



Holiday Schedule

The zendo will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25. **The regular Sunday morning program on November 27 will be held as usual.**

The zendo also will be closed from Wednesday, December 21 through Friday, December 30. **On Saturday night, December 31, there will have a New Year's Program beginning at 8:00, and the regular schedule will resume on Sunday morning, January 1.**

Garden Renovation

As Fall approaches, the new stream bed for the Zen Center entry garden is being constructed with a variety of stones and the existing pond is changing. The two koi and the water plants have been moved to holding tanks where they can overwinter until the new pond is ready. The expenses for the renovation have increased to \$36,000 and due to the generosity of many people, \$28,560 have been donated, with \$2,000 pledged in December. We are very grateful for all we have received and if you are able, we warmly invite you to support this project.

New Year's Eve

On Saturday night, December 31, we will welcome the New Year with two periods of zazen at 8:00 and 8:50 followed by the Bodhisattva Ceremony at 9:20, and a Fire Ceremony at 9:50 followed by refreshments. For the Fire Ceremony, we write down the habits and tendencies, difficult states of mind, tangled aspects of relationships, and so on, that we would like to release. We will have an outdoor fire to burn our papers along with the name cards from Memorial Services held during the past year and the incense stubs that have accumulated throughout year. Everyone is welcome for the whole program or to any part of it. **The program will end with pot-luck refreshments with beverages provided.**

Dharma Talks

Jakuko Mo Ferrell will give a public Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, November 6, at 10:30. Everyone is welcome.

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

On Sunday morning, December 11, we will commemorate Buddha's Enlightenment at 10:30 with a short talk directed to the kids followed by a candle lighting and special service in the zendo. At the end of service, the kids will be given a gift of incense and a candle. **The morning will end with pot-luck refreshments with beverages provided.** Two periods of zazen, beginning at 9:00 A.M. will be held as usual.

General Meeting

The General Meeting, our annual members' business meeting, will be held on Sunday morning, November 13, at 11:00, following zazen. The nominees for the next Board of Directors will be introduced and the budget for 2017 will be presented. Everyone is encouraged to attend, but only Participating Members are eligible to vote. If you have agenda items, please contact the Board President, Maura High at maurahigh@gmail.com

Rohatsu Sesshin

Our Winter sesshin, or meditation intensie will be held December 2-9. See pages 6 & 7 for more information.

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, and an optional group discussion and community building. Both those new to meditation, or experienced, are warmly welcome to join us. For more information, contact Conal or Kriti at pocsittinggroup@gmail.com. As usual, zazen instruction is offered to the public on Sunday morning at 9:00, and on Tuesday night at 7:00.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Nov & Dec, 2016

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 2

Children's Program

The Zen Center 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 November 6 and 20, December 11, and January 8 and 22. To sign up, or simply for more information, please 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 and 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.

Prison Outreach

Members of the CHZC volunteer in both state prisons in North Carolina and the federal prison at Butner. We can always use more volunteers, and having volunteers present is usually a requirement in order for inmates to meet for religious services or to sit zazen. We are looking for people who have been sitting zazen at the Zen Center for at least a year. Orientation is required by each institution. If you would like more information, please contact Robert at jewelednet@gmail.com.

Chinese Brush Painting

Jinxu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from 1:10-2:40, on November 6 and 20, and on December 11 and 18. 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

Jxzc@aol.com to register or for more information. Jinxu is also available to teach children's classes.

New to the Library

The following books have been most recently added to the member's library: *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation* by Rev. angel Kyodo williams; *What's Wrong with Mindfulness (And What Isn't): Zen Perspectives* by Robert Rosenbaum and includes a piece by Sojun Mel Weitsman; *What Is Zen? Plain Talk for a Beginner's Mind* by Norman Fisher and Susan Moon; *The Supreme Identity: An Essay on Oriental Metaphysic and the Christian Religion* by Alan Watts; *The Way of the White Clouds: A Buddhist Pilgrim in Tibet* by Lama Anagarika Govinda; *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to It's History and Teachings* by Donald S. Lopez Jr.; and *Prisoners of Shangra-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* also by Donald S. Lopez Jr.

