



Berkeley Zen Center



November–December 2020 Newsletter

BZC Remains Closed Until March 2021

The Board has decided to keep BZC's physical facilities closed to all but essential activities until a review of the Covid pandemic situation in March of 2021. All community spaces in the BZC facilities are officially closed. The patio, garden, community room, and zendo may be used only if necessary or essential, with prior notification and approval.

Essential activities include the residents' use of their living spaces; maintenance and repair activities; and specially vetted activities, such as ceremonies.

The Board has also developed and adopted specific protocols for everyone's safety when visiting BZC for such essential activities (see page 11).

Jizo Ceremony to Heal Grief

Grief accompanies every loss, be it recent or remote, sudden or expected. Whether through death, illness, miscarriage, abortion, estrangement or other circumstances of disruption, our lives are impacted immediately and in delayed ways by the separation we experience. Loss and grief are also a part of these very disorienting and disturbing times of the Covid



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

November

Jizo Ceremony

Sunday, 11/15, 1:00-4:00pm

One-Day Sesshin

Saturday, 11/21

Zendo Holiday

Thursday, 11/26

December

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony

Friday, 12/4, 5:45 p.m.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Saturday–Monday, 12/19–12/21

Zendo Holiday

Friday, 12/25

Mountain Seat Ceremony

(installation of new Abbot)

Monday, 12/28, 3:00pm

New Year's Eve Sitting

Thursday, 12/31, 8:00pm–midnight

January

Zendo Holiday

1/1

NOTE 1: There is no Winter Break this year.

NOTE 2: 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.

pandemic, reckoning with racism, climate disaster, and threatening divisions in our society.

From Japan we have inherited Jizo Bodhi-sattva, represented in statues and drawings and revered as an embodiment of fearless compassion and perseverance in response to heart-searing losses. We invoke the Jizo ideal to inspire safe passage for those who have died and to provide solace for ourselves during our difficult journeys of mind and body. Jizo is usually portrayed as a child, whose innocent certainty and light-hearted seriousness are the buoyant qualities of purposefulness.

In BZC's annual Jizo gathering we each create our own tokens of participation in the Jizo ideal, making a small garment or token to dress Jizo, with cloth or on paper, and write our wishes for our loved one or for the circumstance. We then offer these in a simple ceremony we create together.

This year the ceremony will be conducted by BZC priests Ryushin Andrea Thach and Hannah Meara. It will be conducted on Zoom on Sunday, November 15, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

We will provide additional instructions to those attending. For those who need them, materials for making the garment for Jizo will be available in advance. Attendance is open to all BZC members and those from the larger community. There is no fee for attending, though dana for materials is welcome. If you have questions or if you would like to sign up to attend, please message either Andrea (andrea.thach@gmail.com) or Hannah (hmeara@gmail.com).

Virtual One-Day Sesshin

BZC will offer a virtual sesshin on Saturday, November 21. It will begin at 7:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. and will include zazen, kinhin,

service, a dharma talk, and a work period. Lunch will be on your own. Gerry Oliva will lead and Mary Beth Lamb will direct the sesshin. If this will be your first sesshin or if you have questions, please contact Mary Beth at sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com. The sign-up form will be available on the website calendar.

The suggested sesshin donation is \$15, or whatever you can afford. Mail a check to BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703, or pay through the BZC website by clicking "Generosity," then "Donations," then "Sits/Classes." Please consider a donation to Berkeley Zen Center above the suggested fee to help us maintain our practice through the current crisis.

Rohatsu Sesshin

BZC will offer a three-day Rohatsu sesshin (via Zoom) December 19–21, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The schedule will include zazen, kinhin, service with bowing and chanting, a light at-home work period, and dharma talks.

Rohatsu is the traditional week-long winter sesshin in observance of Buddha's enlightenment. During the current pandemic we are offering a reduced version via Zoom.

More information will be made available in early December. In the meantime, direct inquiries about the sesshin to Kika: sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com.

