



Berkeley Zen Center



September–October 2025 Newsletter

Ron Nestor (1949–2025)



Ron Nestor, long-time member and beloved friend of Berkeley Zen Center, passed away on July 20 in Eugene, Oregon, where he had recently moved with his wife, Karin Lundstrom. *(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

September

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 9/1

Founders' Ceremony
Friday, 9/5, 7:00am

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 9/6, 9:30am

Half-Day Sitting
Sunday, 9/7

All-Sangha Meeting & Board Nominations
Sunday, 9/14, 7:15pm

One-Day Study Sitting
Saturday, 9/20

Board Meeting
Sunday, 9/21, 9:00–11:00am

Beginners' Sitting
Sunday, 9/28

October

Bodhisattva Ceremony
Saturday, 10/4, 9:30am

Lay Ordination
Saturday, 10/4, 3:00pm

Founders' Ceremony
Tuesday, 10/7, 7:00am

One-Day Sitting (Open Aspects of Practice)
Saturday, 10/11

Zendo Holiday
Monday, 10/13

Board Meeting
Sunday, 10/19, 9:00–11:00am

Sejiki Ceremony & Celebration
Saturday, 10/25

(Continued from page 1)

Ron first came to BZC and was a resident in the early days when the zendo was on Dwight Way. From then on he was a committed Zen practitioner and devoted student of Sojun Roshi.

After BZC moved to its current location on Russell Street, Ron was integral to building the new zendo and he remained committed to the many ongoing building and maintenance projects the temple required. For fifty years he regularly sat zazen mornings, weekends, and sesshins. He performed virtually all the practice positions at BZC, and with humor and good grace trained others to perform them as well. He welcomed newcomers with genuine interest, and was a font of knowledge and patience when asked anything from how to mop the kitchen floor to why Bodhidharma came from the West.

He will be remembered as an inspiring teacher, a quiet foundation of our sangha, and a model of the bodhisattva way as he quietly manifested his dharma name: Plain Simple, Ordinary Way.

We will miss you, Ron.

Vote on New Abbot

BZC members will have the opportunity to vote whether to approve Linda Galijan Roshi as our next Abbot. The final vote will occur at our All-Sangha meeting on September 14 at 7:15 p.m. in the online zendo. The Board and BZC leadership are committed to being as inclusive as possible, so we will offer an “absentee ballot” option September 1–14. You will receive this electronic ballot by email before September 1. Our bylaws state that the Abbot must be approved by a two-thirds vote by members.

The All-Sangha meeting will also include introduction of 2026 Board officers and four new candidates for at-large Board positions. Sangha members will be asked to vote on this slate by electronic ballot October 1–31. There is also an opportunity for any sangha member to nominate an at-large candidate at the September 14 meeting. Currently, the positions which we will vote for include: Colleen Busch as President; Jonathan Koltz as Vice President; Pauline Kerschen, Rich Freitas, Mary Duryee, and Clay Taylor as at-large members.

Sesshins and Sittings

Sunday, September 7, 8:00 a.m. to noon, we will have a **half-day sitting**. The fee is \$10 or whatever amount you can give. To sign up or to ask any questions, please contact Peter Carpentieri (peterc.mft@gmail.com).

Saturday, September 20, we will have a **one-day study sitting**. Suggested donation is \$35 or whatever amount you can give. For more information, please contact Mark Copithorne (copithorne@hotmail.com).

Sunday, September 28, we will have a **beginners’ sitting**. (See the next article.)

Saturday, October 11, we will have a **one-day sitting** (opening Aspects of Practice). Suggested donation is \$35 or whatever amount you can give. For more information, please contact Mark Copithorne (copithorne@hotmail.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.

