



Berkeley Zen Center



September–October 2020 Newsletter

We're Not Going Anywhere

Long ago, when BZC was still on Dwight Way, a policeman, seeing the lights on, knocked at the front door in the early hours of morning. The officer was checking that everything was okay. Sojun answered politely that some people were meditating up in the attic. The policeman looked a little puzzled and asked something like, "Where do you think you're going with this?" Sojun said, "We're not going anywhere."

In September of 2020, in this season of pandemic, in a week of wildfires with smoke hanging heavy in the air, we are still not going anywhere. BZC's in-person practice is on hold until at least the end of the year. Along with so many others in California, we are trying to contain the Covid-19 infection. In late December we'll consider if circumstances warrant at least a partial reopening.

Meanwhile, we are doing all we can to maintain a steady program on a digital platform: daily zazen, lectures, classes, and dokusan. Thank you for your participation and practice. We will see you online. We're not going anywhere.



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

September

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 9/7

All-Sangha Gathering/Board Nominations
Sunday, 9/13, 7:00pm

New Member Entering Ceremony
Monday, 9/14, 7:30am

Half-Day Sesshin
Saturday, 9/19

October

Women's Retreat
Sunday, 10/18

Half-Day Sesshin
Saturday, 10/24

Group Dokusan with Sojun Roshi

Sojun Roshi is now offering group dokusan twice a month. All sangha members are welcome to attend these gatherings (via Zoom) whether or not they ask a question. There are usually eight to ten people scheduled, but there is often extra time for additional questions from others.

These group dokusan meetings take place on two Thursday evenings each month at 7:00. For the particular dates, see the BZC calendar at <https://berkeleyzencenter.org/calendar-3/>. Please check in at 6:50 p.m. to settle in with some zazen.

To sign up to ask Sojun a question, please contact Gary Artim (510-676-9756 or gartim@gmail.com).

Berkeley Zen Video—Consent & Privacy

Since the start of the pandemic this winter, Berkeley Zen Center has moved onto a digital platform for zazen, lectures, classes, and meetings. This platform utilizes Zoom technology, which allows us to record high-quality audio and video of our public teachings.

The audio recordings are easily found on the BZC website by clicking on “Dharma” at the top of the page, then clicking on the submenu “Talks.” Recordings stored there go back to 2008. The direct link to those audio talks is: <https://berkeleyzencenter.org/talks-2/>. Video recordings, as they are created and posted, can be found on our new YouTube channel: “Berkeley Zen Video” — <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2UKL6vJNCB4c5DVkeK4C0w>.

We recognize that some members have understandable concerns about online privacy. BZC has enabled a “recording consent disclaimer” which appears on participants’

screens any time the host is recording a session. If one does not wish to be recorded, this allows an option to leave the session. The language of the disclaimer is:

By continuing to be in the meeting, you are consenting to be recorded. Please understand that question-and-answer sessions following dharma talks are also recorded, and the questioner is highlighted. If you wish to ask an anonymous question, please “chat” to the Saturday director.

In addition to the onscreen message that appears on each participant’s screen, the Saturday Director will make a brief announcement that we are recording. Please note that only the speaker or the questioner appears on screen. Questioners on the video are not identified by name.

If you have further comments and concerns about privacy or about this new project, please contact Hozen Alan Senauke at berkeleyzenvideo@gmail.com.

Virtual Half-Day Sesshins

BZC will be offering virtual half-day sesshins from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 19, and on Saturday, October 24. These sesshins will include zazen, kinhin, service, and a dharma talk. Lunch will be on your own.

Hozen Sensei will lead the September sesshin; Sojun Roshi will lead the October sesshin.

Further details to follow soon from co-sesshin directors Mary Beth Lamb (who will direct the September sesshin) and Kika Hellein (who will direct the October sesshin). You can contact either of them at sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com.

The suggested sesshin donation is \$15, or whatever you can afford. Mail a check to the BZC Office Manager at 1931 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703, or pay through the BZC

website by going to the “Generosity” page and clicking the “Sits/Classes” tab. Please consider a donation to Berkeley Zen Center above the suggested fee to help us maintain our practice through the current crisis.

