



Berkeley Zen Center



November–December 2022 Newsletter

Rohatsu Sesshin

Each year we commemorate the Buddha's enlightenment with a seven-day Rohatsu sesshin. This year Abbot Hozan will lead Rohatsu from Monday, December 5, through Sunday, December 11, from 7:50 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The sesshin will be offered in-person as well as online. A signup form will be posted on the website several weeks prior to sesshin. Minimum participation is three days, of which two must be consecutive. Please register no later than Monday, November 28.

For all in-person participants, Covid protocols will apply. We require that you be fully vaccinated and boosted, and that you wear a KN94, N95, or KN95 mask indoors. We also ask that you get tested within 48 hours of the start of sesshin (an antigen rapid test will suffice), and if you have any Covid symptoms such as fever, cough, etc., that you shift to online participation.

If you need lodging at BZC, please contact Yoni Ackerman (shika@berkeleyzencenter.org) to arrange this.

We will be offering oryoki lunch in the zendo. Oryoki sets will be available for purchase, and there will be refresher oryoki training offered during the week (*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
Monday, 11/7, 7:00am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 11/13

Board Meeting
Sunday, 11/13, 9:00–11:00am

Zendo Holiday
Thursday, 11/24

December

Rohatsu Sesshin
Monday–Sunday, 12/5–12/11

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial
Monday, 12/5, 3:30pm

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony
Saturday, 12/10, 11:15am

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 12/12

Winter Break
Sunday 12/18 through Saturday 12/31

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party
Saturday, 12/31, 8:00pm–midnight

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

(Rohatsu Sesshin, continued from page 1)

between Thanksgiving and Rohatsu. There will also be a bag lunch option, to be eaten elsewhere on the premises, for those who do not wish to do oryoki.

There will be two special ceremonies during this sesshin (see the article below).

The suggested donation is \$25 per day, or whatever you can afford. You can mail a check to BZC Office Manager, 1931 Russell St., Berkeley 94703, or pay through the website using the "Sits/Classes" tab on the "Donate" page. Please indicate on your check or in the PayPal note field that your donation is related to the Rohatsu sesshin. Please also consider an additional donation to BZC above the suggested fee, to help us maintain our practice.

Please check the BZC website for further information and updates. If you have any questions, please email the sesshin director, Rob Lyons (robertlyons2305@gmail.com).

Suzuki Roshi Memorial and Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

During Rohatsu sesshin we will commemorate two significant ceremonies—Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's memorial (his passing was on December 4, 1971) and Buddha's Enlightenment.

Suzuki Roshi's memorial ceremony is an opportunity for sangha members to remember and appreciate our root teacher. Our ceremony this year will be on Monday, December 5, at 3:30 p.m., the first day of our seven-day Rohatsu sesshin.

Our Buddha's Enlightenment ceremony will be on Saturday, December 10, right after the lecture. It is a time to celebrate and express gratitude for our practice passed down through Shakyamuni Buddha.

Both ceremonies will take place in the zendo for Rohatsu participants and can also be attended through BZC's Zoom link. All are

welcome to join and participate.

Noontime Zazen Monitor/Doan Needed

BZC's noontime zazen periods (12:00–12:30 p.m.) provide a peaceful and restorative break during weekdays. We would like to offer such periods on all five weekdays. (We currently offer it Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.) We are looking for someone who can be the monitor and doan on Mondays (the Friday slot has been filled). This includes opening the zendo, checking vax status and proper mask, and serving as a doan (ringing the bells and acting as timekeeper). Training will be offered if you are unfamiliar with the tasks.

Interested people please contact Carol Paul (caroljpaul@yahoo.com or 510-206-5051). Thank you for supporting our practice.

What Is a Good Life?

On three Monday evenings—November 7, 21, and 28, at 7:15pm—BZC is pleased to host Shaykh Yassir Chadfly in dialogue with Abbot Hozan about "a good life" in our respective Sufi and Zen traditions. Yassir, a Sufi imam born in Morocco, has ministered to Bay Area Islamic communities for many years. From 2002 to 2017 he taught Islamic and Sufi studies at U.C. Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union. Yassir and Hozan have been good friends since the 1990s, sharing music and the wisdom of their respective spiritual paths. Yassir has visited and lectured at BZC several times. His warm-hearted presence is uplifting.

We can accommodate up to thirty people in the zendo itself (vaccination card required), and we will be live-streaming on Zoom as well. The suggested class fee is \$30. See the BZC website for registration:

<https://berkeleyzencenter.org/2022/10/07/what-is-a-good-life-begins-nov-7/>

For further information, contact class coordinator Ryushin Andrea Thach at andrea.thach@gmail.com

Lay Ordination

On Saturday, October 15, nine members of the BZC sangha received Lay Ordination (*Zaike Tokudo*) from Abbot Hozan, Peter Overton, Gerry Oliva, and Ryushin Andrea Thach.