Beginners' Sitting

Please join us for a special beginners' sitting that comes around only twice a year. The sitting will be led by Judy Fleischman and Ikushin Gerry Oliva. The focus will be on the basics of Suzuki Roshi's practice: zazen, kinhin, and bowing. New students will receive clear explanations of our sometimes challenging forms, while more experienced students will have a chance to fine-tune their practice. The sitting will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 28, and will be in-person only (no online participation).

The fee is \$15 or whatever you can afford. To sign up, or for further information, please contact Helen Cheng (mankattan@yahoo.com).

Residency Opening

BZC is now accepting applications for a residency opening beginning November 1, 2025, in a shared apartment.

Residency is a training program that requires (1) regular attendance at daily zazen, Saturday programs, sesshins, and classes, and (2) taking a practice position.

Guidelines and an application will be sent upon inquiry. Please contact Head Resident Brianna McGuire at bmcguire442@gmail.com.

Final date for applications: September 15.

Lay Ordination

Please join our sangha members who will be receiving precepts at the annual Lay Ordination ceremony on Saturday, October 4, at 3:00 p.m. On this joyous occasion, after six months of sewing and study, the ordinees will receive their inscribed rakusus, dharma name, and lineage papers from their preceptor. In our attendance we, too, renew our vows as we support our sangha friends. The ordinees this

year are: Anna Tabachnik, Dan Jackson, Jeremiah Holland, Karma Mishra, Marley Alexander, Michael Donnoe, Taryn Elliot, and Paolo Costa.

This will be a hybrid event, with limited attendance in the zendo and community room, but all are invited to join the reception, which will take place at about 4:30 in the courtyard.

Sejiki Ceremony (Feeding the Hungry Ghosts)

On Saturday, October 26, BZC will again celebrate Sejiki, a traditional Soto Zen ceremony, calling forth and feeding hungry ghosts, spirits of the departed, and the hungry ghosts within each of us. To allow preparation time for the ceremony, we will not be having early morning zazen or breakfast. Instead, we will begin with a work period at 7:45 a.m. to prepare our temple for the ceremony, including setting up the altar. The formal program will start with zazen at 9:40, followed by a short lecture and the ceremony at 10:15. Weather permitting, the ceremony will take place outside in the courtyard with an altar filled with fruit, cakes, and other food offerings for the ghosts.

Children are especially welcome. They participate with adults in making loud clashing sounds with noisemakers (some are provided, and you can also bring your own) so hungry ghosts know they are very welcome. Children and adults are also welcome to wear Halloween costumes (or not). At the ceremony we will read the names of all those who have died since last year's ceremony. David Rutschman will be the Ceremony Director for this event.

For further information, or to send names you wish to be included in the ceremony, please contact Gerry Oliva (gryoliva@gmail.com).

Aspects of Practice

This fall we will have a scaled-back version of our Aspects of Practice Period: October 11 to November 8, led by senior students. It will include two one-day sittings (October 11 and November 8) and a hybrid Thursday class on the Sandokai.

There won't be a separate sign-up form for Aspects; registration forms for the class and the sittings will be available on the BZC website in mid-September. We hope you'll join us.

Memorial Celebration for Hozan

On August 10 at The Freight Coffeehouse in downtown Berkeley we celebrated the life and mourned the death of Hozan Alan Senauke, who served as Abbot of BZC from January 2021 until December 2024. The service began with a deep and settling Zen ceremony led by Abiding Teacher Greg Fain. The rest of the program alternated between heartfelt tributes by speakers across Hozan's life and worlds and wonderful music by a number of bluegrass, old-time, and Cajun musicians who had played with him. Many attendees noted that they experienced a great sense of communion.

There is a video of the gathering on BZC's YouTube Channel. You can also find the link to it on the BZC website home page.

Position Changes

There have been several position changes in recent months:

We welcome Finn Ellis as the new Website Content Editor, taking over from Jim Erb and Laurie Senauke. Jim is now the Project Manager (replacing Greg Denny) and Laurie is now the Coordinator (with assistance from Joe Buckner).

