



*I wish to die in spring,
beneath the cherry blossoms,
while the springtime moon is full.*

— Saigyō (1190)

Discussion Group on Old Age, Sickness and Death

This poem may express how many people would like to relate to death, hoping that all will go well but ignoring much in the way of thought or planning. There has been more and more written recently about how much unnecessary suffering occurs at the end of life, often caused by the very people and organizations whose mission it is to assist in paving the way to a “good death.” We are beginning an informal group to discuss sickness, old age, death and the dying process which will meet monthly. The basic idea is that if we spend some time thinking and talking about illness and the dying process, these experiences will become more familiar and less emotionally charged and confusing when we have to confront them. Through this kind of preparation we should be able to approach this end of life period in a more awake, intelligent and meaningful way, and better allow us to provide compassionate, solid support for sangha members and their families as they go through the dying process. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 6, after temple cleaning around 11:30, in the community room. All are welcome to participate, and please feel free to contact Elliott with any questions or comments at 610-283-9419 or eschaffer1946@gmail.com.

Work Leader

Mike McKillip has generously served as Work Leader for over five years for Sunday morning Temple Cleaning, Quarterly Temple Jobs, All-day Sittings, and for Sesshin. He is stepping down from this responsibility and I hope you will join me in expressing your gratitude to him for these years of service to the sangha. We are fortunate that Choro Carla Antonaccio has agreed to step up and become the new Work Leader.

Dharma Talks

Sunday, March 6, **Josho Pat Phelan** will give a public Dharma Talk at 10:30.

Sunday, March 27, **Taigen Dan Leighton** will give a public Dharma Talk at 10:30, followed by a **Book Signing**.

Sunday, May 1, **Kokyo Hnekel** will give a public Dharma Talk at 10:30.

The Joy of Suchness

Many of the central stories about Dongshan relate to recognizing, exploring, or expressing reality, or the suchness of things. Known in Sanskrit as tathata, this suchness is described in Indian Buddhism as ultimate truth, reality, the source, or the unattainable. Experientially, this suchness might imply the direct apprehension of the immediate present reality.... So, in varying contexts suchness may refer to our clear perception of reality, or else to the nature of that reality itself. — Taigen Leighton

Taigen Dan Leighton will lead a workshop from 9:00-5:00, on **Saturday, March 26**, on the joy of “suchness” which shines throughout the teachings attributed to Dongshan Liangjie, the founder of the Caodong lineage of Chan Buddhism, transmitted to Japan by Dogen as Soto Zen. Based on Taigen’s most recent book, *Just This Is It: Dongshan and the Practice of Suchness*, we will discuss select teaching stories from Dongshan that reveal the subtlety and depth of teaching on the nature of reality, including the complexity of self and non-self, and the immediacy of awakening. These subtle teachings about engagement with suchness remain vital today for Zen people and for all those who wish to find meaning amid the challenges to modern lives. **Please register by writing info@chzc.org or call 919-967-0861 before March 22. The cost is \$50 and \$40 for members, and lunch is included.**

Taigen Dan Leighton is a Soto Zen priest in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki of the San Francisco Zen Center, and he is the Dharma Teacher of the Ancient Dragon Zen Gate temple in Chicago.

Zen Meditation Workshop

A Zen meditation workshop will be offered on Saturday, March 19, from 9:30-12:00, by Josho. In Zen meditation we practice with the interrelationship of body, breath, and mind through being present with our immediate experience. Instruction will include awareness of the breath and how to practice with the mind, with individual attention given to finding a well-supported position, whether you sit on a cushion, a meditation bench or a chair, as well as how to do walking meditation. The workshop is for beginners and anyone else wanting to review zazen practice. Suggested donation is \$20 (\$10 for students). To register, contact info@chzc.org or call 919-967-0861.

Spring Sesshin: Nagarjuna's Wisdom of the Middle Way

The brilliant second-century Indian teacher Nagarjuna wrote one of the most profound and influential expositions of Buddha-Dharma, the Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way, elucidating the teachings of the interdependent arising of all things and emptiness of independent existence. Chapter 24 of this great work clarifies the heart of the Middle Way, which has the potential to free the mind from fixations in zazen and in everyday life.

Kokyo Henkel, the Head Teacher at the Santa Cruz Zen Center will lead a three-day teaching



sesshin, beginning at 7:00 on Friday night, April 29, through Monday afternoon, May 2. In this sesshin, Kokyo Sensei will give hour and a half talks each morning and afternoon on Chapter 24 of Nagarjuna's teaching on the Middle Way.