Zazen – Practicing with the Body with the Whole Being

Joshu Pat Phelan

The tradition we practice in was brought to the U.S. by the Japanese priest, Shunryu Suzuki or Suzuki Roshi, in 1959, and it was brought to Japan from China by Master Eihei Dogen in the 13th century. Zen Master Dogen wrote, "We practice our way not for ourselves and not for others. We practice the way for the sake of the way." Suzuki Roshi commented, "There is no other reason why we practice our way. We just want to go back to our home as a duck wants to return to water...like a traveler who comes back and lies down in his own bed at last.

When I was growing up, I went to a church that was founded in the 1880's, and when I was in high school I heard that the co-founder of the church would sometimes meditate all night. I was really drawn to the *idea* of meditation and I tried meditating several times on my own, but nothing happened and I thought that something should happen – usually after a short time, I drifted into sleep or got bored and stopped. One thing that drew me to Zen was that it had a meditation

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Nov & Dec, 2016

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 3

practice; and later I found out that it even had instructions for how to meditate, which was a big help to me. I first heard about Zen when I read *Franny and Zooey* by J. D. Salinger and from it, I got the sense that Zen practice brought about a kind of authenticity, focusing on that which is most essential, at least that's how it sounded to me. A couple years later I read a book by D.T. Suzuki and loved the poetic images of nature that are often used in Zen teaching, as well as the emphasis on non-dual experience.

I had wanted to meditate for five or six years before I finally found a Zen group at the University of Oregon where I had some minimal instruction. I did Zen meditation or zazen with the group sporadically for a couple of months. But then I realized that I was squandering an opportunity that I had waited for, for such a long time. So, I decided that I would sit everyday which I did with this small group. At first I was afraid to even try sitting at home by myself because I was sure, that before long, I would just get up and begin doing something, since it was so very hard for me to stay on the cushion for forty minutes. And it never occurred to me that I could sit for less than forty minutes. But after a couple of months, I did begin sitting by myself each day in addition to sitting with the group. After a couple more months, I was sitting four times a day, and I had the feeling or fear that if I missed a day, that I might stop and never sit zazen again. Finding the Zen group and beginning zazen practice, brought a great sense of relief and gratitude. Gratitude for the meditation practice itself, for the group of people I sat with whose presence helped keep me on my cushion, gratitude for the cushion, for the wall, and gratitude for the relief.

That fall, I sat my first sesshin or five-day meditation intensive, which was held in the lodge of a state park in Oregon and it was led by the Rinzai teacher Sasaki Roshi from Los Angeles. The sesshin was pretty intense and vigorous. Four months later I came to the San Francisco Zen Center and sat a sesshin led by Suzuki Roshi, which was also intense, but quiet. Since the first sesshin I sat was for five days, I just assumed that was what how long sesshins lasted. I didn't find

out that this was a 7-day sesshin until after I arrived. A couple of months after that, I graduated from college and during the summer of 1971, I moved into the San Francisco Zen Center as a residential student. The rest of that year, I was able to sit three sesshins with Katagiri Roshi and one sesshin in December with Zentatsu Richard Baker. Just before the first period of zazen on the first day of that sesshin, Suzuki Roshi died.

This period of time had a lot of changes, but it was such a relief to be able to sit zazen – to know how to do zazen, and especially to have zazen scheduled four times a day, with people to sit with and to have talks on how to practice. Each time I walked through the front door of the SFZC and smelled the residual incense in the air, I felt like I was finally home.

I had the opportunity to practice with wonderful teachers and to be able to sit lots of sesshins, especially in the early years, including practicing at Tassajara in the early 1970's. This is how I spent my first eight years at Zen Center. I had still moments in zazen, but I also had many memories, emotions, desires, restlessness, and boredom. Then in 1987 I began reading Uchiyama Roshi's books and the teachings of Sawaki Kodo; and a couple of years after that Shohaku Okumura began visiting and giving talks in the U.S. Even though the teachers at the San Francisco Zen Center taught zazen, I got a more pragmatic sense of how to do zazen through these teachings. In 1999 I began finding talks by Issho Fujita, whose teacher was a disciple of Uchiyama Roshi, and I continued to get a clearer and more concrete sense of Dogen's way of zazen and how to practice it. Fujita Sensei led a Zen group in western Massachusetts from 1987 to 2005, and during that time he attended Vipassana or Insight Meditation retreats partly to study how zazen is the same as, as well as different from, other types of Buddhist meditation.