Dan Jackson is the current BZC Treasurer, taking over from Erna Andre. Kitchen Cleaner Preston Evers has passed that position on to Kyle Stephens. Patrick McMahon is tending the Dokusan Hut and James Frank is the new Community Room Attendant.

Mary Beth Lamb will take over Listserv Monitoring from Tom Painter. Tom is the new facilitator of the HEAR committee, taking over from Stan Dewey.

If we left any transitions out, apologies. Deep bows to those who have taken care of these many areas of our sangha life, and more bows to those who have stepped into new roles; our ancestor Maylie Scott characterized our practice: "Devotedly do!"

If you don't have a volunteer position at BZC and would like one, we would be delighted to bring you on board. Please contact the Coordinator at lauriesenauke@gmail.com.

Quan Yin Scroll

The fascinating and powerful scroll currently hanging in the BZC zendo is a Chinese-influenced etching of Quan Yin. With fluid gender attributes, Quan Yin (Avalokiteshvara) is known as the Bodhisattva of Compassion, the “one who hears the cries of the world.” In this scroll Quan Yin floats in space, on gentle leaves, above rock-hard mountains.

Sam Melton, who started to practice with Sojun Roshi in the late 1970s, donated the scroll “in honor of my deep appreciation of Sojun and the effect he has had on my Zen practice.”

Sam received the scroll from his friend Shang Yang, whom he met at the Gyuto Tantric Monastery in Richmond. Mr. Yang, currently ill with cancer, has returned to Nepal to live in a monastery. He gave this scroll to Sam as a gesture of their long friendship and shared beliefs in the practice of Buddhism.



Looking Ahead: Sangha Work Day

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, November 2, which will be a Sangha Work Day. There are always projects that take a bit longer than a sesshin work period, so we hope you can participate! If you have any questions, please email the project manager, James Erb (jameserb@gmail.com).

Looking Ahead: Rohatsu Sesshin

Sesshins and one-day sits are a great way to practice in the many positions that make sesshins and Saturday programs possible, such as serving for oryoki, assisting in the kitchen with meal prep, and heading up a dishwashing crew, as well as leading chants and sounding the bells and mokugyo during service.

Our seven-day Rohatsu Sesshin each December is a particularly good opportunity to immerse yourself in a new position. It's helpful (and with some positions, essential) to receive training ahead of time. If you're curious about or interested in receiving training in any of these positions, Rohatsu Sesshin Director Colleen Busch invites you to contact her now at sesshindirectorcolleen@gmail.com. She will connect you with the appropriate person for training.

Don't wait! Life is swiftly passing and Rohatsu will soon be upon us.

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

- September 6: Abiding Teacher Greg Fain
- September 13: Mushim Patricia Ikeda
- September 20: Abiding Teacher Linda Galijan
- September 27: Sue Moon

- October 4: Abiding Teacher Greg Fain
- October 11: TBD
- October 18: Dana Takagi
- October 25: Abiding Teacher Linda Galijan

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

- September 1: Zendo Holiday
- September 8: Open Discussion
- September 15: James Frank
- September 22: Zachary Sherman
- September 29: Joel Feigen

- October 6: Open Discussion
- October 13: Zendo Holiday
- October 20: Tom Painter
- October 27: Rich Freitas

Friday Afternoon Talks, 5:45 p.m.

- September 5: Sandeep Lehil
- October 3: Rob Walker

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.

In the Family of Buddha

Dear Berkeley Zen Center sangha, beloved community,

One year ago, Greg and I arrived back at BZC, our home temple. As I sit here writing to you, my heart is so full, and I am finding myself at a loss for words. Still, as Katagiri Roshi said, “You have to say something.” So I will do my best to express what is in my heart, and see where it takes us.

I will start with what is most clear and present, which is the profound gratitude I feel for all of you, the Berkeley Zen Center sangha. From the time we arrived, people have been asking, “Do you have everything you need? How can I support you?” It is humbling to receive such sustained and attentive kindness and care. I hope to be worthy of the abundance of your warm offerings.