The schedule for this sesshin will be similar to that of a monastic weekend. In order to help all of us settle into the schedule and our zazen practice, please arrive on time. **Sesshin will begin at 7:00 on Friday evening** with orientation and job assignments. The zendo will be open by 4:00 P.M. on Friday; so please try to arrive in time to settle in before 7:00 P.M. The sesshin day will include zazen, beginning at 6:00 A.M., a work period, and formal meals served in the zendo. The day will end around 9:00 P.M. **The fees are \$150, and \$120 for members.** There also will be an opportunity to make a donation to the teacher. *It is our intention that no one be turned away for financial reasons,* and partial scholarships are available. If you would like to request a scholarship, please contact Maura at maurahigh@gmail.com. In the past, contributions received for scholarships were very helpful in allowing people to attend sesshin here and at the San Francisco Zen Center. **Please return your registration form by April 22**, with a \$40 deposit.

You are welcome to sleep in the zendo, and there may be some space available in members' homes nearby. Please bring a pad for the floor, a sleeping bag, a towel and wash cloth, slip-on shoes, and layered clothes. Opportunities for bathing are limited. **Please bring work clothes.** For more information, please contact info@chzc.org or 919-967-0861. The zendo emergency number is: (919) 933-0776.

Kokyo Henkel came to the Santa Cruz Zen Center in 2009 as the new Head Teacher. He has practiced Zen since 1990 in residence at Tassajara Zen Mountain, Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, and Bukkokuji Monastery in Japan. He was ordained as a priest in 1994 by Tenshin Anderson Roshi. Kokyo is interested in exploring how the original teachings of Buddha-Dharma from ancient India, China, and Japan are still very much alive and useful in present-day America to bring peace and harmony to this troubled world.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — March & April, 2016

<http://www.chze.org>

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Spring Sesshin Registration Form April 29 thru May 2—Applications Due April 22

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Emergency contact person: Name _____ Phone _____

Liability waiver: *prior to sesshin, you will be required to sign a waiver whereby you release the Zen Center from any liability for accident or injury, and agree not to sue. You may request a copy of the form in advance.*
Do you have a **medical condition** (e.g., diabetes, heart condition, pregnancy), allergies or **dietary restrictions**? If so, please attach an explanation.

I have an oryoki I can bring Yes No

I plan to arrive at _____ on _____ I plan to leave at _____ on _____

I can help set up (4:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.) I can help clean up

I have enclosed my deposit/sitting fees \$ _____

Checks payable to
Chapel Hill Zen Center
P.O. Box 16302
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

I would like to donate toward a scholarship fund \$ _____

If this is your first sesshin with the Chapel Hill Zen Center, please attach a short statement about your zazen practice and history: How long have you been sitting zazen? How often are you currently sitting? Have you sat a one-day sitting or longer sesshin before? If so, when and with whom?

Where do you plan to sleep?

Do you have room in your home to host someone from out of town?

The zendo emergency number is (919) 933-0776. Please read sesshin guidelines on the facing page.

Sesshin Guidelines

Follow the schedule completely. If you are unable to do so, please speak to Josho before signing up.

No talking. Please try to maintain silence and a focused atmosphere during breaks and work time.

Meal Practice. Please take some of each food being served unless you have a bad allergy to a particular food. Our meal practice is to accept what is offered. Tea, coffee and water will be available during breaks and before *zazen* in the morning. **If you have a problem with, or allergy to, any food, please indicate that on the registration form.**

No smoking in the building or on the decks.

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; the next meetings are March 6 and 20, April 3 and 17, May 8 and 22, and June 5 when we will have the end-of-year picnic. For more information, please visit childrensprogramchzc.wordpress.com or contact Maura High, the program coordinator, at maurahigh@gmail.com.

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: 919-265-7600 or ZenandRecovery@gmail.com.

Richmond Zen Group

Josho Sensei will visit the Richmond Zen Group on Wednesday evening, March 2, at 7:00. She will give be available for individual meetings and will give a Dharma Talk.

People of Color Sitting Group

The POC Sitting Group meets on Wednesday nights from 6:00-7:30, beginning 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.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration

Buddha's Birthday celebration will be held on Sunday, April 17, following regular *zazen*. At 10:30 A.M. there will be a short talk in the zendo directed to the children. The kids will then have a procession to an outdoor altar where they will offer incense and bathe the Baby Buddha. Following the ceremony, there will be a **vegetarian** potluck picnic. Beverages and birthday cake will be provided.

Children, families, and friends are welcome! At 9:00 A.M. the kids will decorate the pagoda or "flower house" outside during *zazen*. Please bring balloons, bubbles, and banners for the procession and flowers for decorating the pagoda for the Baby Buddha.

Work Morning

On Saturday, April 16, there will be a work period from 10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. to clean the grounds and prepare for the outdoor celebration of Buddha's Birthday. **Everyone is encouraged to come to the work period, either for the whole session or for any part of it.** Please bring flowers if you can, either on Saturday, or by 9:00 A.M. on Sunday.

