

February 2025



# Annual Report 2024

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## Dear Friends of the Beatenberg Meditation Center



2024 has already come and gone. There was again a lot happening 'on the mountain' this year. In addition to the usual goings-on, inevitably there were changes, fresh faces, departures and new beginnings. We would like to share some of this with you to give you a picture of the lively events at the Beatenberg Meditation Center.

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### THE HOUSE

The large building with its grounds always requires of course much maintenance, repair and renovation.

- \* Many people are familiar with the large 'walk-in' fridge in the kitchen. It had lasted about 47 years and had to be replaced. If it had given up the ghost during an ongoing retreat, we would have been in big trouble!
- \* During one course this year the heating system broke down, which fortunately could be rectified.

- \* A new sound system was installed.
- \* The showers require refurbishment to prevent mold infestation (moisture due to intensive use). One part was sanitized at the end of 2024, the other part will follow when sufficient funds are available.
- \* When we took over the house of the town of Burgdorf, the rooms were painted in child-friendly hues of pink and blue. Now, after 25 years, some of the rooms are due to be given a new coat of paint. To begin with, we test-painted one room. The remainder will be carried out in 2025 whenever we have definitely chosen the color.
- \* Every year we value the wonderful floral decorations in front of the house, which are a source of great pleasure and are greatly appreciated. The plants are a generous donation from Stefan Knecht (Knechtgarten nursery). We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks.



## PROGRAMME AND COURSES

As in the previous year, we were able to conduct all our planned retreats. The number of participants was steady, and the total of overnight stays increased slightly. A satisfying balance even if the number of meditators still has not at all attained the levels of the pre-corona years.

- \* The popular courses, such as the Easter course, the New Year course, the Metta and study courses were well attended thanks to regular course participants, some of whom have been coming for years.
- \* The two retreats for young people led by Irene Bumbacher, Samuel Theiler and Stefan Lang remain very well received. We hope younger people will continue to seek access to spiritual training, and that the meditation center will remain a refuge for continuous Dharma practice.
- \* In 2024, another course took place with the Venerable Ajahn Sucitto from Cittaviveka Monastery in England. We are delighted that at such an advanced age he still likes to travel and teach the Dharma with his humor, depth and creative methods.



- \* For the first time, Roland Nyanabodhi held a course at the center. Roland is monastically trained and brought his very own style of teaching to the center. It was also a baptism of fire for the new sound system, which - after the usual teething problems - passed with flying colors.
- \* 31 people attended the four-week retreat in November. It is wonderful that a longer retreat can take place once a year and that people take advantage of this opportunity to deepen their insights.
- \* Many of our courses were conducted with the assistance of Doris Eckstein, Kathrin Weyermann, Nicole Fasel and Kathleen Royston. All four wo-

men are currently training to become Dharma teachers and will complete the fourth and final year of their program in 2025. In the near future, they will increasingly be teaching independently - and not just at the Beatenberg center.

- \* The fact that people register for courses and then do not turn up is something we have come to recognize even more frequently as a post-corona phenomenon. There is confusion at almost every registration because people do not appear, arrive late or someone other than the person registered turns up. This presents a challenge for the house team. Unfortunately, such no-shows often mean that places that could have been reallocated remain unoccupied. The popular courses are not necessarily totally oversubscribed; if you put your name on the waiting list, there is a real chance of moving up (provided, of course, that people cancel in good time if they are unable to attend).
- \* It was not necessary to adjust course costs this year, even though the euro exchange rate remains weak, and the tourist tax was increased.
- \* We have not regained the pre-corona level of participation, a situation that Beatenberg shares with many other centers, and which is a frequent cause of concern.

There is a lot more we could mention and report concerning courses, but this would go beyond the scope of this report. Just one small anecdote, however: In one of the longer courses, a participant developed huge back problems due to an overly soft mattress. At lightning speed, though, the house team organized a firmer mattress, enabling the participant to continue the course. He was delighted and expressed his gratitude with a kind donation.

## PERSONNEL

It remains a formidable task for the house team to manage the large premises and feed and look after people during courses. This requires 100% commitment virtually around the clock during retreats. This in turn involves being attentive to the requirements of course participants, providing meals three times a day (occasionally with demanding nutritional requirements), in addition to administrative and organizational effort before, during



The work is multifaceted and never-ending. It requires a great deal of commitment, but also self-care and professional support measures to perform the task effectively. All staff members now live outside the center, which incurs additional costs but is currently an important element in maintaining a good work-life balance.

There have been some changes to the house team this year. There were changes in all areas - the kitchen, housekeeping and office team. A new operating manager was also appointed.

Thanks to the great commitment of former employees and many volunteers, it was possible to accommodate and absorb staff changes. Many thanks are due to all those who helped and ensured that the center ran smoothly despite the many changes. Once again this year, course participants expressed their gratitude for the attentive and considerate care they received during the retreats.

The Board of Trustees, which currently has 8 members, was also required to manage and support the ongoing changes. A challenging task for volunteers who also have other jobs and duties. Some of them are also active as Dharma teachers. We would like to thank them all for their many hours of searching for solutions and active practical work.

We very much hope that the current team will grow together successfully and will fulfil the challenging tasks with enthusiasm and commitment, but also with good professional distance.

I would also like to thank Catherine Felder, who has written the annual report since the center was founded. She has taken a well-deserved retirement and passed the pen on to me. So here, too, there has been a form of 'personnel change'.

The Beatenberg Meditation Centre is a spiritual home for many people. A place where many like to return time and again.



- \* May the ensuing changes and adjustments go smoothly and peacefully.
- \* May the center continue to flourish and exist for a long time to come.
- \* May it be a place of inspiration for many people.

For the Board of Trustees  
Ursula Flückiger

For the annual report  
Cornelia Lossner

