



Berkeley Zen Center



July-August 2020 Newsletter

A New Normal

The Covid-19 infection rate in Alameda County is still increasing, even as Berkeley officials plan to reopen retail businesses, outdoor dining, religious services, and more, while they urge continuing use of face masks, physical distancing, and limited contact with people outside one's "social bubble."

At Berkeley Zen Center we miss the intimacy of the zendo and other community activities. In March, responding to the pandemic, BZC acted quickly to move our practice onto a digital platform. More than three months later, we have an "online zendo," with daily zazen, a Saturday program, lectures, classes, dharma groups, day-long sittings, practice discussions, and regular all-sangha meetings. Many members are working hard to keep all these new forms going as smoothly as they are. It would take the rest of this page to name everyone involved and delineate the responsibilities they have taken on, but we do want to give a shout-out to the tech team: Judy Fleischman, Gary Artim, Laurie Senauke, and Kelsey Chirlinn, for supporting all of us in this transition.

Meanwhile the Coordinating Team—Gerry Oliva, Mary Duryee, Sojun Roshi, and Hozen Sensei—along with the Practice *(Continued...)*



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

July

Zendo Holiday
Saturday, 7/4
(Informal zazen TBA)

Skit Night
Sunday, 7/12, 7:00pm

Sesshin
Saturday, 7/18

All-Sangha Gathering
Sunday, 7/26, 7:00pm

August

Sesshin
Saturday, 8/15

All-Sangha Gathering
Sunday, 8/23, 7:00pm

September

Sesshin
Saturday, 9/19

(A New Normal, continued from page 1)

Committee and Senior Students group, have begun to discuss how to make a slow transition back to face-to-face practice. We are consulting closely with BZC's Health and Safety team, which is tracking directives from the California Department of Public Health, translating the CDPH's evolving policies into safety and sanitation protocols for our community.

BZC is planning a careful and gradual transition to a new normal. When we do choose to restart activities on Russell Street, attendance will be limited, social distancing will be in place, and thorough cleaning and sanitation will be integral to our practice. Meanwhile, we will certainly maintain the robust digital practice created on Zoom and other platforms. No one knows what normal will look like, but, having opened the digital door and seen what it offers, we will continue to explore that space. This may well be necessary, because we have no idea how long the pandemic will last. Chances are we'll have to continue distancing and wearing masks for in-person encounters until a reliable vaccine emerges, and maybe beyond that.

So, we will sustain Suzuki Roshi's Zen in ways he could not have imagined. We will do this together, with gratitude to all those, near and far, who work to keep us well and creative.

A Closely Watched Mind (Online Class)

Hozan Alan Senauke will be leading an online class on the Eight-Consciousnesses Model of the Mind-Only School of Buddhism. The class will meet via Zoom for four consecutive Mondays—June 29, July 6, 13, and 20 from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. To participate, go to the BZC website--www.berkeleyzencenter.org--and

click "Enter the Zendo Now." Suggested donation \$30, or what you can afford.

When Voramai Kabilsingh, the first fully-ordained nun in modern Thailand, was asked how she kept the three hundred eleven bhikkhuni precepts, she said, "I keep only one precept. I just watch my mind."

The Yogacara or Mind-Only School of Mahayana Buddhism represents foundational teachings of the Zen School. While the philosophical aspects of Yogacara are complex, at heart it is Buddhist psychology, a map of the way our minds work, allowing for transformation from delusion to enlightenment. In these classes we will touch on basic Yogacara principles, particularly the "Eight Consciousnesses" model and how it is useful in meditation and in regulating and harmonizing our lives. Newer and older members are welcome to participate; we will move at a moderate pace, incorporating dialogue so one can see the utility of these teachings.

We will draw from Ben Connelly's book *Inside Vasubandhu's Yogacara*, Thich Nhat Hanh's book *Understanding Our Mind: 51 Verses on Buddhist Psychology*. Supplemental materials will be electronically distributed. For class materials, please contact Hannah Meara (hmeara@gmail.com).

Donations by check to BZC or by Paypal using the "Classes" tab on the BZC donate page: <https://berkeleyzencenter.org/support-bzc/>.

If you have any questions, please contact Hozan Sensei (asenauke@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, July 18, and on Saturday, August 15. These sesshins will include zazen, kinhin, service, and lecture. Hozan Alan Senauke will lecture for the July sesshin; Sojun Roshi will lecture for the August sesshin. Lunch will be on your own.

You can sign up for the July sesshin at <https://forms.gle/yo1H1EMAr4b23YuPA>.