I also want to express special gratitude to the Tanto-Ino group, Laurie, Ross, and Susan, and to Board President Karen Sundheim. In our weekly meetings they shared their feelings for BZC forms, ceremonies, organizational structures, past and present, as well as the depth of their practice. They helped guide Greg and me in so many ways, and their generosity, patience, and availability have been an enormous support in our continuous learning and growth over the past year.

As I look ahead, I see that my view has gradually shifted from just what needs to be taken care of immediately to a longer view. More recently, my horizon has expanded to the next three to five years and beyond. BZC is such a vibrant, thriving place of practice, and my fundamental intention is to support the continuation and further flourishing of the warm heart of our practice and sangha life.

I have also been reflecting deeply on what “appropriate responses” might look like as we explore ways to meet the increasingly urgent cries of the world, which includes the suffering being experienced here and now by BZC members and our friends and families. I have been in conversation with both individuals and the Board, and I hope that I will have the opportunity to hear from many more of you regarding your own experiences, feelings, and suggestions.

Not surprisingly, I have been reflecting on all that brought me to this present moment. I see that over time I have become inextricably woven into this, my chosen family—the family of Buddha—and to find my true place in Suzuki Roshi’s lineage and Sojun Roshi’s house. I am deeply honored to be entrusted to pass on our lineage in their names.

When Greg and I finished dharma transmission with Sojun Roshi at Tassajara in 2012, on the morning after the conclusion of the week-long ceremony we gathered in the Abbot’s garden. Hozan was taking lots of pictures of the three of us, Greg and I in our new brown okesas. Sojun turned to the two of us and said, “Your practice is just beginning.”

Today as I contemplate the coming months and years, I am feeling the truth of his words in my bones. To continually return to beginner’s mind, letting go again and again of how we think things ought to be, making space for the unexpected, keeps our practice fresh and alive. I have been feeling

particularly fresh this past year, and I know this practice will keep me grounded as I continue to walk this path with all of you.

I am blessed to have two heart-homes, Berkeley Zen Center and Tassajara (a great fortune that I share with Sojun). My first period of morning zazen at BZC felt completely right, so I just kept coming every day. I went to Tassajara because I felt called to devote my life to intensive practice in community, and to be of service.

After twenty years of whole-hearted training, to be invited to dedicate myself to service to the sangha jewel of my home temple, to throw myself into the house of Buddha in this completely unexpected way, is a gift of trust beyond anything I could have imagined. I feel the flow of trust in both directions, the mutuality of giver, receiver, and gift.

There is a small footbridge in New Orleans over the bayou in the City Park sculpture garden. Appearing as a tangled braid of brilliant colors, it illustrates the transformations of the course of the lower Mississippi River over millennia. Each color is an image of the river's path at a specific geologic period, layered from past to present, revealing multiple manifestations of the no-self of the great river over time. [*See next page.*]*

