and puts down increasingly strong roots. Our shared commitments support all of us." Links for registration are on the BZC website. Please join us.

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 are three groups from BZC attending this year:

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)

More information about these work-study weeks is available on the BZC website and through the individual leaders, also on the website (under the Teachers tab).

Mountains & Rivers Sesshin

BZC is happy to announce the 2026 Mountains & Rivers Backpacking Sesshin at Point Reyes National Seashore July 3–5. It will include hiking and camping while trying our best to maintain a sesshin atmosphere and mindful Zen practice in nature. There will be periods of silence, zazen, assigned positions and responsibilities (cooking, serving, cleaning), and free time. This sesshin is a wonderful way to meet and connect with other BZC practitioners while hiking and experiencing practice in an outdoor setting.

Carpooling will be arranged. Sign up on the patio bulletin board, or contact Sesshin Directors Ellen Webb and Susan Marvin, especially if you have questions (ellenwebbdance@gmail.com, lai_hang@yahoo.com).

Plan to attend a mandatory meeting the night before Sesshin begins (July 2, time TBA) in the CR room at BZC in order to divvy out equipment and food.

Fee: Payment of \$100 (sliding scale available) is due before trip to cover supplies, campsite reservations, and food. Payment via Paypal to bzcofficeanager@gmail.com or check to BZC.

IMPORTANT: If you are new to backpacking or to Zen practice, specifically sesshin, contact the Sesshin Directors for further information and planning.

Sangha Work Practice Day

Come join your sangha siblings to care for the temple and grounds on Sunday, May 31st. The day will begin with coffee and tea followed by Zazen and then work circle. We will break for lunch at noon and begin again with work circle at 12:45. Please come at 8:00 a.m. for the morning and lunch, or come at noon for lunch and the afternoon work.

Some work may get you dirty. Dress appropriately. Both light work and heavier physical work are needed. You can indicate your skills and work preferences when you sign up.

A sign-up link will be posted on the website soon. If you have questions, please contact Jim Erb at jameserb@gmail.com or 415-309-5128.

Lotus Sutra Chanting

On Memorial Day, Monday May 25, we will again gather in the zendo and online to chant the Lotus Sutra and dedicate the merit of our chanting for world peace. The chanting lasts from 8:30 a.m. until roughly 5 to 5:30 p.m. We will be chanting from “The Threefold Lotus Sutra” by Michio Shinozaki, Brook A. Ziporyn and David C. Earhart. There will be no need to bring a copy of the Sutra, since the text will be projected onto the wall of the zendo as well as shared online.

All are encouraged to join us in the zendo, in order to create a critical mass of people chanting. Thus, we will chant the Sutra continuously, while allowing people to drop out and drop in. There will be snacks, and spill-proof water bottles will be permitted in the zendo. Please contact Greg Fain (greg.fain@gmail.com) for any questions.

Baika Lecture and Presentation

Please join us on Sunday, June 28th from 4pm to 5:30pm in the zendo for a lecture and presentation on Baika, melodic Buddhist chanting from our Soto tradition, given by Monen Ishikawa. This event will be in person only.

Baika is a beautiful expression of Soto liturgy, performed by priests and laypeople alike. A form that dates from the early 1950s, it combines ancient melodies with Zen words. Baika is part of a broader category of Buddhist songs of praise called *goeika*. In Japan, *baikako*, or groups of people who meet at the temple to sing together, form an important social network.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about a beautifully powerful expression of devotion to our founding teacher, Dogen Zenji, and our liturgy. The literal translation of *baikaryu eisanka* is “plum blossom style recitation praise song.” In the *Shisho* and *Baika fascicles* of the *Shobogenzo*, Dogen Zenji writes about the plum blossom as a symbol of the true transmission and flowering of the dharma from person to person and generation to generation.

There is no fee for the event; however, you are invited to offer dana for this offering.

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: attending approximately 10 two-hour Sunday morning meetings per year, attending an all-day retreat in early 2027, and participation in at least one committee (like Finance, 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), Sue Oehser (soehser@earthlink.net), or Rich Freitas (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.

Practice Period Class on Genjokoan

Genjokoan is Dogen's "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow," the essence of his teaching. Originally written as a letter to a layperson, it presents a series of poetic images that express absolute Reality continually manifesting in every moment—if we could only perceive it this way. Through presentation, dialogue and small groups, we will explore the practice-realization of true Reality right here, right now, in the middle of our everyday, complicated, "wanting it to be otherwise" lives.

The class will be taught by BZC abbot, Linda Galijan. The five classes will be on Thursday evenings from 7:15-8:30, May 7 to June 4, and will be hybrid. The class fee is \$50 or whatever amount you can give. You do not need to participate in the practice period in order to attend.