Annual Women’s Retreat

Our annual Women’s Retreat (via Zoom this year) will be Sunday, October 18.

The retreat will be led by Seishin Gyokuko Karen DeCotis, a transmitted priest of Sojun Roshi, who practices in Bozeman, Montana. Karen says: “The theme of the day will be: Are you and your soul separated?, drawing on the famous koan of Senjo. Women in particular often suffer the travail between service to the world and self care and knowledge. How can we embody the full range of the feminine to both honor this individual existence as well as offer ourselves to the world in fulfillment of our Bodhisattva Vow? In our time together we will experientially dive into the feminine energies of the practice, which include both wisdom and compassion, strength and softness, rigor and nurture. The retreat will offer guided and silent meditation, reflection, journaling, dialogue, stories, and shared examination of being women in practice.”

The retreat will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. We will share a virtual brown-bag lunch together.

The suggested dana for the day is \$15, or whatever you can afford. There will be a reminder notice in late September that will include an online registration sign-up sheet. For more information or questions, please contact Sesshin Director Penelope Thompson (penelopethompson9@gmail.com or 213-255-0776).

Weekly Chanting

Every Tuesday morning from 8:15–8:45 a.m. we are doing chanting practice. During this half hour, we chant dharanis for the healing and protection of all suffering beings. Chanting can be thought of as a form of action meditation. As we chant we hold the sincere intention to accompany in heart all those who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit, especially in these challenging times. It is a powerful practice, and you are welcome to join us.

Interested in Becoming a Member of BZC?

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. During this time of Covid, we have developed ways to keep our practice alive and thriving using Zoom. 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 member of Berkeley Zen Center. Members make regular dues donations, vote in Board elections, and can check out library books (after Covid). They also may be asked to join a committee or hold a practice position.

Please contact the Office Manager at bzcofficermanager@gmail.com if you are interested in becoming a member. The Office Manager will forward your contact information to our New Member Committee, who will then be in touch with you to review the process.

New Members Entering Ceremony

Our annual Entering Ceremony for new members will be on Monday, September 14, 7:30 a.m. If you are a new BZC member, or if you are a member who has never participated in this ceremony and would now like to, please contact Carol Paul (carolipaul@yahoo.com or 510- 206-5051).

Although during this time the sangha cannot meet new members with an in-person bow, BZC heartedly welcomes and looks forward to greeting them in our virtual online zendo at the ceremony.

All-Sangha Meeting: Nominations for the BZC Board

An all-sangha meeting will be held Sunday, September 13, at 7:00 p.m., which will include nominations for the BZC Board. Each year the sangha affirms three of its six members-at-large for two-year terms to the BZC Board. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Elections take place in October and the new term starts in January 2021.

This year, all three of the at-large Board members who will finish their first terms at the end of 2020 are willing to serve another term: Sue Oehser, Linda Hess, and Dean Bradley. BZC members will have the opportunity to affirm them in an online ballot process in October. (The at-large members who are in the middle of their terms are Tom Painter, Gary Artim, and Rondi Saslow.)

On that ballot, the members will also have the opportunity to affirm the three salaried positions at BZC: abbot, vice abbot, and office manager.

In the foreseeable future, BZC will have a new abbot. On behalf of the Board, the sangha is invited to affirm Hozan Alan Senauke as the

new abbot. This too will be on the ballot.

If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the Board, please pass their name on to Ed Herzog, Rondi Saslow, or Carol Paul (BZC Nominations and Elections Committee members). We are always interested in potential Board members!

A great deal of care, time, and commitment has been put into the nominating process to make it as fair and unbiased as possible.

All BZC members and friends are invited to attend the sangha meeting. Please join us for this important conversation.

