



2017 Board Members

We are happy to announce that the Chapel Hill Zen Center Board Members for 2017 are President, Maura High; Vice President, Ken Wilson; Secretary, John Paredes; Treasurer, Mike McKillip; Members-at-Large, Shawn Johnson and Steve Pickett. We offer our deep gratitude to Elliott Schaffer for serving as Treasurer for these past two years and before that as Vice President, and to Michael Emberson for serving as Member-at-Large this past year.

Study Group

The Thursday night Study Group which meets from 6:45 until 8:00, will resume meeting on **Thursday, January 5**. The topic is Dogen Zenji's text, *Gyoji* or "Continuous Practice." We will be studying the text and comparing different translations, but the primary translation will be Kaz Tanahashi's found in *Enlightenment Unfolds*, pages 114-136. Copies of the text will also be available. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge.

All-day Sittings

The all-day sittings for January and February will be on Sundays, January 15, and February 12, from 6:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The sitting will begin with orientation on Saturday night at 7:30, and will include instruction on the meal form and one period of zazen. The regular Sunday schedule, with zazen at 9:00 and 9:50 and Dharma Talk at 10:30, will be open to everyone. The day will include zazen, a Dharma talk, dokusan, and a work period, as well as breakfast and lunch. The fee is \$10 for members and \$20 for others. It is alright to sit half of the day, but please sign up in advance, and please speak to Josho Sensei if this is your first all-day sitting. For more information on the oryoki meal form see: <http://kannondo.org/getting-started/oryoki-manual/>

Dharma Talks

Josho Pat Phelan will give public Dharma talks on Sunday mornings, January 15, February 12, and March 5, at 10:30.

Beginning Zen Practice: A Class with David Guy

Monday nights, 7:30 to 9:00,
January 23 to February 27

Stop searching for phrases and chasing after words. Take the backward step and turn the light inward. Your body-mind of itself will drop off and your original face will appear.

— Dogen Zenji

Zen Meditation, or *zazen*, is the simple practice of being present with our experience. We hear the instructions in a matter of minutes, but spend a lifetime learning the practice. This class will introduce participants to meditation and give them support as they develop a daily sitting practice. It will also introduce them to other aspects of practice at the Chapel Hill Zen Center.

The first night will begin with meditation instructions and a short period of sitting. Each week we will continue to sit for a period at the beginning of class, gradually increasing the time. Participants will have a chance to ask questions and raise concerns about their practice. As the weeks proceed we will study other aspects of Zen practice, including walking meditation, protocol around the zendo, and the service of bowing and chanting. But the focus will be on *zazen*, and participants' actual practice as it unfolds. The content of the class will emerge from participants' questions and concerns.

Cost is \$60, payable the first night, and will be contributed to the Zen Center. Partial scholarships are available. For more information, or to sign up, please contact David Guy at 919-286-4952 or davidguy@mindspring.com.

David Guy has been practicing meditation since 1991, and regularly gives sitting instruction. He has co-authored two books with Larry Rosenberg of the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center – *Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation* and *Living in the Light of Death: On the Art of Being Truly Alive*. In 2008 he published *Jake Fades: A Novel of Impermanence*. You can find David's blog at: www.davidguy.org

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End of Life Discussion Group

We are grateful to Elliott Schaffer who initiated the informal discussion group Old Age, Sickness and Death, giving us the opportunity to gather and share readings, information, and explore conversations among ourselves on these topics. Sangha members Jeff Sherman, Carol Klein and Kris Garvin-Sherman will organize and facilitate a group to continue these discussions if there is enough interest. The group plans to meet on January 29th following the regular morning schedule, around 11:15, after temple cleaning. Old age is not a requirement! Please contact Kris Garvin at krisgarvin@gmail.com, or Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com, if you have questions or comments, or if you would like to be included in email notifications.

Precepts Weekend

The Lay Precepts Ceremony, *Zaike Tokudo*, will be held on Sunday afternoon, March 5, at 1:30. Craig Adamski, Andrea Ashdown, Sheldon Clark, and Bruce Miller are preparing to receive the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. You are warmly invited to attend, to witness and support these ordainees. A reception will follow.

