



Luka Häkkinen

Luka Häkkinen (they/them) first attended a Tuesday-night Introduction to Practice in Madison, Wisconsin, in the summer of 2013 and subsequently became a member of the Madison Zen Center in 2014, midway through their Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin. By the end of their first 7-day sesshin at Chapin Mill in January 2015, they knew that Zen practice would be a lifelong pursuit.

Luka holds degrees in comparative literature (B.A., University of New Mexico), Middle East studies (M.A., University of Chicago), and languages and cultures of Asia (Ph.D., UW – Madison). Raised in the culturally porous southern border region of New Mexico, they have an abiding interest in culture and in bridging the perceived gap with the “other,” an interest borne out by their longtime study of international literature and East Asian, Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA), and Central Asian languages, history, and cultures. Luka sits daily and attends sesshin whenever possible, finding it a welcome necessity for their growth and well-being.

Luka’s approach to problem-solving and decision-making is informed by practicality, emotional and cultural sensitivity, an awareness of sociocultural context, history, and precedent, as well as a sense of fairness and justice. One of their strong points is an understanding of how actions or statements are “read” against the broader cultural zeitgeist.

Queer, trans, and the eldest of several siblings, Luka is a strong believer in cultivating safety, community, and inclusivity. Since moving to Rochester in 2016, they have chipped in with volunteering at the Center, and are a regular participant in various Sangha groups, such as the Zen of Living and Dying, Seeing Through Racism, and now Uprooting Racism, where they are a member of the Leadership and Planning Group. In their free time, Luka loves deep conversation, dance, picnics, hosting potlucks, writing nonfiction and short stories, reading, movement, cooking, keeping up with their young niece and nephew, and learning.

If you have any questions for Luka, you’re invited to email them at hakkila@wisc.edu.



Betsy Friedman

Betsy grew up in central New York and has lived in Rochester since 1975. She is a graduate of Western Michigan University and has done advanced studies in educational psychology at Butler University and in business administration at the University of Rochester. She has been privileged to work professionally as a social welfare caseworker, work counselor in a sheltered workshop, commercial law paralegal, head of the residential mortgage department for a regional bank, and personnel data systems analyst. In 1984, she began her market research career as a Project Manager for Xerox Corporation. In 1988 she joined Harris Interactive, where she became Vice President of the company’s Qualitative Research Division, specializing in voice-of-the-customer research using focus groups and personal interviews. Betsy retired in 2000, but continued to work with some clients as a consultant for several years after.

An avid supporter of the arts, Betsy has volunteered her market research skills to provide market research to the Hochstein School of Music, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, GEVA Theatre Center, and the University of Rochester’s Memorial Art Gallery, among others. This volunteer work has supported these organizations’ institutional initiatives related to strategic planning, branding and marketing, market segmentation, customer care, and program evaluation.

Betsy attended the Community Center for Engagement’s six-month board training program. She is a former board chair and current trustee of the Hochstein School, a former board chair and current honorary trustee of GEVA, and an honorary board member of the Rochester Philharmonic.

Betsy has been a Zen Center member for the past thirteen years and a Center Trustee for the past five. She is a member of the Center’s Development Committee. She coordinated the project to identify and implement the Zen Center children’s program and currently is a resource for Center leaders in conducting member surveys to guide the work of the Sangha engagement initiative.

Betsy won’t hesitate to tell you of her joy in participating in the antics of her three “gift” grandchildren. She loves to learn and enjoys theater, concerts, golf, and – on the rare occasions when she has some quiet time – you will find her with her nose in a book. She is grateful for the stability and perspective that her Zen practice has added to her life. Betsy can be reached at betsyf61@gmail.com.