New Year's Eve Sitting

As usual Berkeley Zen Center will have a New Year's Eve sitting on the evening of December 31, but because of the Covid pandemic, it will be online this year. Please join us for all or any part of New Year's Eve, sitting from 8:00 p.m. to midnight. Join us by going to the BZC website and clicking "Enter the Zendo Now."

In the course of the evening we will alternate periods of zazen and kinhin, have informal tea together, and ring in the new year with 108 bells. Please join us in bidding farewell to 2020 and welcoming 2021. For more information, contact Carol Paul: caroljpaul@yahoo.com.



Buddhist Women Ancestors Guiding the Way

"If you really want to cry for somebody, why not cry for yourself? Why not cry for all of us — who are just passing through. Fall on your knees and weep. Get it all out. Now get up. You've got work to do." (from *The First Free Women: Poems of the Early Buddhist Nuns*)

Please join Karen DeCotis, Laurie Senauke, and Susan Marvin for a four-week class on our women ancestors, with a focus on how they encourage us to continue to practice and awaken together in these challenging times. We will read and discuss stories that offer the inspiration of their presence in our own lives.

Class dates are November 16, 23, 30, and December 7, 7:30–8:30 p.m. We extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to attend the series or individual evenings.

Class materials and reading list suggestions are available on the BZC site. Your optional

donations support BZC's programs and are greatly appreciated. You can pay by check to BZC or via PayPal using the "Sits/Classes" tab on our Donation page.

Position Changes

Deep bows to our long-time Office Manager, Bruce Coughran, for staying on top of our income and expenses and helping to keep BZC chugging along for almost four years. He passes this position on to Helen Cheng.

Jake Van Akkeren has served as Health and Safety Coordinator for the past few years, including organizing our first-aid supplies and our biannual CPR training. Ross Blum has agreed to take on this position going forward. In this capacity Ross will be the key contact person for implementing our revised H&S protocols for onsite activities and for keeping our various venues virus free.

Thanks to Gary Artim for his work in updating our website. We have hired David Anderson as our Web Administrator. Dan Harden is our new Website Content Editor. The previous content editor, Laurie Senauke, has moved into a new Website Manager position.

Judy Fleischman has worked with unceasing effort to create our online presence, which has allowed us not only to continue but to expand BZC programs to reach a much wider audience. Judy's new title is Online Programs Manager, and her new team includes Raghav Bandla, Online Programs Scheduler; Yoni Ackerman, Online Technical Support Coordinator; and Jonathan Koltz, Social Media Coordinator. Kelsey Chirlinn will continue as consultant to both Judy and Laurie in their newly expanded positions.

Thanks to you all for your dedication! 🙏

New Leadership Positions

The BZC Board has created two new positions: Founding Dharma Teacher and Acting Head Priest.

During the Stepping Down Ceremony, a new form was added. It came after the jisha unwrapped and handed the temple seal to Sojun, who inspected it, incensed it, and handed it to the president for safekeeping until there is a new Abbot. The president then picked up a scroll which described the Founding Dharma Teacher position, and said: "Dear Sojun Roshi: We, the sangha of Berkeley Zen Center, invite you to be our Founding Dharma Teacher. We want you to continue to teach us. We want to continue to practice with you. We would be grateful if you accepted this position. Do you accept this position?" Sojun said "Yes," and the president then gave the scroll to him.

Hozan Alan Senauke, who has been our Vice Abbot, now steps into the Acting Head Priest position. This position carries the administrative and practice duties and responsibilities for Berkeley Zen Center until BZC installs him as its new Abbot in the upcoming Mountain Seat Ceremony.

Stepping Down, Stepping Across

On October 24, Hakuryu Sojun (White Dragon/Essence of Purity) Mel Weitsman Roshi stepped down as the first abbot of BZC and took the new position of Founding Dharma Teacher. Board president Mary Duryee writes about the ceremony in more detail in the following article.