Informal Sitting

In preparation for the precepts ceremony, there will be an **informal sitting** on **Saturday, March 4**, from 9:00–4:00. Everyone is welcome to attend any part of the sitting. Tea will be available, but **lunch will not be served**.

Sangha Network

The CHZC has a Sangha Network of volunteers to offer short-term assistance to those in the sangha who need help with simple tasks such as shopping, arranging for meals, or transportation, due to transitions in one's life including illness, disability, or death of a loved one. If you would like to volunteer or if you need assistance, please contact Kris at krisgarvin@gmail.com or Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com.

Children's Program

The Zen Center's Children's program offers children four years and older a place in the Zen Center sangha through a variety of activities, including meditation, story, craft, song, and movement, as well as participation in Zen Center events and celebrations throughout the year. In each meeting, the children have the space and time to practice living mindfully and learn about Buddhist teachings and contexts while giving their parents an opportunity to meditate in the concurrent adult program. The Children's Program meets twice a month, on Sundays, from 9:00 until 11:00. Meetings will be held January 8 and 22, February 5 and 19, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 23. To sign up, or simply for more information, please contact Maura High, the program coordinator, at maurahigh@gmail.com.

People of Color Sitting Group

Wednesday nights from 6:00-7:30

The POC Sitting Group begins with zazen at 6:00, followed by kinhin (walking meditation), and then there is the option to stay for group discussion and community building. Both those new to meditation, or experienced, are warmly welcome to join us or drop in as you like. For more information, contact Conal or Kriti at pocsittinggroup@gmail.com. As usual, instruction in zazen and an orientation are offered to the public on Sunday morning at 9:00, and on Tuesday night at 7:00.

Recovery Meeting

The Recovery Meeting meets on Tuesday nights at 7:30. This is a recovery group with a Buddhist perspective on the 12-Step Program which meets at the Chapel Hill Zen Center. The meetings begin with twenty minutes of silent meditation. For more information, contact: call 919-265-7600 or ZenandRecovery@gmail.com.

Richmond Zen Group

Josho Sensei will visit the Richmond Zen Group on Wednesday evening, January 18 at 7:00. She will be available for individual meetings and will give a Dharma Talk.

Y12SR or Yoga of 12-Step Recovery

Wednesday 6:30-8:00 pm

Y12SR combines the practical tools of the 12-Step program with the ancient wisdom of yoga. Class themes are based on the spiritual principles of the 12-steps. Y12SR is for anyone dealing with their own addictive behavior or that of others. It is an open and inclusive group. Classes will resume on **Wednesday, January 4**. Contact Delane for more information at delanecody@gmail.com

Delane is a 200 hour registered yoga teacher and received her Y12SR certification in January, 2016. She looks at yoga as a way of living, believing that lessons from the mat become prescriptions for life. She is passionate about healing from the inside out often combining yoga with meditation or pranayama as a path to self-discovery promoting personal and spiritual growth.

Chinese Calligraphy & Brush Painting New Time

Jinxiu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from **2:15-3:45**, on January 8 and 22, and on February 5 and 19. Chinese Brush Painting is from **2:15-4:15**. Fees are \$20 for calligraphy and \$25 for brush painting. Please contact Jinxiu at (919) 484-7524 or Jxznc@aol.com to register or for more information. Jinxiu is also available to teach children's classes.

Looking Ahead

Buddha's Birthday Celebration is planned for Sunday, April 23

The **Spring Sesshin** is planned for May 5-10, led by Josho Pat Phelan

We are planning to have a 3-4 week **Practice Intensive** in June

Sesshin Talk: *Dharma Position*

Josho Pat Phelan

The meditation manual, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, uses the image of a hen sitting on a nest, hatching her eggs, as a metaphor for the kind of

attention to be cultivated in practice. It says, "The hen embraces the egg, always mentally listening.... The way a hen can give life to an egg is through warm energy; warm energy can only warm the shell and cannot penetrate the inside, so she mentally conducts the energy inward. That 'listening' is single-minded concentration (or continuous attention). When the mind enters, the energy enters; with warm energy, birth takes place." "Therefore even though the mother hen goes out from time to time, she is always listening, and the concentration of her spirit is never interrupted...so the spirit comes alive." I have the image of us here sitting in the zendo as chickens sitting around the room on our round black nests, incubating or maturing our awareness, our continuous connection. Sesshin, a Zen meditation intensive, provides a wonderful support to maintain our connection with the present and our presence. But leaving sesshin and entering the world, how do we maintain this connection to living reality, to our warm energy, keeping its spirit alive?