This ceremony takes place once a year at BZC and is a significant rite of passage for each participant and for the whole sangha. We have the feeling that we are all together witnessing and participating as the ordinees receive Buddha's precepts. We welcome these friends into the lineage of Shakyamuni Buddha and Suzuki Roshi's family. Great thanks to Sewing Teacher Jean Selkirk, along with Hannah Meara and Kabir Nabi. Laurie Senauke did a wonderful job working out the many details for this ceremony.

Hozan's ordinees:

Helen Cheng—Jinkai Tatsugen/Renhai Dayuan (Ocean of Compassion/Reach the Source)

Heather Sarantis—Kokai Seigō (Vast Ocean/Manifest Awakening)

Yoni Ackerman—Wakai Shōnin (Peaceful Ocean/Luminous Person)

Joe Buckner—Genkai Shinyū (Subtle or Dark Ocean/True Courage)

Peter Overton's ordinee:

Diane Ritchey—Myōgetsu Jinsei (Subtle Moon/Compassionate Essence)

Ryushin Andrea Thach's ordinees:

Nick Robinson—Ro-un Meishi (Buoyancy Cloud/Illuminate Stillness)

Nathan Britton—Tokushu Egen (Virtuous Shelter/Wisdom Manifest)

Gerry Oliva's ordinees:

Phillip Sherard—Yakusan Yūshin (Medicine Mountain/Brave Heart)

Ten Bartholomew—Kyokin Shōdō (Great Diligence/Illuminating the Way)



New Year's Eve at BZC

Y'all come to BZC's annual contemplative New Year's Eve celebration! We will meet via Zoom from 8:00 p.m. until midnight for zazen and kinhin. From 10:05 until 10:30 we will have tea together, seeing each other on our screens. When kinhin resumes at 10:30 the first of 108 bells on the densho, will begin, accompanied by reading the names of those who died this year. Just after midnight we will chant the Heart Sutra, followed by a statement from Abbot Hozan. All can then unmute, to share New Year's greetings.

Sojun Roshi Ashes Interment

A portion of Sojun Roshi's ashes will be interred beneath his memorial stone in the garden behind the zendo on Saturday morning, January 7, at 10:45, following a short talk by Abbot Hozan. The interment ceremony will be simple, and there will be an opportunity for all present to offer fresh blossoms.

At a later date (not yet determined), Sojun's remaining ashes will be interred and a memorial stone will be placed at Tassajara on the hillside site of Suzuki Roshi's memorial site.

Lay Entrustment for Mary Duryee

Mary Duryee—Hokyo Josu/Original Home, Calm Center—will receive Lay Entrustment from Abbot Hozan on Monday morning, January 9, in a hybrid ceremony. After a short period of zazen, Hozan will offer Mary a green rakusu and entrustment as a lay teacher in Berkeley Zen Center's Soto lineage. Following the ceremony Mary will give a short talk and take dharma questions from the sangha. Please come to support Mary and our dharma family.

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 2023–2024 term: Fulani Offutt, Heather Sarantis, and Rob Walker. 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: Sue Oehser, Linda Hess, and Dean Bradley. They have served us with steadfastness, reliability, and skill. Nine bows to all three.

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

Bow to Our Donors

The BZC Board wants to express our deep gratitude to all those who donated to our mid-year fundraising drive. Our goal was \$30,000—and we raised just a little over that!

We are zeroing in on the project of improving heat and ventilation in both units at 1929 Russell (the Community Room and the upstairs residence) and at the same time converting to electric heat instead of gas, on behalf of our planet. Your support really matters as we continue to move forward—carefully, persistently, and together—caring for our temple in the ever-changing world.

Bag Lunch Project News

The Bag Lunch Project has continued to provide 40 lunches twice monthly throughout the pandemic, half delivered to the Women's Drop-In Center in Berkeley and half offered to homeless folks in downtown Berkeley and People's Park. People are so appreciative of this.

The city of Berkeley and UC Berkeley have combined efforts and financial support to lease the Rodeway Inn on University Avenue for a year, housing about forty folks from People's Park. Their partnership will also include a daytime drop-in center at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. UC Berkeley is paying \$500,000 and the city is paying \$250,000 for meals, mental health counseling, support with documents, housing navigation, and other services. This is good news!

We plan to continue providing lunches to the Women's Drop-In Center. Because many of the people on the street we previously served are now being housed, we are looking at other ways to continue to support the homeless in Berkeley. Several of our members are researching how we might support places like the Rodeway Inn, Dorothy Day, or Bridget House (a sister project to the Women's Drop-In Center).