Along with my poem, which is included in Mary's piece, my comments to Sojun Roshi spoke to the easeful genius of how he created and sustained a living Zen community in

Berkeley. Things just seem to have happened around him, but this is the Zen master's mark of total dynamic working. Fifty-three years on, from Dwight Way to Russell Street to the wide world, Sojun's subtle influence reaches far and wide.
—Hozan Alan Senauke

Stepping Down Ceremony

With boundless gratitude, on October 24 Berkeley Zen Center honored Hakuryu Sojun Mel Weitsman in a Stepping Down Ceremony (*Taitoshiki Saho*). A formal invitation to him to step into the newly created position of Founding Dharma Teacher was incorporated into the ceremony as well, which Sojun Roshi accepted.

The ceremony was warm, emotional, and well attended through live-streaming. (It was also recorded, and can be viewed at the Berkeley Zen Center channel on YouTube.)

Ten people offered congratulations:

Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi (Abbot, Rinso-in)
Gengo Akiba Roshi (Bishop of Soto Zen North America)
Tenshin Reb Anderson Roshi (Senior Dharma Teacher, San Francisco Zen Center)
Leslie James (Abiding Teacher, Tassajara), speaking for the San Francisco Zen Center sangha
Zoketsu Norman Fischer (Founder, Everyday Zen Foundation), as deshi
Josho Pat Phelan (Abbess, Chapel Hill Zen Center), as deshi
Zenki Mary Mocine (Abbess, Clear Water Zendo), as deshi
Hosho Karen Sundheim, speaking for the Berkeley Zen Center sangha
Liz Horowitz (Sojun Roshi's wife)
Hozan Alan Senauke (Berkeley Zen Center Vice Abbot)

Hoitsu Suzuki Roshi said: "Congratulations to Sojun Roshi. You have been following the teachings of Buddhism for a long time, but you still have more and more to do, so please continue your work and also take care of yourself. About sixty years ago you learned zazen from Suzuki Shunryu Roshi. He would have taken your hand and taught you the Hokkaijoin (the Dharma-realm meditation mudra). I hope that you will continue the Hokkaijoin for the rest of your life as long as zazen continues, until now and into the future. . . . Congratulations. Thank you for inviting me. I'm really thankful to you."

Rev. Akiba Roshi said: "To me, it seems like Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi has been engraving 'Monk Sojun of Shogaku' on the foundation stone of Shogaku-ji, that was placed by Suzuki Roshi, for the long time in the past forty years. Today, the engraving is completed. That is what I feel. . . . To end my statement, I would like to say 'Gokurou-sama deshita,' thank you for your hard work for such a long time. I deeply thank you for your many contributions to Soto Zen in North America. . . . From now on, I wish you have a slow and pleasant life enjoying what people will call the engraving 'Monk Sojun of Shogaku.' "

Hozan Alan Senauke offered a poem:

For My Old Teacher — Hakuryu Sojun

*For fifty-three years
The White Dragon has prowled
The slopes of Old Plum Mountain
Some trees here and there
Bear scorch marks from his fiery breath
But students who come and go
Are warmed and comforted
Bathed in his pure gaze
The fire in Sojun's belly
Burns as it once did*

*At any moment
Embers may flare up bright and hot —
The fire remains
But as Suzuki Roshi told Sojun
"Just being alive is enough"
We have counted on him for so long
Now on our own two feet
The young dragons (comparatively speaking)
Must climb the steep hillside together
To care for all beings and even the mountain itself*

A number of people were involved in planning both the ceremony and the technical aspects of the virtual presentation. Particular thanks to Steve Weintraub for guiding the planning of the ceremony, and to Jon Voss for acting as the digital producer. Mary Duryee, Laurie Senauke, and Carol Paul assisted Steve; Rob Lyons, Ed Herzog, and Ross Blum assisted Jon. Mary Beth Lamb, Raghav Bandla, Blake Tolbert, and Laurie Senauke acted as digital shikas to help people link into the ceremony. Deep bows and thanks to all.

(See next page for photos of the ceremony.)

Mountain Seat Ceremony

The Mountain Seat Ceremony (*Shin San Shiki*) to install our new Abbot, Hozan Alan Senauke, is set for Monday, December 28, 2020, 3:00 p.m. PST. It will be live-streamed via Zoom, and all are invited to attend.