The last class (6/4) will be online only, and will be led by Shinshu Roberts, author of a new book on Genjokoan, "Meeting the Myriad Things," that features commentaries by two of Dogen's Dharma heirs.

If you are planning to attend the class be sure to register at this link (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaqMiDfuWsd65ieV449wp2diMpRIqCyq4VICjk6b4RjclJhg/viewform>) so you will receive future information.

Sesshins and Sittings

Our **Spring 2026 Practice Period** will begin with a **one-day sitting** on **Saturday, May 2**, and end with a **five-day sesshin** Wednesday through Sunday, **June 10–14**, led by Abbot Linda Galijan. Both start at 5:00 a.m. and end at 5:30 p.m. and include formal oryoki breakfast and lunch.

The May 2 sitting includes a ceremony to install our Shuso, Colleen Busch, Myoka Eido (Subtle River/Endless Path). To sign up for May 2 or for more information please see the BZC website or contact the director, Dean Bradley (1daysitting@berkeleyzencenter.org).

The five-day sesshin in June culminates with a Shuso Hossen, or Dharma inquiry ceremony. Details, as well as the sign-up link for the June five-day sesshin, will be posted on the website and the listserv in mid-May.

Please note that an online sitting and sesshin will be offered on the date of the in-person sitting, as well as for three days of the five-day sesshin. Online sitters will have their own Zoom room and will join the in-person Zendo for services and the Dharma talk. To register or for more information about the online sittings, contact Karen Sundheim at ksundheim@gmail.com.

The suggested donation for both the one-day and the five-day is \$35 per day (\$15 for online) or whatever amount you can give.

There will also be a **half-day sitting on Sunday, May 17**, 8:00 a.m. to noon. The suggested donation is \$10 or whatever amount you can give. To sign up or to ask any questions, please contact the director, Gary Artim (gartim@gmail.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.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

- May 2: Linda Galijan Roshi
(Open Practice Period Sitting)
- May 9: Gerry Oliva
- May 16: Colleen Busch
- May 23: Linda Galijan Roshi
- May 30: Colleen Busch

- June 6: Ellen Webb
- June 13: Linda Galijan Roshi (Sesshin)
- June 20: Ryushin Andrea Thach
- June 27: Mushim Patricia Ikeda

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

- May 4: Colleen Busch
- May 11: Michael Donnoe
- May 18: Laurie Senauke
- May 25: No talk (Lotus Sutra Chanting
at 8:30 a.m.)

- June 1: Open Discussion
- June 8: Shosan Ceremony online
- June 15: Zendo Holiday
- June 22: Caren McDonald
- June 29: Preston Evers

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

- May 1: Jean Selkirk
- June 5: Shosan Ceremony in person in zendo

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.

Spring Practice Period, 2026

For more than thirty years Berkeley Zen Center has offered a Spring Practice Period. This year, our study and practice will center on Dogen's Genjokoan ("The Koan of Everyday Life"), which he considered to be the essence of his teaching. Throughout the practice period, we will explore the practice-realization of true Reality right here, right now, in the middle of our everyday, complicated, "wanting it to be otherwise" lives.

I studied and memorized Genjokoan during my shuso practice period at Tassajara almost 20 years ago. It has been an anchor of my practice ever since, and it continues to inspire, encourage and surprise me as I read new translations and commentaries, and listen to talks by a range of teachers. Dogen's use of poetic imagery of everyday experiences (firewood becoming ash, the moon reflected in water) continually points us back to our own immediate experience, inviting us to see this very moment as nothing other than Reality: "Here is the place, here the Way unfolds."

Longtime BZC member Colleen Busch, Myoka Eido (Subtle River/Endless Path), will share my seat and serve as Shuso (Head Student). Jeff Kastenbaum will hold the position of Benji (Shuso's attendant), organizing sangha teas and assisting Colleen in various ways.

During practice period, we will be chanting the Repentances ("All my ancient tangled karma") and Refuges ("I take refuge in Buddha") at the start of morning service. Chant cards will be provided.

Practice period is traditionally a time to intensify our practice, to stretch ourselves a little more than we usually do, and to rededicate ourselves to the practice of awakening to our life—one moment at a time, nothing left out. As part of completing the practice period registration form, you might reflect on your heartfelt aspirations about practice during this time. And then, with full awareness of the ongoing commitments you already have, decide which elements of the practice period you can commit to. Even a small intensification of practice, repeated regularly, is highly beneficial and puts down increasingly strong roots. Our shared commitments support us all.

Everyone is welcome to attend all events during the practice period, whether or not you are formally enrolled. We encourage everyone to support the Practice Period and our Shuso in whatever way you can, and we look forward to sharing this time with you.

Warm bows, Abbot Linda

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

for the July–August issue is

Friday, June 19.

Please submit items to
newsletter@berkeleyzencenter.org

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703