There is a story that Dogen quoted in his fascicle, *Only Buddha and Buddha* which goes, Long ago, a monk asked a master, "When hundreds, thousands, or myriads of objects come all at once, what should be done?" The Master replied, "Don't try to control them." Dogen commented: "What he means is that in whatever way objects come, do not try to change them. Whatever comes is the buddha-dharma, not objects at all...."

I like this passage, but there is another version of this dialogue which goes in a different direction. This version is between Kueishan or Isan and his disciple Yangshan or Kyozan. Kyozan asked, "When hundreds and thousands of objects come upon us all at once, then what?" Master Isan replied, "Green is not yellow, long is not short. Everything is in its place. It's none of my business." Dogen's comment on the first version of the dialogue, to treat objects – sights, sounds, ideas, emotions and so on – as Buddha-dharma, is expressed from the position of the horizontal where everything is equal by having the same empty, interdependent nature. From this perspective, whatever we meet is Buddha. In the

second version of the dialogue, Isan brought up the particularity of each thing where everything has its own function, is in its own place, in its own position, according to its own individual characteristics and limitations, which is referred to as the vertical. The particularity or function of a thing intersecting with the equality or emptiness of each, is called the merging of difference and unity. These two characteristics are unified, or interpenetrate within each phenomenon.

There is a well-known story about Bodhidharma, the first Zen Ancestor who came from India to China where he is attributed with having established Zen during the 6th century. The story took place when Bodhidharma was about to leave China and return to India. He called his disciples together and said, "The time has come. Each of you, say something to demonstrate your understanding."

First, his disciple, Daofu came forward and said, "My present view is that we should neither be attached to letters (meaning sutras and written teachings) nor should we reject them, but allow the Way to function freely." Bodhidharma responded, "You have attained my skin."

Then the nun Zongchi, expressing non-attachment, said, "According to my understanding, it is like the joy of seeing Akshobhya Buddha's realm. Seen once, it need never be seen again." Or, "Having seen it once, is sufficient."

Bodhidharma responded, "You have attained my flesh."

Then the third disciple Daoyu said, "The four great elements are originally empty and the five skandhas have no actual existence. As I see it, there is not a single dharma to be grasped."

Bodhidharma said, "You have attained my bones."

The last disciple to respond was Huike, or Taiso Eka, who came forward without saying anything, silently bowed three times, stood up and returned to his place. Bodhidharma said, "You have attained my marrow."

This story is commonly viewed as demonstrating a progression from a shallow understanding expressed in words and characterized by "skin" and

"flesh" to a deeper level of understanding referred to as "bones" and then finally "marrow," with Bodhidharma's main disciple, Taiso Eka, having the deepest level of understanding and who was therefore designated his Dharma Heir. Dogen discussed this story in his fascicle "*Twinning Vines*" where he gave an alternate meaning, as he is known for doing. According to Dogen, Bodhidharma's confirmation of each disciple was equal because for Dogen, "...in the ancestor way there is only attaining the self." Dogen said, "The ancestor's body-and-mind is the ancestor – skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. It is not that the marrow is close and the skin is far." "There is an ancestor whose full body is skin, an ancestor whose full body is flesh, an ancestor whose full body is bones, and an ancestor whose full body is marrow." "Where you know the skin, there is no need to search for the marrow. This is truly attaining the marrow." For Dogen, the skin, flesh, bones and marrow, each thoroughly represented the essence of the teaching. Dogen expressed this in the *Genjokoan* as, "Doing one practice is practicing completely." It reminds me of a story about the Japanese poet-monk, Ikkyu, who went out in a boat one day and when he saw crows overhead, he had an opening. Ikkyu went back to his teacher and told him about this experience and his teacher responded, "That's nice, but it isn't the enlightenment of the Buddhas and Ancestors." Ikkyu at first was disappointed but then paused and said, "Well, it's good enough for me." And his teacher said, "That's the enlightenment of the Buddhas and Ancestors."