We benefited greatly from the guidance of Steve Weintraub, a disciple of Sojun Roshi's, in the planning of the Stepping Down Ceremony. Steve will continue in this guiding role for the Mountain Seat Ceremony, with the help of Laurie Senauke (Steve's assistant), Mary Duryee (president of the Board), and Carol Paul (co-zendo manager). Feel free to contact any of these individuals if you have questions or wish additional information.



Sojun Ordains a New Priest

On October 17 in the zendo Sojun Roshi ordained Doko Kika Susan Hellein as a priest, with online participation in the ceremony of over seventy-five members and friends. Kika's dharma name, given by Sojun at jukai, means Path Light/Returning Home.

Kika came to BZC in 2012 and has been an active BZC community member, serving in a variety of practice positions. From January 2017 through summer 2019 she lived and practiced at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. She is currently a BZC resident.

We celebrate Kika's ordination and her passion for the practice we treasure together.



Great Congratulations

On November 5, Sarah Liu received lay ordination from Hozan Sensei at her home in the Berkeley hills. Hozan was assisted by Hannah Meara and Ross Blum, who were also present for the ceremony. Sarah's new dharma name is BiNin KoGen—Beautiful Endurance/Patience, Vast Source. Buddhas rejoice!



Gratitude

The BZC Board extends deep bows of thanks to the sangha for our successful midyear fund-raising drive. We modestly asked for \$10,000 and you came through with over \$30,000! This will help us to balance lost income due to the pandemic, and to continue with needed repairs and upgrades to the property. Thank you!

Upgrade to Google Workplace

In early November BZC is switching to a comprehensive Google account for the entire organization. There will be some new email addresses, new groups, and a different access to Drive folders. Changes will be rolled out incrementally. Stay tuned for late-breaking news!

Well-Being and Memorial Services

A Memorial service, led by Bruce Coughran, is held the first Wednesday morning of each month, immediately following morning zazen. The remaining Wednesday mornings of the month, also immediately following morning zazen, we have Well-Being services. Sangha members are welcome to send names for the Memorial or Well-Being services to Hannah Meara: hmeara@gmail.com.

Tuesday Evening Tea with Hozan

Hozan Sensei is offering virtual “tea” and discussion for up to eight people every first and third Tuesday for the next several months. Upcoming dates are November 17, December 1, December 15, January 5, and January 19. For a place at the table, contact Hannah Meara: hmeara@gmail.com.

Suzuki Roshi Memorial

Each year, usually during Rohatsu sesshin, we commemorate Shunryu Suzuki Roshi’s passing (December 4, 1971). It is an opportunity for sangha members to remember and appreciate our root teacher. Our ceremony this year will take place in BZC’s online zendo at 5:45 p.m. on Friday, December 4. Please see the BZC website for more details.

Bag Lunch Project Update

Beginning in August, a small group (Yoni Ackerman, Lihong Chan, Preston Evers, Laurie Senauke, and Susan Marvin), supported and funded by the BZC Board, began a BZC Bag Lunch Project that came together rather spontaneously as a result of several conversations. Mira Queen joined in to make sandwiches in October. We now make and deliver forty bag lunches twice monthly. Twenty go to the Women’s Drop In Center on Acton Street in Berkeley, a place that has served homeless women and children for many years. Additionally, twenty lunches are offered to homeless people in downtown Berkeley in the corridor between the post office and Dwight Way, along Shattuck Avenue. Two of us walk the streets, offer lunches, and talk to the homeless. Here are recent comments from Preston and Lihong:

Lihong: *“When passing out bag lunches to the homeless in downtown Berkeley, I found it heartwarming to learn a little more about those we encountered on the street. Even after spending only five minutes with those who engaged with us, it offered me insight and appreciation for all the struggles they have to go through.”*

Preston: *“Delivering food to some of my homeless neighbors last Friday was such a joy. It feels good to connect with community members, especially those who have material needs I can help*

meet. I look forward to the next delivery, and hopefully making some friends along the way."

The bag lunches include hearty sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, cut-up veggies, fruit, a piece of chocolate, a napkin, and a small printed card that says, "May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be nourished."

