



Berkeley Zen Center



November–December 2021 Newsletter

Plans for Gradual Reopening

During the past year many sangha members have been monitoring the state of the pandemic in Alameda County and California, as well as the air quality in the zendo and the community room. The BZC Board and the Project Management Committee are in the midst of exploring affordable ways of improving ventilation in both spaces. They, with the help of Dean Bradley, have also updated and strengthened our WiFi system, enabling us to transition to a reliable online presence.

Parallel to these efforts, Hozan Alan Senauke has been consulting with a reopening team. Originally formed by Sojun Roshi to plan for the transition of the Abbacy, the newly renamed Reopening Committee is now addressing the various complex aspects of reopening. The Committee recommends resuming some in-person activities early in 2022 (provided that the downward trend of new Covid cases continues). We will begin by opening the 6:00 a.m. zazen period in the zendo to nonresidents as well as residents, and gradually step-in additional activities.

In-person events will require proof of vaccination, use of masks, and physical distancing. We are in the process of *(Continued...)*



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.

B Z C S C H E D U L E

November

Founders' Ceremony
Saturday, 11/6, 9:20am

Jukai (Lay Ordination)
Saturday, 11/6, 3:00pm

Board Meeting
Sunday, 11/7

One-Day Sesshin (End of Aspects)
Saturday, 11/13

Zendo Holiday
Thursday, 11/25

December

Rohatsu Session
Wednesday 12/1 through Sunday 12/5

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony
Saturday, 12/4, 3:30pm

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 12/6

Founders' Ceremony
Tuesday, 12/7, 8:00am

Winter Break
Sunday 12/19 through Friday 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party
Friday, 12/31, 8:00pm to 12:30am

Note: BZC continues to offer many other events and activities, but during the pandemic these have mostly been via Zoom and have tended 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 listserv.

(Reopening, continued from page 1)

figuring out how to deal with the possibility of overflow. We will also continue to offer Zoom access for 6:00 a.m. zazen.

The team is composed of: the Abbot, the Board President, the Treasurer, a representative of the senior students, the Health and Safety Coordinator, and the BZC Coordinator (Hozan, Mary Duryee, Laurie Senauke, Ron Nestor, Ellen Webb, Gerry Oliva).

We know how important resuming our in-person, warm-hand-to-warm-hand practice is for everyone. We are especially grateful for the patience and cooperation expressed among sangha members over this long haul, and for how fortunate we are to have a space to reopen and a supportive sangha dedicated to making this a safe process.

One-Day Sesshin

Aspects of Practice will close with a one-day sesshin on Saturday, November 13, 7:50 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., led by Ryushin Andrea Thach. If you signed up for the Practice Period and indicated that you would attend the sesshin, you are already signed up. If you did not sign up and wish to do so, please contact Mary Beth Lamb at sesshin@berkeleyzencenter.org by Wednesday, November 10.

When paying for sesshin, please indicate on your check or in the PayPal note field that your donation is for the "November Sesshin." The suggested donation is \$15, or whatever you can afford. Mail a check to BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 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.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Our annual Rohatsu sesshin will take place from Wednesday, December 1, through Sunday, December 5. Rohatsu is the traditional winter sesshin in observance of Buddha's enlightenment.

This year's program will again be on Zoom. To help us maintain continuity and focus, participants must sign up for a minimum of two consecutive full days. We will have a daily schedule starting at 7:50 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m. The schedule will include zazen, kinhin, service with bowing and chanting, a light at-home work period, dharma talks, and dokusan or practice discussion. Shosan (question and response with our Abbott Hozan Sensei) will be Sunday, December 5, 3:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to attend the Suzuki Roshi annual memorial ceremony (Saturday, December 4, 3:30 p.m.); any of the lectures at 10:15 a.m. daily; and the first period of morning zazen at 7:50 a.m.

A link to the sesshin application will be posted on the BZC website in early November. If you have any questions, please contact the sesshin director, Gary Artim, at 510-676-9756 or sesshin@berkeleyzencenter.org.

The Coordinating Team

When the pandemic began in March of 2020, I spoke with Sojun Roshi and we expanded our customary meeting with abbot, vice abbot, and coordinator to include the board president. Until Sojun's death, he and I thus met weekly with Gerry Oliva and Mary Duryee. The three of us have continued to meet regularly to consider and refine the many issues and decisions our sangha has been facing in circumstances that change from week to week. I can't find ways to fully express my gratitude to Gerry and Mary. Each of them works long hours

strategizing and planning how to sustain our BZC practice. Working with them has been smooth and harmonious, even when our meetings run on and on. Each of them is a model of devoted Zen practice moving from the meditation hall into the sometimes thankless world of temple administration.

At the end of this year, Gerry and Mary will rotate out of their respective positions. Carol Paul will be the new coordinator, and Karen Sundheim will be BZC's new board president. I have practiced with Carol and Karen for years, and we are already working together on this transition. Offering gratitude, love, and 108 bows, I honor Gerry and Mary, Carol and Karen—the old flowing seamlessly into the new.

