

January 2026



Annual Report 2025

Dear friends of the Meditation Center Beatenberg

Another year in which world history has taken some unpleasant twists and turns has come to an end.

At the Beatenberg Meditation Center, things progressed in a somewhat more sedate fashion. However, a lot has been happening here too. This year's activities took place as usual in terms of course management. Regarding the center administration, however, things proved to be quite an ordeal. Even a meditation center is subject to the laws of impermanence, and must deal with the fact that nothing stays the same. It is important to accept these challenges in a skillful and suitable manner, while constantly learning new lessons.



THE HOUSE

This year saw a number of technical improvements, renovation plans and acquisitions.

- * The center's car turned 15 and had served faithfully for many years. However, without costly repairs, the 'vintage car' would no longer have passed its MOT. We were therefore compelled to purchase a replacement (second-hand) vehicle.

- * Renovation work has been carried out on an ongoing basis and is still being planned for the shower facilities (new paintwork).
- * After 25 years, a new lighting concept is finally planned for the meditation hall.



What catches the eye in this photograph (or rather, what NO longer catches the eye)?

- * That's right! The aerial power cables were laid underground so that the first floor once again offers an unobstructed view of the fantastic mountain panorama.

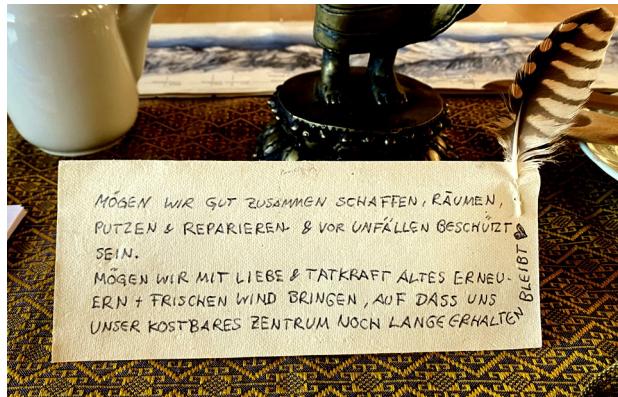
PERSONELL

As mentioned in last year's report, there have been and continue to be many changes within the in-house team. In addition to organizational restructuring, these changes have also involved personnel changes. Long-standing employees have left the center after many years of commendable service, while others have left after only a short time. In this respect, this year has indeed been challenging for everyone affected by these changes at various levels. In addition to the uncertainty that such personnel changes bring, there is also an opportunity to adapt processes, break with old traditions and create a structure that better meets the current requirements for managing such a large center.

Since its inception, the house has undergone a transformation from an idealistic Dharma project to a course provider that is becoming increasingly complex and subject to high standards in terms of professionalization. It is important for everyone involved to run the organization realistically. In this regard, employee salaries have been adjusted and now comply with the collective labor agreement for the hospitality industry in the Canton of Bern.

In the midst of this, the central focus of the Beatenberg Meditation Center as a place for silent meditation practice and the development of wisdom and compassion must be born in mind. That is why voluntary work in the house and teaching on a donation basis are central pillars of spiritual life at the center.

One example of this is the volunteer days, which take place once a year. Many people take part in thoroughly cleaning the huge house and carrying out necessary repairs. This year, 25 people helped out. One volunteer made a rack for the yoga mats in agreement with the personnel and installed it during the volunteer days. She also made a storage unit for the mats' cleaning materials.



Altar with dedication for the volunteer days

The volunteer days—a wonderful way to cultivate generosity!

In the fall, we learned that Nikolaus Rechberg, who had carefully managed the center's maintenance for several years, had passed away in Germany. In memory of him, his picture was placed in the memorial hut near the walking meditation meadow on New Year's Day.



And now to the current personnel changes:

Unfortunately, the new general manager, Philipp Kuntze, resigned after nine months. Katrin auf der Heyde (housekeeping) and Jelena Mirkovitch (administration) also planned to leave the center at the end of the year.

This meant a lot of extra work for the remaining house team and for the foundation trustees who manage the personnel department. Applications had to be reviewed, interviews conducted, and the administrative reorganization that had already begun had to be continued. You can imagine what this meant for everyone—especially during the ongoing retreat program.