We are happy to report that the BZC Board has agreed to continue to help fund twice-monthly bag lunches on into 2021. Thank you! We also want to thank BZC members who have generously sent donations to the project.

If you would like to make a contribution to this project, please write a check to BZC and note on it: "BAG LUNCH PROJECT."

Alternatively, you can donate on the BZC website; however, if you choose this option, please send the office manager an email (bzcofficeanager@gmail.com) saying that you did this and the amount, since there is no way to note this on the site. As the holidays and winter approach, we would like to also consider nonfood items we might purchase for our homeless neighbors as well as other new ways to join a growing response to the needs of the greater BZC neighborhood and beyond. Any ideas you have are welcome.

If you would like to help with shopping, making, or dropping off lunches, we welcome your participation! Please email Susan at lai_hang@yahoo.com.



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 click the “Enter the Zendo Now” link.

Zazen Monday–Friday:

7:30–8:10 a.m. and 5:40–6:20 p.m. (See website 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 or Memorial Service:

Wednesdays, 8:10 a.m.

Saturday Program:

Zazen: 9:45 a.m.

Lecture: 10:15 a.m.

Wednesday Night Drop-In:

See BZC website for details.

Group Dokusan with Sojun Roshi:

Usually two Thursdays a month at 7:00 p.m. (check BZC website for dates).

All-Sangha Gatherings:

7:00–8:30 p.m., usually once every month or two (check BZC website calendar for dates).

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

November 7:	Sojun Roshi
November 14:	Hozan Sensei
November 21:	Gerry Oliva
November 28:	Laurie Senauke

December 5:	Hozan Sensei
December 12:	Ron Nestor
December 19:	TBA
December 26:	TBA

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

November 2:	Open Discussion
November 9:	Dan Harden
November 16:	David Gill
November 23:	Sue Oehser
November 30:	TBA

December 7:	Open Discussion
December 14:	TBA
December 21:	No talk (Rohatsu)
December 28:	TBA

BZC Safety Protocols

The Board has developed and adopted these protocols for everyone's safety when visiting BZC for essential activities. These protocols will be updated periodically as we learn more and are advised by our Health and Safety Committee.

1. Prior approval is required.

a. Visits must be essential: tasks related to the care or cleaning of the space; tasks that can only be done in the space, such as sewing, ceremonies, or meeting with Sojun or Hozan for specific tasks.

b. Process:

i. Proposals for events and meetings in the CR, zendo, and grounds should go through the Coordinator. Include the date, time, length of time, number of people involved, and everyone's agreement to observe BZCs instructions for safety: spacing, use of masks, proper ventilation and cleaning up.

ii. A designated person (Ross Blum) will hold the zendo/CR calendar, keep track of approved visits to the CR and zendo, and be the contact person for personal requests, e.g. to visit a resident or to get information about submitting a proposal.

iii. Only one activity, per time slot and per physical space, will be approved.

iv. Residents should be notified by the designated person when visitors and or events are going to be at BZC.

2. On arrival and during stay:

a. Sign in. All visitors should sign in when arriving and sign out when leaving, with dates and times, and symptom statement. Visitors should come only if they have not experienced any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours: persistent cough; fever; headache; aches and fatigue; a change in hearing or taste. (A clipboard will be kept on the kitchen porch for this purpose.) This is to permit later tracking, if needed.

b. Masks must be worn at all times. Visitors should maintain social distance of at least 6 feet.

c. All (residents and visitors) should use **hand sanitizer** upon entering a space and upon leaving the space, **each time**.

d. Care of the interior spaces.

i. All the windows should be kept open to allow **maximum ventilation** when in the zendo or community room for an extended period of time (longer than 10 minutes).

ii. Surfaces in the bathroom(s) (CR and patio) should be wiped down with sanitizer or alcohol after each use. (Surfaces: counter top; toilet handle; door handles; any other surface that has been touched.)

iii. The **air purifier** in the space (if there is one present) should be left on when the space is closed.

iv. Cooking/tea making is not permitted in the CR kitchen.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the January–February 2021 issue is
Friday, December 18.

**Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.**

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703