As always, we welcome your contributions. Thank you to BZC's board, which has continued to offer financial support to the project. And to Berkeley Bowl, which has given us a discount on sandwiches throughout the pandemic. We are about to return to making our own sandwiches, which we used to do when the project started three years ago.

If you would like to join the Bag Lunch Project, please contact Susan Marvin (lai_hang@yahoo.com). The group changes according to life unfolding, and we welcome your participation and ideas! Each task takes

about an hour: we shop, make sandwiches, put together bags, and deliver/offer lunches. If you would like to make a contribution, please go to the BZC site Generosity page AND let Helen Cheng (bzcofficeanager@gmail.com) know that you did that OR send a check to BZC, noting what your contribution is for.

Thank you for your continued support.

—Preston, Mira, Penelope, Tom,
Maria Teresa, Laurie, Susan



*A homeless man plays a tune for us on his lap harp, and says,.
"Thank you for listening, and thank you for not walking by me."*

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

November 5:	Abbot Hozan
November 12:	Bob Rosenbaum
November 19:	Luminous Heart Thompson
November 26:	Abbot Hozan
December 3:	Carol Paul
December 10:	TBA
December 17:	Abbot Hozan

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

November 7:	HEAR Presentation
November 14:	Emily Fenster
November 21:	Juen Friederike Boissevain
November 28:	Rob Walker
December 5:	No talk (sesshin)
December 12:	No talk (zendo holiday)

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

November 4:	Taryn Eliot
December 2:	Kurt Kowalski

Current Weekly Schedule

Many of our programs are now open to a limited number of in-person masked attendees. If you are interested in attending, please send your vax and booster information to the Office Manager (bzcoffice manager@gmail.com) AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE YOU ATTEND (if you come sooner than that, also bring your vax card and ID with you).

Our programming varies between in-person-only, online-only, and hybrid. See the BZC website (berkeleyzencenter.org) for details.

Recent Jukai Ceremony

On October 15, for the first time in two years, we held a Jukai (Lay Ordination) Ceremony, long awaited due to the pandemic. There were nine ordinees: Diane Ritchey, Heather Sarantis, Helen Cheng, Joe Buckner, Nathan Britton, Nick Robinson, Phillip Sherard, Tenacity Bartholomew, and Yoni Ackerman. For the first time there were four preceptors: Hozan Alan Senauke, Gerry Oliva, Ryushin Andrea Thach, and Peter Overton.

The ceremony is one of giving and receiving Buddha's precepts. What are precepts? In our sangha, and also in our world, precepts are about how we conduct our relations with others, and with ourselves. In fact, all of Buddha's teaching is accessible through the lens of relationship, including the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

How are precepts "given"? Completely, and for all time; they cannot be given back. It is a significant undertaking on the part of the ordinees, and this ceremony is a form of recognition of their commitment to, and love of, this practice of not knowing, which is most intimate.

In the ceremony we share a significant moment with each other. The ordinees show up completely and are invited to vow to do an impossible task, which none of us know how to do.

This is one of the many ways our sangha supports everyone by creating and enacting ways for us to support each other. In this ceremony, the ordinees support the whole sangha through their vows. And in this moment we support them by bearing witness, by seeing and hearing them, by sharing the same space, breathing the same air.

The ceremony begins with an invocation, followed by avowal by the ordinees of their past unwholesome karma. This is an acceptance of mistakes and otherwise unwise choices. One forgives oneself by abandoning any ideas of "improving" our past, all the while staying connected to what we most deeply care about.

Next there is a ritual purification of the ceremony space, performed by the abbot, which includes all the participants and guests (including Zoom attendees) and the whole of the present moment, in the "ten directions."

Then the ordinees receive the Three Refugees and the Precepts (recited by the preceptors and repeated by the ordinees). These are different from our usual recitations of vows and precepts, which are meant as reminders in our everyday practice.

This is a statement of one's deepest intention; an enactment of a shift in relationship on several levels: between practitioner and precepts; between ordinee and sangha; between now and some other moment.

Then the ordinees receive their new (Dharma) name, meant to convey their preceptors' sense of each person and pointing to a direction of growth. They also receive a lineage document outlining their connection to the "warm hand to warm hand" transmission of the precepts going back to the Buddha.

Each person has also sewn their own rakusu, reciting "I take refuge in Buddha" with each stitch. Plunging in wholeheartedly. How many stitches? Who knows? Students are encouraged to do their best, but not go down the rabbit hole of perfection. The Middle Way.

Much gratitude to all those who worked to make this ceremony possible in this same spirit.

—Peter Overton

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the January–February issue is
Friday, December 16.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Berkeley Zen Center
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