There's a story Uchiyama Roshi told where he described himself as a quiet, somewhat meek person, while his teacher Sawaki Kodo had a strong, dynamic presence. Uchiyama as a new practitioner, assumed that Sawaki Kodo's strong presence was the result of his years of zazen practice. So, Uchiyama Roshi thought if he practiced long enough that he, too, would develop a strong, confident manner. Uchiyama Roshi said it took a long time before he realized that Sawaki Kodo's confident, strong presence was not the result of zazen; and that no matter how long Uchiyama Roshi practiced, he would always have

a quiet manner. He characterized this as, no matter how long a large, vibrant-colored rose practices, it will always be a rose, and no matter how long a small, common violet practices, it will never turn into a rose. A violet practices completely as a violet and a rose practices completely as rose. One isn't any better than the other.

Going back to the Bodhidharma story, Dogen quoted the famous 8th Century Master Zhaozhou or Joshu who commented on this saying, "If Bodhidharma means, 'Someone who has reached the outside attains the skin, someone who has reached the inside attains the bones,' then tell me: What does someone who has reached even deeper inside get?" Then Dogen wrote, "When you discuss 'outside,' skin, flesh, bones and marrow are all outside. When you discuss "inside," skin, flesh, bones, and marrow are all inside."

Dogen taught that each thing, when it is completely and fully what it is, when it "attains its self," it manifests the absolute. This is the meaning of the word *juhoi* which has been translated from Japanese as dharma position, dharma stage, phenomenal expression, and dharma situation. Dogen's understanding of dharma position is that it respects the uniqueness and individual characteristics of each thing while, at the same time, recognizing its inherent emptiness, which is the same for everything. Again, sometimes this is referred to as the intersection of the horizontal and vertical or the merging of difference and unity. Horizontal refers to the boundless, empty nature that characterizes all things. Again, this is to experience everything as Buddha, and maybe the way everything is experienced by Buddha. Whereas vertical refers to each thing's individual features and uniqueness, which is expressed through its particular function. The ideal in Zen is to be able to move freely between these two perspectives. In the conventional world, we are operating in the realm of differences; we discriminate and make judgements and choices based on these differences. This is where our karma is created and where it plays out – where we take responsibility for our actions. At the same time all things lack inherent existence, or a substantial self. Our world and the things or

beings that inhabit it are referred to as conditioned or compounded which means they are dependent on myriad causes and conditions for coming into being, for maintaining and existing, and for passing away. Because they are interdependent, they are empty, they can change, and there is space for possibility. This is why emptiness is form and form is emptiness.

Going back to dharma position, in a *Moon in a Dewdrop*, Kaz Tanahashi defined dharma position as, "The unique nonrepeatable stage of a thing's existence at any given moment." It literally means a "position of one time." He said, "The dharma position or state of being itself (*hoi*) at each moment ... carries entire time." Since each moment of our lives, each breath, is unique and nonrepeatable, if we aren't awake to it, we've missed it, forever. In *Genjokoan*, Dogen used firewood and ash as an example of the unique nonrepeatable stage of each thing's existence. Jakusho Kwong said that "We are the firewood. We are the ash. After we turn into ash, we don't become firewood again. Each thing has its own beingness." So, no matter how long we live, our babyhood will never repeat itself – we will never go through adolescence or junior high again.

In *Sounds of the Valley Streams*, the practitioner-translator, Francis Cook helped clarify this when he wrote, "Part of Dogen's reasoning is that change is not a situation in which some enduring substance is transformed into something different, and this is an implicit reference to early sections [of the *Genjokoan*] that deny the reality of a substantial self. Firewood does not *become* ashes, and winter does not *turn into* spring, as if there were in each case something that remains itself while taking on a new form. Each thing is just what it is and always abides (*ju*) in its own state (*hoi*). It [or ash] is indeed preceded by and succeeded by other states [such as firewood], but the prior and subsequent are two different *things*, not two different *states* of the same thing."