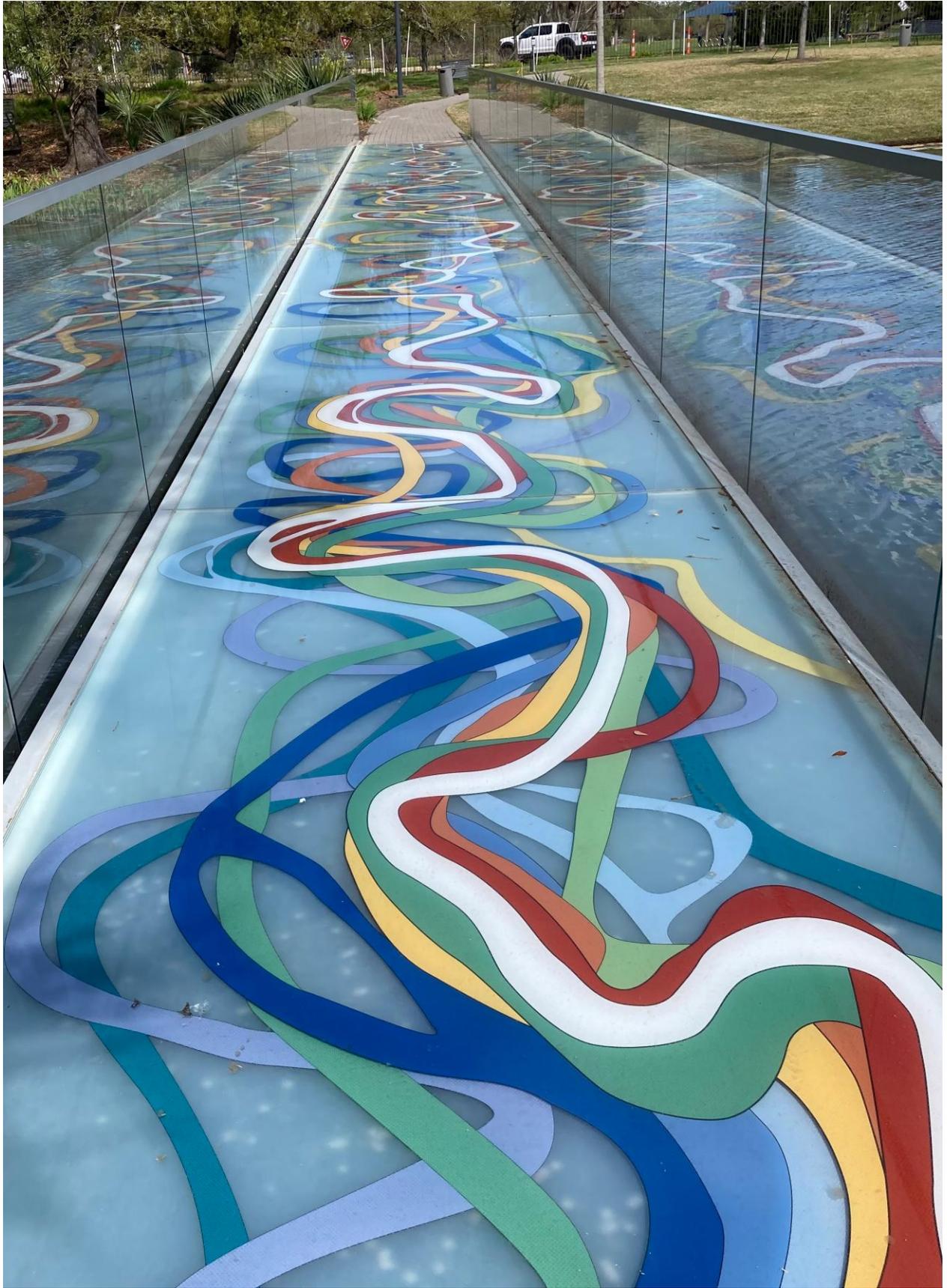
For me, this image expresses what it is to be thoroughly and intimately woven into the tangle of roots and relationships in the broad flow of the family of Buddha through space and time. The power of the Buddhadharma is ungraspable, untamable. Yet at any given moment its form is made manifest within the texts and teachings, the forms and practices that continue to evolve over time, meeting whatever arises both in the world and within each individual.

This is why I have faith that we will continue to find our way forward in the midst of impermanence and change. Because we will be giving and receiving the mutual aid of walking this path together—with each other, with the broad family of Buddha, and with our ancestors.

Bowing and bowing with gratitude for this life and for all of you,

Linda Galijan

* If you are reading the black-and-white print version of this newsletter, the image will not show up very well. To see the vividly colored version, go to <https://berkeleyzencenter.org/newsletters/> and click the "September–October" link.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the November–December issue is
Friday, October 17.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA 94703