—Hozan

More Transitions

As of this writing, the votes are more than 90% in and we are able to confirm three new Board members for the 2022–2023 term: Ellen Webb, Dan Jackson, and Penelope Thompson. Kudos and welcome!

We express deep gratitude for the service of the three members-at-large who are transitioning off the board after two terms of service: Gary Artim, Tom Painter, and Rondi Saslow. They have served us with steadfastness, reliability, and skill. Nine bows to all three.

Thank you to Carol Paul, who has served two terms as Vice President. She has provided invaluable support and brought a depth of knowledge to the board. She will be our new coordinator, and Hannah Meara will take on the Vice President position.

We are grateful for the continuing services of Laurie Senauke as Treasurer, Hozan as Abbot, and Helen Cheng as Office Manager. We welcome Joe Buckner as our first Archivist Assistant. Bows and gratitude for all.

Adopting New Guidelines for Our Listserv

While BZC's listserv has evolved through numerous changes over the years, it has become essential during the pandemic. The listserv has become our courtyard "bulletin board" — an important place for announcements of core events such as sesshins, all-sangha meetings, practice periods, and the like.

This is a significant extension of what it has been in the past: a place to share information; to post needs and services of sangha members (housing, items for sale, etc.); for announcements of personal interest; and for dialogue related to our Dharma practice.

It is now more important than ever that members and friends of BZC are welcomed to post and read on the listserv: it is an essential means of keeping abreast of official activities of BZC and the sangha members.

We have adopted new Guidelines for posts on the listserv, in order to foster right speech. The full guidelines can be reviewed here: <https://media.berkeleyzencenter.org/BZCListGuidelines.pdf>

As part of the implementation of the guidelines, we will have at least two listserv administrators (which will be BZC practice positions). The administrators will work in consultation with one another and with the Abbot and Coordinator, and will be empowered to intervene in order to encourage harmony in the sangha. They may also remove a post from the listserv, after consulting with the Abbot and/or the Coordinator. Our first administrators are Linda Hess and Tom Painter.

If you have unsubscribed to the BZC listserv in the past, we invite you to try it once more. If you would like to be added, please contact our coordinator — Gerry Oliva for 2021 (gryoliva@gmail.com) or Carol Paul for 2022 (caroljpaul@yahoo.com).

Addressing Racism

For over a year a work group has been meeting at BZC to address ways of creating an organization with full awareness of the impact of racism, and developing skillful means to address racism.

The next meeting will be November 21, from 9:00–11:00 a.m. That will be the last meeting of 2021. All interested BZC members are welcome. For more information, please contact Mary Duryee (maduryee@icloud.com) or Karen Sundheim (ksundheim@gmail.com).

Several projects have emerged from the large work group. A smaller group met to design and then launch reading groups. There are now three groups, involving more than twenty sangha members, who are reading Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands* and Larry Ward's *America's Racial Karma*. Another subgroup worked on rewriting our welcome of inclusivity, which now appears on every page of the website, and the final Eko in our full service.

We have added a new page on the website, titled "Embracing Liberation for All," which can be found under the "Practice" tab. A third subgroup worked on developing the Listserv Guidelines (see above article), and is now working on developing training, available to all sangha members, to learn how to identify and respond to micro-aggressions as they occur, and in a manner that is in line with our vows to awaken together and express compassion for one another. We expect this training to be offered in 2022.

Finally, here are a few suggested readings from several members of BZC's Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) group. Please feel free to contact soniatamez@sonic.net with your recommendations.

Charles Johnson, *Taming the Ox: Buddhist Stories and Reflections on Politics, Race, Culture and Spiritual Practice*

Ruth King, *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*

Rhonda McGee, *The Inner Work of Racial Justice*

Meikle Paschal, *The Black Buddhist: A Spiritual Journey*

Larry Wang, *Awakening Together: The Spiritual Practice of Inclusivity and Community*

Rev. angel Kyodo Williams, Lama Rod Owens, et al., *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*

Jan Willis (ed.), *Dharma Matters: Women, Race, and Tantra*

Jan Willis, *Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist, and Buddhist—One Woman's Spiritual Journey*

Pamela Ao Yetunde and Cheryl A. Giles (ed.), *Black and Buddhist: What Buddhism Can Teach Us About Race, Resilience, Transformation, and Freedom*

Jukai 2021

Hozan Sensei and Gerry Oliva will offer the Bodhisattva precepts and lay ordination to four BZC members on Saturday afternoon, November 6, at 3:00 p.m. Hozan will give jukai to Sam Melton and Jonathan Koltz. Gerry will give jukai to Sandeep Lehil and Kabir Nabi. The ceremony will take place in the zendo for the immediate participants. Sangha members, families, and friends are invited to witness the ceremony on Zoom via the BZC website's "Online Zendo" link.

Congratulations in advance to these lay ordinees. And great thanks to sewing teacher Jean Selkirk and to Hannah Meara.

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 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 4. More details will be provided in late November.

New Year's Eve Sitting

As is our tradition, Berkeley Zen Center will have a New Year's Eve sitting on the evening of December 31. However, since we are still not practicing at the temple due to the pandemic, it will be online. This year, after tea at around 10:00 p.m., we will read out the names of those who have died during 2021. If you have names to add to the list, contact Hannah Meara at hmeara@gmail.com.