You can sign up for the August sesshin at <https://forms.gle/GWqSp5B3L7LRLE7X9>.

For more information, email the sesshin director at sesshindirectorbzc@gmail.com. (Mary Beth Lamb will direct the July sesshin; Kika Hellein will direct the August sesshin.) The last day to sign-up for the July sesshin will be Wednesday, July 15, and for the August sesshin, Wednesday, August 12. Once you sign up, but closer to the actual day, the director will send you a schedule for the day, guidelines for preparing a space in your home, the Zoom link, and the chants that will be used during service.

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

Looking ahead, a similar half-day sitting is planned for Saturday, September 19. More information on that in the next newsletter.

Virtual Skit Night

There will be a BZC Skit Night offered via Zoom on Sunday, July 12, 7:00 p.m.

Members and participants may submit short videos (2–3 minutes) to Laurie Senauke (see email address below); the deadline for submission is July 3. Note that longer videos will be difficult to send and also to include in Laurie’s presentation software, so please stick to the time limit.

As in our previous in-person versions of this event, there will probably be a leaning toward humorous, but this is not at all required—particularly in these times. You can read your own or others’ poems, sing songs of any genre and feeling, whatever you feel moved to do—I’m sure our sangha will be open to the full range of emotional tones.

Note that we will not be able to edit your video, so you should submit a finished version. You may need a few “takes” to get it the way you want it, and there may be some sangha members willing to help you edit it. You are encouraged not to wait until close to the deadline to work on your recording.

Please contact lauriesenauke@gmail.com for details on how to create and submit your video.

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.

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.

All-Sangha Gatherings:

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

Saturday Speakers, 10:15 a.m.

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| June 27: | Carol Paul |
| July 4: | Zendo closed |
| July 11: | Sojun Roshi |
| July 18: | Hozan Sensei |
| July 25: | Hannah Meara |
| August 1: | Hozan Sensei |
| August 8: | Sojun Roshi |
| August 15: | Sojun Roshi |
| August 22: | Mary Duryee |
| August 29: | Gerry Oliva |
| September 19: | Hozan Sensei |

Monday Morning Talks, 8:00 a.m.

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| June 29: | Raghav Bandla |
| July 6: | Yoni Ackerman |
| July 13: | Christian Evans |
| July 20: | Stephanie Solar |
| July 27: | Troy DuFrene |
| August 3: | Kabir Nabi |
| August 10: | TBA |
| August 17: | TBA |
| August 24: | Heather Sarantis |
| August 31: | TBA |

Circular Sangha

Dear Sangha,

If someone were to ask me what would make me happy, I would say sitting together with a diverse group of people from all corners of the world, even though, because the world is more or less round, there are no real corners. We all belong to this great circular form whirling in space. Ever since I can remember I have been either thrilled or brought to tears experiencing people from diverse cultures or orientations working together in loving harmony.

When we opened the zendo in 1967, I thought of it as a grassroots endeavor where people from around here could find a zazen practice that they could devote themselves to for however long or short a time worked for them. Over time this vision has developed, and little by little a diverse group of members from all over the world have found their way here. We have folks from the deep midwest USA to Afghanistan and Japan.

I went through the BZC directory to verify all of this, and this is what I found. Our sangha includes members from both emigration and heritage, and here it is: Iranian, many Jews, French, Native American, African, English, Japanese, German, Korean, Norwegian, Irish, Chinese, Scottish, Finnish, Afghani, Italian, Mexican, Latino, East Indian, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Turkish, Filipino, diverse Europeans that are hard to classify, diverse Asians, multiple mixes, and many unknowns. ALL EQUAL AND EACH ONE UNIQUE.

A teacher's meeting space is called the *Hojo*. It is Vimalakirti's 6 x 6 room where multitudes of beings fit comfortably and there is always space for more. My teacher Suzuki Roshi's Hojo was his vast compassionate mind, which could expand to encompass the entire universe with all its beings. This is what I wish for all of you. It's not as hard as one might think.

I feel honored to have been able to practice with you all these years and to continue to practice with you in this wonderful inconvenient time, figuring it all out together and expressing our mutual support.

From this small corner of the circular world let us set an example for those around us. Please remember to make the best of this present situation and don't get caught wondering when it will be over. The characteristic of our practice is to find our uprightness in our present topsy-turvy situation, moment by moment. If you find your balance in this moment, you can find it in the next. As Adam said to Buddha, "Here am I."

—Sojun Roshi

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE
for the September–October 2020 issue is
Friday, August 21.

Please submit items to
knabb@bopsecrets.org.

Berkeley Zen Center
1931 Russell Street
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