Fortunately, we were able to steer the ship into calmer waters. This was only possible thanks to the extraordinary commitment shown. Katrin in housekeeping and Jelena in the office (who had already in fact resigned) agreed to work a little longer into 2026 to ensure continuity. Margit Tilley, who always steps in when needed, deserves a big thank you, as does Silvia Haufe, who put in many hours of overtime to bridge the gap in management. Equally, thanks go to Doris Eckstein and Peter Flückiger, former house team members, who stepped in as substitutes.

In addition, there are the many volunteers in the kitchen, course management and housekeeping, as well as the other house team members who have remained on the ball during this turbulent phase. Kathrin Baumann, Isis Bianzano and Beatrice Eyer have also done a brilliant job as foundation board members, far exceeding the time commitment that would normally be expected for such voluntary work.

This is how things now stand:

- * As of 1 October 2025, Rolf Arni has taken over the management duties on a temporary basis.
- * Rafaela Schmid took up the position of General Manager in December 2025. She is currently working alongside Rolf and will take over the management of the center on a 70% basis from February 2026.
- * In the fall, Antje Stahlschmidt and Anja Kuster started working part-time in the admin department.
- * Adrian Wüthrich will be trained in housekeeping and, partly, maintenance from December onwards until he takes over the housekeeping position completely in February 2026.

We are describing these changes in such detail so as to illustrate the people and effort involved in these positions. This is essential work that enables the Beatenberg Center to continue to be a place of refuge for so many people.

PROGRAM AND COURSES

In 2025, 27 retreats lasting between 3 and 28 days took place. Four of these were held in English (Yuka Nakamura with Jaya Rudgard, Charles and Patricia Genoud, Guy and Sally Armstrong/Yuka Nakamura, and the summer retreat with Carol Wilson, Fred von Allmen and Ursula Flückiger). Here are some details:

- * Catherine Felder, who had regularly led the so-called 'Pentecost Retreat' together with Ursula Flückiger since the center was founded (and even before that), was here this year for the last time. We regret her departure, however understandable her reasons may be. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts for her many years of commitment to teaching the Dharma. We bade her farewell with many good wishes and a tinge of a heavy heart.
- * Unfortunately, the 3- and 4-day retreats for young people with Irene Bumbacher, Stefan Lang and Samuel Theiler did not attract as many participants this year (around half the number of previous years, i.e. around 25 people). Next year will tell whether this was a temporary blip or a trend that needs to be addressed. Marked by lively exchanges, this year's course was once again inspiring for both participants and teachers.
- * The 8-day retreat with Guy and Sally Armstrong from the USA, Yuka Nakamura and Monica Antunes as assistants was a special occasion as well as premiere. They taught an in-depth awareness practice for experienced meditators. Sally and Guy were thoroughly thrilled by the mountains and our center's location and will - who knows? - perhaps return to the Beatenberg Center in the future.



- * This year, numerous courses were again held with the assistance of Doris Eckstein, Kathrin Weyermann, Nicole Fasel, and Kathleen Royston. They have now completed their four-year training as Dharma teachers. With official authorization from their trainers, they will be able to start teaching independently from now on. Our warmest congratulations!



- * Course prices have been adjusted: the tourist tax has been separated from the price and is now clearly visible. In addition, euro prices have been fixed at 1.05 against the Swiss franc in order to at least partially take into account the current exchange rate fluctuations.

These are just a few highlights from this year's program and courses.

As always, the retreats were an intense experience for the house team and volunteers. This year, there were again people who did not show up, those who left early, or those who had to be looked after due to illness. There was even one emergency case of acute appendicitis. The house team and course instructors handled everything admirably. During closing rounds, they regularly receive positive and grateful feedback for their supportive teachings, loving care, carefully maintained house, and - last but not least - delicious food.

Particularly in these socially turbulent times, with events that are at times intolerable, the opportunity to retreat, experience silence in beautiful natural surroundings, and reflect on the fundamental principles of our lives and spiritual development is something of immeasurable value. We are grateful that this is still possible, not least thanks to the generous donations of countless people. Thank you to everyone who supports the center and helps in so many different ways.

For the Foundation Board

For the Annual Report

Ursula Flückiger

Cornelia Lossner