Berkeley Action to Feed the Hungry

Bay Area Buddhist communities come together each year to support Buddhist Global Relief, an organization that directly addresses hunger and poverty around the world. BZC is once again co-sponsoring this year's BGF fundraising Walk for Hunger. The Berkeley Action to Feed the Hungry, which has moved online, will take place Saturday, October 3, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. For more information on this event, please go to:

<https://secure.frontstream.com/berkeley2020>

In addition to making an online donation, there are two ways to participate in the Walk:

1) *Make a Mindful Movement Pledge.* Pledge to do an activity in support of the Action to Feed the Hungry. This might be walking or cycling, for example. Share your Mindful Movement Pledge via the above link, and encourage others to donate in support of your efforts.

2) *Join our Buddhist Action to Feed the Hungry online gathering.* On Saturday, October 3, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time, we will gather online to hear from our host temples: Berkeley Buddhist Monastery, Berkeley Buddhist Temple, and Berkeley Zen Center. We'll share

a video of Mindful Movement activities and hear from BGR Executive Director Kim Behan and from Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi, Founder and Chair of BGR.

Please join us in support of this important and compassionate work!

Thank You, Members!

The BZC Board offers deep bows to our members for continuing to make dues payments during this difficult time. We are also grateful to past Board members, treasurers, and fundraisers for many careful and far-sighted decisions over many years, including paying off our mortgages and setting up a “21st Century Fund” which has become our Leadership fund.

Monday Teas

Open discussion over virtual tea is now happening every Monday from 5:00 p.m. until evening zazen. It is currently hosted by Heiko John Lake.

The Buddhas Rejoice

In the undetermined but not-too-distant future, BZC will mark two joyous occasions in the sangha. Sojun Roshi writes: “We are pleased to let you know that the abbots and the BZC priest group have given Kika Susan Hellein permission to sew an okesa in preparation for priest ordination: *shukke tokudo*. If anyone wants to put some stitches in her robe, please see Kika.”

Daito Steve Weintraub has invited Nyokai Laurie Senauke to study and sew in preparation for dharma transmission: *shiho*—recognition as a full Zen priest. Steve writes: “I want to share with you the joyful news that I have offered transmission to Laurie Senauke. Laurie and I first practiced together at Tassajara in 1984, and we have remained close since then. In recent years we have formalized a teacher-student relationship, and Laurie has been practicing with the Presidio Hill Zen Group which I lead. I feel deeply her rightness for receiving transmission—her many years of practice, her deep insight, and her bodhisattva life: truly, a vessel of the Dharma.”

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 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!)

Tea and Chat:

Mondays, 5:00 p.m. until afternoon zazen.

Chanting for All Who Are Suffering:

Tuesdays, 8:15–8:45 a.m.

Well-Being 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:

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 a month (check BZC website calendar for dates).

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

September 5:	Sojun Roshi
September 12:	Penelope Thompson
September 19:	Hozan Sensei
September 26:	Ellen Webb
October 3:	Hozan Sensei
October 10:	Sojun Roshi
October 17:	Mary Duryee
October 24:	Sojun Roshi
October 31:	Gerry Oliva

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

September 7:	Zendo closed
September 14:	New Members Entering Ceremony
September 21:	Emily Fenster
September 28:	Taryn Elliot
October 5:	Joe Buckner
October 12:	TBA
October 19:	Phillip Sherard
October 26:	TBA

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:50 p.m.

September 4:	Sojun Roshi
October 2:	TBA

Think Not Thinking

Often we read or hear that we should stop the activity of thinking in order to meditate properly. But that is almost impossible. The mechanism of thinking is going on constantly like a rushing torrent, and although you can stop it for a few moments, it always wins. It's like the bubbles in a fish tank. When we sit, we think the thought of zazen. When we breath, we think the thought of breathing, when sitting up straight, we think the thought of balance, and when working, we think the thought of work. In other words, our thought and our activity become one. Thinking and that which is thought are not separate.

Master Dogen calls this ("Think not thinking") the art of zazen. When there is no gap, there is no discrimination. When our thoughts wander, as they will because they are always hungry, we bring them home where they belong, and include them in some satisfying work. When our thoughts sit zazen, they become enlightened. So when you sit, think the thought of zazen.

—SOJUN ROSHI



"We can get through this (pandemic)"

(Sumi painting by Kazumi Cranney)

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the November–December 2020 issue is
Friday, October 23.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703