Practice Period

This year we are planning to have a six-week Practice Period from May 16, through June 26. I have invited Choro Carla Antonaccio to be *Shuso* or Head Monk. The *Shuso* is a training position in which a senior practitioner takes responsibility for helping lead the zendo practice during the more intensive schedule of a practice period by giving public Dharma talks, meeting with students in small groups and individually, and officiating for the longer chanting service. As usual, there will be Practice Period Teas on Sunday mornings, Way-seeking Mind Talks on Tuesday nights, a period of zazen on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and a Study Group. *Shuso* is the second level of priest training and ordination culminating in a Dharma Inquiry Ceremony at the end of the practice period. Having a practice period with a *Shuso* indicates a level of maturity for our sangha and our practice together. This is an unusual opportunity and I encourage you to support Choro with your participation and presence.

With a bow, Josho

Practice Discussion

Jakuko Mo Ferrell is available to meet individually for Practice Discussion. If you would like to set up a meeting, please contact her at the zendo or at Mositwear@gmail.com.

Study Group

The Study Group meets on Thursday nights from 6:45 until 8:00, except for Thursday, March 24. We are studying *Just This Is It, Dongshan and the Practice of Suchness* by Taigen Leighton. Everyone is welcome to come to all or any of the classes, and there is no charge. Copies of the book are available for sale in the entryway.

Transition

Mitsu Suzuki (4/23/1914 to 1/9/2016)

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's wife, Mitsu Suzuki, called "Okusan" by her students, passed away on January 9, at age 101. She remained in the United States, living at the San Francisco Zen Center, for twenty-two years after Suzuki Roshi's death. She taught Tea Ceremony, the sewing of traditional Japanese gar-

ments, arranged flowers on altars, and taught and demonstrated how to take care of a temple.



Zenkei Blanche Hartman was asked to make a statement to be read at Mitsu Suzuki's Funeral, which follows:

"Mitsu Suzuki Sensei was an inspiration to me and to all of us. After she came to the United States, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi gave her a book on Tea (*Chado*) and suggested that she study *Chado*, which she did. She came to understand that he was preparing her to be a teacher in her own right. Teaching Tea was a way for her to enter a teacher-student relationship, and it was a good way for some people to enter Zen practice. She also demonstrated to us how to care for a temple, how to make daikon pickles, how to keep flowers fresh on the altar, the natural beauty of a single flower, and how to enter a relationship with birds, plants, altars, tatami mats... My memory is not sufficient to share all the subtle ways that she wove the attitude of Tea into her daily activity. She was an inspiration to me ... to all of us.

With a deep-deep bow of gratitude,"

Zenkei Blanche Hartman

Members Library

The Member's Library is located in the Zen Center Annex and Kristine Heaton is the librarian. Recent acquisitions include *Fail, Fail Again, Fail Better: Wise Advice for Leaning into the Unknown* by Pema Chodron; *The Rainman's Third Cure: An Irregular Education* by actor, political activist and Zen priest Peter Coyote; *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall B. Rosenberg; *Early Buddhist Discourses* which discusses the structure and language of the Pali Canon, giving an overview of the basic doctrines of early Buddhism, edited and transl. by John J. Holder; *Dharma Talks* by Geoffrey Shugen Arnold Sensei, abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery, on eleven CD's.

A Short Talk on Karma for Kids

Josh Pat Phelan

There used to be a bumper sticker on the back of a car that said, "My karma ran over your dogma." I wasn't sure what this meant, but I thought it sounded pretty funny, but I do know what the word "karma" means. I would like to talk about that today because if you can understand this, it will help you the rest of your life. Karma simply means the actions we do through body, speech and mind. These are the things we do physically like feeding or petting a dog, washing dishes, running, playing baseball, weeding a garden, and so on; and what we say and if it is kind or friendly, helpful, generous or angry; and what we think and how we feel which might be relaxed, happy, unsure, a little irritated, tired, or, wanting something or wanting someone to do something for us, and so on. In terms of karma these actions of body, speech, and mind need to be volitional – which means we have to be trying or wanting to do them. An example is if you are outdoors and you step on an ant and kill it, but you didn't even see it, then that is an accident and it's different from trying to kill an ant or wanting to hurt something. Buddhism teaches that the reason we do what we do, or say what we say, or think what we think, is just as important, or sometimes even more important, than the thing we do, or say, or think. Our reasons for doing things can be wholesome

and support a clear mind and a sense of well-being; or they can be unwholesome which means that they are rooted in self-centeredness, or trying to get what we want, without thinking about how it effects other people.

