

Dear friends of the Meditation Center Beatenberg,

Once again, we would like to offer you a potpourri of information about events at our center during 2023. Although the day-to-day reality of a dynamic, lively organization cannot be conveyed in just a few words and pictures, we hope that this annual report will at least provide a small insight.

COURSES

We are very pleased to say that all 26 courses planned for 2023, between 3 days and 4 weeks in length, could indeed take place. Past experience has taught us that this cannot be taken for granted!

Unfortunately, the retreat with Christina Feldman and Ursula Flückiger, which has been part of the schedule since its inception, took place for the last time this year. It remains to be seen whether Christina will find her way to us again via the Bodhi College organization. The course with Annabelle Zinser, also part of the program since the beginning, was also the last of its kind this year. Even teachers grow older and need to adjust their workloads... We would like to thank both for their valuable teaching work and many years of loyalty and wish them all the best for the future.

While some are departing, others are arriving: For the first time, Jaya Rudgard from England and Kirsten Kratz from Germany co-taught retreats at our center.

The 7-day retreat with Lama Tilmann Lhündrup and Rainer Künzi "Mahamudra and Vipassana" was again fully booked - with a long waiting list. Lama Lhündrup intends to teach at our center for the next 10 years (!). May this come to pass ...

Every year, the Help Days illustrate the principle of generosity that has enabled the center to come into being and maintain its operations for 23 years. Two dozen participants took part in the monster cleaning party with a great deal of enthusiasm, passion and merriment. Among other things, the entire first floor and all the rooms and sanitary facilities in the west wing were dismantled into their component parts, cleaned down to the bare bones and then - amazingly - put back together again, spick and span.

At the beginning of December, a four-day "Beatenberg Teachers' Meeting" once more took place for the first time since the pandemic. In the depths of winter, 33 teachers from ten countries shared experiences of their many years of Dharma practice and teaching. All participants appreciated the atmosphere of this meeting to be very inspiring:



For years, Samuel Theiler with “Dharmatapes” has voluntarily recorded, copied and sent out recordings of course lectures. From now on, lectures will be offered exclusively via Dropbox downloads on a donation basis. On behalf of all those who make use of this offer, a big thank you to Samuel.

PERSONNEL

Eight paid, part-time employees work in our in-house team, making a total of 5.5 full-time equivalents. Changes have constantly taken place, not only organizationally, but also in terms of personnel. For example, Doris Eckstein (office and course support) and Miklos Szilard (housekeeping) moved on at the end of October 2023. We would like to thank them both for their excellent professional and valuable work and wish them all the best in their future endeavors, both internally and externally. At the same time, we wish to welcome our two new employees Simon Darlington for office and course support and Jelena Mirkovitch for housekeeping.

There have also been changes to the Board of Trustees: Fred von Allmen stepped down from this body at the end of the year following his 80th birthday. In addition to his teaching activities, Fred was already active on the board of the Dhamma Group Switzerland (forerunner of the current foundation) and was involved for decades as a co-founder and member of the meditation center’s foundation board. Our center owes much of its charisma and success to his vision, his tireless creativity and his rich experience. Fortunately, Fred will continue to work as a teacher at the center and support it through his work.

We were very grateful to be able to welcome Felix Hirschburger as a new member of the Board of Trustees this summer.

Two events were held this year for members of the house team as well as for interested members of the Board of Trustees and center teachers to help train and refine our awareness of current social processes and how to deal appropriately with minorities. These were short training/sensitization sessions with a specialist on the topics of “Diversity” and “Trans”.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCES

In common with many other centers, the number of guest nights has fallen 25% compared to the pre-corona period in 2023, implying a corresponding financial hit. While some retreats are fully booked with waiting lists, others have seen a decline in participants. The hybrid courses offered since then, which enable online participation, can regrettably only contribute a small amount financially. They are attended steadily and with great enthusiasm. And so, we are still dependent on financial support from patronage or one-off donations. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the many people who have generously supported the center this year through financial or material donations and volunteer work.

As announced last year, we felt compelled to increase the course prices from CHF 80 to CHF 90 per night from 2023. We have also moderately increased the cost of participating in the livestream from CHF 25 to CHF 28 per day. A maximum reduction of 50% is now possible for courses for young adults. Thanks to a special fund, however, we were also able to grant generous price reductions in the current year. We also think it is worth mentioning that the kitchen budget, which our cooks use to prepare three wholesome, mostly organic meals a day, has been increased from CHF 11 to CHF 12 per person per day.

HOUSE AND GARDEN

A perennial issue for the house team is mold remediation in the showers, which are frequently used and difficult to ventilate. An on-site assessment of the situation by an architect is already planned, but the form and timing of remedial improvements is not yet clear. In any case, it is likely to be quite expensive. However, as we have just been promised a large, earmarked donation for this purpose, we are quite confident that a solution will be found to this nagging problem.

The replacement of the windows on the north side on the first floor and in the cloakrooms has been completed. This means that all windows, except those in the attic, are now state-of-the-art in terms of energy efficiency. The thermal insulation of the attic floor on the west side was completed in February with the active help of carpenters and volunteers.

As the costly projects for the energy-efficient renovation of our house often exceed original estimates, we were very pleased to receive a large amount of state funding for the installation of the photovoltaic system. For the tech-savvy among you: The photovoltaic system produced 38,000 kWh in its first full year of operation. We consumed 36% of this directly and fed the rest into the grid. The proportion of inhouse consumption will be higher next year as we have recently been able to feed the surplus electricity into the heating system as well.

Thanks to a generous donation, a small memorial house was completed this year for those deceased who had been closely associated with the center.

This elegant, light-filled little wooden building is nestled at the edge of the walking meditation meadow. With photos and short texts, visitors are invited to pause for a moment and remember with gratitude our





late friends who made an extraordinary contribution to the success of the center. It is likewise intended to encourage us to reflect on our own impermanence and how we can make meaningful use of our remaining time.

A Japanese Kannon, from another donor, reminds us of active compassion..

Last but not least, following the review, here is a brief preview:

In May next year, Ajahn Sucitto will once again honour us with his presence for an eight-day retreat, for which there is already a long waiting list. And in July, Roland Nyanabodhi, Ayya Khema's main disciple, will lead a course at the center for the first time.

We also wish to highlight that those seven new, mostly younger teachers, some of whose training is ongoing, and others whose training is complete, have been accepted into the 2024 program as assistants.

We could have written far more about the topics covered above, but this would have gone beyond the scope of an annual report. We are therefore all the happier to welcome everyone to the “blissful mountain” in person in 2024.

May our efforts serve the well-being of all living beings!

For the center:

Catherine Felder

Ursula Flückiger