Please join us for all or any part of New Year's Eve, sitting from 8:00 p.m. to midnight. If you have questions, please contact Carol Paul: caroljpaul@yahoo.com or 510-206-5051.

Thank You, Donors!

The BZC Board, on behalf of the whole community, offers nine deep bows to all those who donated to our midyear fundraising drive. Our goal was \$30,000—and we raised \$32,000.

We are in the midst of study of: ventilation; sanitation; technology of being in-person, Zoom, and hybrid; and archiving. All in preparation for how to be together in all our venues. Your support really matters. It makes a real difference and is a mark of our community, which has been generous, consistent, reliable, and stable.

Appreciation, appreciation, appreciation.

Caregiving Resources

From concerns about a distant loved one, to preserving the dignity of a spouse, to helping a friend stay in their home, caregiving takes many forms. In addition to recommending public and nonprofit resources, Sangha Support offers a quarterly meeting where you can discuss how your caregiving relates to your Zen practice.

For more information, please call Debbie Schley at 503-505-4282.

Interested in Becoming a BZC Member?

Membership is a significant step in our practice at Berkeley Zen Center. It acknowledges our commitment to be actively engaged in a regular zazen schedule with our teachers and sangha. If you have been sitting with BZC regularly for a few months or longer and wish to contribute to support the practice, we encourage you to become a BZC member.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please email Sue Oehser at membership@berkeleyzencenter.org.

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:

- 6:00–6:40 a.m.
- 7:30–8:10 a.m.

(See Calendar for special Monday morning schedule.)

- 5:40–6:20 p.m.

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 a.m., but via a different link.

Go to the BZC website and click “Zazen Instruction.”

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

November 6: Hozan Sensei
November 13: Andrea Thach
November 20: Mary Duryee
November 27: Hozan Sensei

December 4: Hozan Sensei
December 11: Joanna Macy
December 18: Hozan Sensei
December 25: Zendo closed

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

November 1: Open Discussion
November 8: Karen Sundheim
November 15: Pauline Kerschen
November 22: Evan Vreeland
November 29: TBA

December 6: No program after Rohatsu
December 13: Open Discussion
December 20: Zendo closed
December 27: Zendo closed

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

November 5: Open Discussion
December 3: No talk (Rohatsu)

The Dharma of Listening and Speaking

(Part 1)

In these contentious times, our words—public and private words—can wound or heal.

We see this in relationships, in society, and in the sangha. We also come to understand that what each of us hears is not necessarily what a speaker might have meant in speaking. This is the distinction of intention and impact, both of which are important.

In Buddhist traditions there is a wealth of teachings on Right Speech, which includes listening and speaking. But let's begin from the space of zazen. The titles of Dainin Katagiri Roshi's first two books bring us back to essentials. His first book is titled *Returning to Silence*. The second book is *You Have to Say Something*.

Returning to silence is hearing, listening; stepping into the receptive mind of zazen. Listening is the active component of hearing. Listen for a moment. I hear the refrigerator's sound, a car going by, birds in the yard. Listening takes place against a background of silence. This is also Bodhisattva practice. Avalokitesvara, Kannon, or Kwan Yin is referred to as "one who sees the cries of the world." In zazen, with all senses functioning, there is a kind of synesthesia—experiencing one sense through the workings of another. That is returning to silence, the all-inclusive experience of zazen.

But zazen mind is not a practice confined to the walls of the zendo, or to the frame of a Zoom screen. The full unfolding of zazen is in our life, where we are bound to have activities. We have to do something; we have to say something. We do zazen with our bodies as an activity. The active side of our practice completes the continuous circle of the way. We are always moving between returning to silence, listening, and having to say something.

I recently came across this excerpt from a 1967 lecture by Suzuki Roshi where he speaks about the practice of listening:

When you listen to someone, you should give up all your preconceived ideas and your subjective opinions; you should just listen to him, just observe what his way is. We put very little emphasis on right and wrong or good and bad. We just see things as they are with him or her, and accept them. This is how we communicate with each other. Usually when you listen to some statement, you hear it as a kind of echo of yourself. You are actually listening to your own opinion. If it agrees with your opinion you may accept it, but if it does not, you will reject it or you may not even really hear it.

Suzuki Roshi is suggesting that we ratchet back our habit of judging everything we listen to, of evaluating of right and wrong, good and bad. He is not suggesting that we ignore morality. But he is encouraging us to set aside self-centered views which subtly show up in many of our verbal exchanges. In the moment of listening to someone, try to see the cries of the world. Just see that person as he or she is right there. Whether you agree with them or not, make an effort to accept them. As Thich Nhat Hanh writes:

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and to relieve others of their suffering.

How we listen and how we speak is the heartbeat of a practical Zen Buddhism. Yes, the silence is deep and nourishing, but we inhabit that space just a small part of the time. Much more of our day is spent interacting with others. Even as we speak, we must always be listening and watching.

—Hozan Alan Senauke

(The Practice of Speaking will be Part 2, in the next newsletter.)

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the January–February 2022 issue is
Friday, December 17.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

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