The idea of karma is based on what is called the Law of Cause and Effect which means actions will ripen into a similar kind of effect or result. So, the things we do, the things we say, and the things we think, have an effect on how we feel and how our lives go. There is a passage in the Bible that reminds me of karma. It goes, "What you sow, so shall you reap;" or the seeds you plant are what will sprout and grow for you to harvest. So, the kind of seed that you plant or sow is what will grow from that seed. This is a natural law, for example, when you plant an acorn, an oak tree grows – and only an oak tree and nothing else; not even a dandelion will grow from an acorn. When you plant a peach seed, a peach tree grows; and a peach tree will never grow from anything else, like a watermelon seed or a penny. When a peach tree grows from a peach seed, it seems natural. We know that the peach seed sprouting and growing is not a punishment or a reward to the person who planted the peach seed. It's the law of nature.

Sometimes we experience the effects or results of our actions right away, and other times it takes many, many years for our actions to fully ripen. Examples of cause and effect working in our everyday lives are things like, if you touch something hot, you get burned; if you eat a lot, you get a full stomach; or if you eat too much, you may get a stomachache; if you play in the snow long enough, you'll get cold; if you don't get enough sleep, you feel tired and you may get cranky and say things you don't really mean. For each of these, the effects happen right away.

Cause and effect is impersonal, or natural, the way gravity is impersonal. Gravity is a force that we can't see that holds us onto the floor or onto the earth so we don't go floating away like a balloon – it is just the way things are here on Earth. So, cause and effect isn't something that people get together and vote on. The law of cause and effect simply means that wholesome actions sooner or later will ripen as wholesome results or

experiences for the person doing them, and unwholesome actions will ripen as unwholesome or unhappy experiences. When we have unpleasant or painful experiences, they are not punishment for unkind actions, it simply means at some point we did something self-centered or unkind. And when we have enjoyable or happy experiences, they are not a reward to us for doing kind actions, it is just the way that things naturally work out.

When I started school, the first thing I had to learn was the alphabet and how to count to a hundred. And the next thing I had to learn was at Sunday School, where we memorized a poem called the *Heart's Garden* and this poem reminds me of karma.

The Heart's Garden

The heart is a garden

Where thought flowers grow;

The thoughts that we think

Are like seeds that we sow.

Each kind, loving thought

Bears a kind loving deed;

While a thought that is selfish

Is just like a weed.

We must watch what we think,

Each moment all day;

And pull out the weed thoughts

And throw them away,

And plant loving seed thoughts

So thick in a row

That there won't be room

For the weed thoughts to grow.

—Katherine Merrill

According to Buddhist teaching, everything we try or intend to do, or say, or even think is like planting a seed. It begins very small, but the more we do it, it is like watering a seed that grows and becomes a larger, stronger part of our life. In our everyday lives, the things we do such as stepping onto a school bus, or opening a door, or eating, or the way we treat others, we can try to remember to do them with a kind mind. We can choose to be kind. We have a choice about what we say and how we treat other people and things. So, if you listen carefully to your thoughts, you will see that some thoughts are kind or helpful and you will be able

to choose what you say and do, planting the seeds for joy and well-being in your heart.

Looking Ahead

May 13-15 – Death and Dying Workshop by Andrew Holecek, author of *Preparing to Die, Practical Advice and Spiritual Wisdom from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition*. This is a guide for those facing death and for their caregivers, including from the great masters and useful advice on navigating end-of-life issues.

August 5-10 – Genzo-e Sesshin led by Shohaku Okumura Roshi. This is a teaching sesshin where Okumura Roshi will teach on two shorter fascicles or texts by Dogen for an hour and a half each morning and afternoon. He will talk on *Dotoku* or *Expressing the Truth*, and *Mitsugo* or *Intimate Words*. Okumura Roshi will be making his own translations which will be available before he arrives. Translations are also included in Kaz Tanahashi's *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, Vol. 1, p. 439, and in Nishijima and Cross's *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 2, p. 269.

Chinese Brush Painting

Jinxu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from 1:10-2:40, on March 6 and 20, and April 10 and 24. Chinese Brush Painting is from 1:10-3:10. Fees are \$20 for calligraphy and \$25 for brush painting. Please contact Jinxu at (919) 484-7524 or Jxznc@aol.com to register or for more information. Jinxu is also available to teach children's classes.

Board Members

The Board Members for 2016 for the Chapel Hill Zen Center are President, Maura High; Vice President, Ken Wilson; Secretary, John Paredes; Treasurer, Elliott Schaffer; Members-at-Large, Michael Emberson and Steve Pickett.

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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— Sora (1649-1710, companion of Basho)

*The stars on the pond,
Again the winter shower
Ruffles the water*

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.