Dogen used the idea of dharma position in his "Instructions for the Zen Cook." He wrote, "Conscientiously wash out the rice container and the soup pot, along with other utensils...and

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put those things that naturally go on a high place on a high place, and those that would be most stable on a low place on a low place; things that naturally belong on a high place settle best on a high place, while those which belong on a low place find their greatest stability there.” This actually refers to another exchange between Isan and Kyozan when they were making a new rice paddy. One day out in the rice field, Kyozan said to his teacher, “It’s pretty low here and rather high over there?” Isan replied, “Water can be used as a standard of levelness for all things so we can use water as standard of levelness for the field.” Kyozan, the student, replied, “We cannot depend upon water as a standard, Master! A high place is level as a high place and a low place is level as a low one.” One commentator wrote, “...blindly using water to make all things level is like measuring all things by your own standard.” “You just use the high place, itself, as a standard for its high level and the low place, itself, as a standard for its low level...” For example, “the highness of a tree is the tree’s level, and the lowness of grass is the grass’ level.” Each thing has its own meaning, importance, and appropriate treatment, based on its function; but this isn’t a judgement about its inherent value. Chan Master Sheng-yen wrote, “All dharmas are equal, but each dharma has its own place.... one dharma is not better or higher or closer than another dharma, but each dharma has its own position, its own direction and its own causes and conditions.” For sesshin, we could say, be true to the position or function you have been assigned. It is not you, it is your function or your role for this week. You can practice putting it on and taking it off like a coat. Our lives are filled with many roles which carry different responsibilities and influences, and this can be a reminder not to take them too seriously as being “me.”

One of the enlightenment stories about Tozan Ryokai also expresses the idea of dharma position. Tozan or Dongshan, the 8th Century founder of the Caodung or Soto School of Zen in China, had realization when he began practicing with Master Ungan Donjo, and he continued training with Ungan for some years. When Tozan was

taking his leave, he asked Ungan, “If in the future someone should ask if I can describe the master’s truth, how should I respond?” After a long pause, Master Ungan replied, “Just this is it.” Tozan sighed and remained silent. Then Ungan continued, “Worthy One, now that you have assumed the burden of this Great Matter, you must consider it carefully.” Tozan didn’t quite understand. Later, after he left and was crossing a stream, he looked down and saw his image reflected in the water below and had an insight into Ungan’s meaning and composed the verse: *“Earnestly avoid seeking without, lest it recede far from you. Today I am walking alone, yet everywhere I meet It. It is exactly me, but I am not It. One must understand in this way to merge with Suchness.”* This also expresses the idea of dharma position and the merging of difference and unity. “It” is the essential nature, the boundless, open, impermanent nature of all things. So, “It” is exactly me. But at the same time, “me,” “mine,” and “I” have my own individual karma which expresses me as a non-repeatable event, how I am unique from everything else. So, me, mine and I are not It, but It is no other than me.

In Jakusho Kwong’s book, *No Beginning, No End*, he included Suzuki Roshi’s restatement of this poem:

Do not try to see the objective world.

You which is given as an object to see is quite different from you yourself.

I am going my own way and I meet myself which includes everything I meet.

I am not something which I can see (as an object)

When you understand self which includes everything,

You have your true way.

This reminds me of a statement in our Wedding Service, “When we are intimate with one person completely, we meet ourselves in others where ever we go.” Intimacy, whether with others or ourselves, requires dropping the objective world. So everything becomes subject, everything becomes the self. Jakusho Kwong wrote, “Your realization comes when you see the objective

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world and realize that it is part of you: the birds singing, the trees, the mountains, the wind, the sky. It's all part of you. This is one realization of truth: You as subject realizes that the object is no other than you."

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"Begging Monks" by Deiryu (1895-1954) from *The Art of Twentieth-Century Zen*, by Audrey Yoshiko Seo with Stephen Addiss, Shambala, 1998.

Chapel Hill Zen Center



P.O. Box 16302
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 967-0861

Schedule

Sunday Morning Tuesday Evening

9:00 zazen	7:00 zazen
9:40 kinhin	7:40 kinhin
9:50 zazen	7:50 zazen
10:30 service	8:20 service

Monday to Friday

<i>Thursday Evening</i>	6:00 A.M. zazen
6:00 P.M. zazen	6:50 A.M. zazen

Meetings at 5322 NC Highway 86
2.5 miles North of I-40 exit 266

Josho Pat Phelan, Abbess

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Embracing diversity, the Chapel Hill Zen Center expresses the fundamental connection of all beings by welcoming everyone to the practice of zazen.
May all beings realize their true nature.