The instructions for zazen are pretty much the same for a beginner as they are for someone who has been sitting for ten or twenty years, but I think both our idea of what we are trying to do as well as our experience in zazen continues to

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Nov & Dec, 2016

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 4

become more refined. As we practice *zazen* year in and year out, the way we experience our body/mind tends to become more subtle, and our attention and awareness may settle and become more focused and clear, but the basic practice is the same. There's a well-known saying that a moment of *zazen* is a moment of Buddha, meaning a moment of true engagement in *zazen*, is a moment of Buddha mind.

One thing that may set *zazen* apart from other forms of meditation is the extent to which we settle into our bodily experience, letting go of thoughts, but also letting go of trying to make anything happen. For me *zazen* is a way to connect with a more fundamental level of being, and it requires trust or faith to let go of our usual concerns and thinking, and open ourselves to non-discursive experience. Non-discursive experience is available through the wisdom or presence of our physical being. If we do this practice long enough we will be at home wherever we are, settled in our body – embodying our practice. In Zen, it is said that realization must penetrate every cell of our bodies, down to the marrow of our bones and out to each tip of our hair. And while insights have their value, transformation occurs when insight penetrates our body, penetrates our whole being through and through, until it becomes one with our lives. This is one difference between meditating for self-improvement or self achievement and just sitting.

Issho Fujita has studied different mind-body traditions including Alexander Technique and Sensory Awareness. Everyone has a different way of talking about *zazen*, but I especially appreciate how Fujita describes *zazen*. He wrote, “*Zazen* is to continue aiming at a dynamic posture. And it is the activity of unending awakening to the reality of life right here, right now. Therefore, *zazen* is the activity of Life that is continuously going beyond itself and is free with no stagnation.... It is so free and unrestricted that it cannot be captured with a fixed shape.... ultimately we can only say that *zazen* is *zazen*.” He said, “*Zazen* can never see *zazen* itself.... It's something that far transcends the frame of all conceptual and speculative limits and standards.”

When he says, “*Zazen* can never see *zazen*,” I think he means that being totally engaged in the activity of *zazen* leaves nothing else or nothing extra to think with about what we are doing. (*Dharma Eye*, Oct. 2007, #20, p. 18)

One aspect of *zazen* is finding a balance between the intentional activity of will and the willingness to allow practice to happen. First we need the will or discipline to make space in our daily routine to sit, as well as to develop our ability to sit upright, without moving. But after we sit down and align our posture, we add to that letting go...letting go of our expectations, desires, irritations, fantasies, insights – everything – and simply aim at an alert yet relaxed presence.

I think of *zazen* or *shikan taza* as the whole-hearted practice of just sitting while engaging fully in the actuality of our being as it arises moment by moment. “Our being” means both my being and all beings; so engaging with the actuality of all-being as it arises in us moment by moment. And in *zazen*, the environment we are sitting in is part of this total, holistic experience. I think the koan inherent in *shikan taza* is finding the balance between will and willingness, between the discipline and effort needed to practice and noninterference. *Zazen* isn't a static or predictable exercise. There is no guaranteed method to produce the results we may want, or think we want. The dynamic activity of practice requires a continual sensitivity to find the right mixture of effort and ease, each time we sit.

I would like to look at some of Fujita Sensei's teachings on *zazen* or *shikan taza* which helped me understand the practice better. First of all, Fujita said that “*zazen* is ‘being’ not ‘doing.’” He distinguishes between *zazen* and meditation practice, which he sees as having an intended result. He considers meditation “an effort to ...create one's desired condition based on the calculation that ‘if such and such is done, this will follow.’” From the perspective of *zazen*, this kind of intention to create a particular experience stains our practice with the idea of a result or a spiritual accomplishment – you know, what we want to have happen in our meditation. This operates in the realm of duality or karma where,

even though the activity is subtle, it is based on expectation and grasping – on something separate from or outside our present experience.

Fujita describes zazen primarily as a body practice saying that “Dogen ... tends to describe zazen simply by...body postures such as ... just sitting in correct posture, ...just sitting, ...sitting immovably like a bold mountain. He said that Dogen’s substitution of the word “sitting” for “zazen,” “should not be [seen as] coincidental. In Dogen’s view, the main point of zazen must be, first and foremost, the holistic body posture or sitting posture, not the state of our minds.” I think this is kind of revolutionary – that zazen is just our body sitting using up our whole being 100%, without trying to cultivate or influence our mental state. There’s simply holistic, undivided consciousness, with nothing left over for self-consciousness.

Uchiyama Roshi said that “To practice zazen is to leave everything thoroughly and continuously to the correct posture of zazen.” Fujita Sensei compared the physical aspect of zazen to other forms of meditation saying, “Although... full-lotus position is regarded as the best sitting posture in other meditation methods... there seems to be a huge difference in how sitting posture is positioned in meditation and [how it is positioned in] zazen.” (I am going to add the phrase “sitting upright” to his words “full-lotus” since almost none of us sit full-lotus when we practice zazen.)

Fujita said, “In meditation, practitioners start a certain method of meditation after sitting in full-lotus position (or in the upright position). In other words, it is full-lotus position (or sitting upright) plus meditation. (The upright position or) Full lotus here is the means of conditioning the body and mind optimized for mental exercises called meditation, not the objective as itself.” This implies that the objective of zazen is just sitting, pouring our mind and body into the upright position, just being. He talked about the practice of meditation, in contrast to zazen as being “structured in a somewhat dualistic manner that the body sitting is a container and the mind meditating is the content. And the empha-

sis is always on meditation as mental exercises.” The idea that meditation is a method or technique in which the body supports the mind to concentrate or cultivate a particular mental state is how I thought of meditation when I began practicing zazen, and I think this is a pretty common idea. But Fujita said that zazen is “full-lotus (or upright sitting) plus zero. ...there is no dualistic structure that the body sits while the mind does something else ...” “In zen, both the body and mind are simultaneously used up completely just by the act of sitting.” So, you can see that zazen is simpler than other forms of meditation, but at the same time, the non-doing of zazen is a radical departure from the rest of our conscious life and in that way, not so easy to understand or to do. So, what is zazen? Sawaki Kodo said, “Zazen is to do what we cannot say in words and to practice what we cannot think.” Even if we can’t define it, let’s support each other to do it.

In 1971, I moved from Oregon to the San Francisco Zen Center and practiced there until I moved to Chapel Hill in 1991. It has been such a gift to be able to practice here with you. I feel so grateful for practice – yours and mine – and for the support of your presence. May we continue this undefinable practice that confirms an authenticity beyond thinking.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Josho Sensei will lead *Rohatsu* sesshin from Friday night, December 2, through Friday afternoon, December 9. Sesshin is an intimate way to practice with ourselves and others. We begin sesshin together, we sit together, walk together, eat together, and work together. Our practice is supported by the entire universe and each of us is supporting everyone else. In order to help all of us settle into the schedule and our *zazen* practice, please arrive on time. It is possible to sit part of the sesshin, but please come to orientation on Friday night, and plan to sit for at least two days, and, when registering, clearly explain what part of sesshin you would like to attend.

Sesshin will begin at 7:00 on Friday evening with orientation and job assignments. Following orientation, silence will be observed. The zendo will be open by 4:00 P.M. on Friday; so please plan to arrive in time to settle in before 7:00 P.M. The sesshin day will include *zazen*, beginning at 6:00 A.M., *kinhin*, a Dharma talk, work period, formal meals served in the zendo. *Dokusan*, an individual meeting with Josho Sensei, will be available. The day will end around 9:30 P.M. The fees are \$40 per day for Participating Members and \$50 per day for others. Fees for the whole sesshin are \$280 for Participating Members and \$330 for others. There will also be an opportunity to make a donation to the teacher. **It is our intention that no one be turned away for financial reasons.** Scholarships are available. If you would like to request a scholarship, please contact Maura High 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 November 25, with a \$30 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, pillow, 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 Josho at (919) 967-0861 or info@chzc.org.

Sesshin Guidelines

Follow the schedule completely. If you are unable to do so, please speak to Josho before signing up. If you become sick, or if a difficulty arises during sesshin, please speak with Sensei or the Ino at that time.

No reading or writing, including Buddhist studies. Of course, you may read the sesshin schedule, but any reading that is not essential to the sesshin should not be done.

No talking. Please 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.**

Please do not use deodorants, aftershave lotion, or other cosmetics that are perfumed.

No smoking in the building or on the decks.

The Zen Center emergency phone: 919-933-0776.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Nov & Dec, 2016

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 7

Rohatsu Sesshin Registration Form December 2-9 — Applications Due Nov. 25

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?

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

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

Nonprofit Organization
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Iron Gate

*So high you cannot climb up or get close to it.
Raindrops scatter in the flying wind, the gate is barred
with green moss.
Suddenly forgetting thought, without attainment,
Only then will you be sure the gate has been open all along.*

— *Taego 1302-80*

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.