



General Meeting

Our annual General Meeting will be held on **Sunday morning, November 8, at 11:00**, following zazen. The nominees for the next Board of Directors will be introduced and the budget for 2016 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, Robert Haake at jewelednet@gmail.com.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Dec. 4–11. Information and registration on p. 7.

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.

Children's Program

The Zen Center Children's Program offers children four years and older a space and time where they can practice living mindfully, through programmed activities; it introduces them to Zen concepts and Buddhist teachings; and provides a place for children in the Zen Center sangha while giving their parents the opportunity to meditate. Maura High leads the program, which meets twice a month on Sundays from 9:00 until 11:00. It will meet on November 8 and 22, and December 13. For more information about the program, please visit childrensprogramchzc.wordpress.com or contact Maura at maurahigh@gmail.com.

People of Color Sitting Group

Wednesday nights from 6:00–7:30

Begins with zazen at 6:00, followed by walking meditation, and then there is the option to stay for discussion and community building. Both those new and experienced meditators are warmly welcome to join us. For more information, contact Conal or Kriti at pocsittinggroup@gmail.com. Instruction in zazen and an orientation are also offered to the public on Sunday morning at 9:00, and Tuesday night at 7:00.

Recovery Meeting

Tuesday nights at 7:30

This is a recovery group with a Buddhist perspective on the Twelve-Step Program. The meetings begin with twenty minutes of silent meditation. For more information, contact 919-265-7600 or zensetter@gmail.com.

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

On **Sunday morning, December 13**, 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.

New Year's Eve

On Thursday 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 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 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.

Library

The CHZC Members' Library regularly acquires new material. Here are those received most recently: *Breathe Through This*, by Eline Snel, an introduction to mindfulness meditation for parents of teenagers. Snel describes how mindfulness-based practices can help you calm down during tense and heated moments and become a more focused and open-hearted parent. *Seeds for a Boundless Life*, by Zenkei Blanch Hartman, a collection of short teachings taken from her talks

on the subject of the boundlessness that sees beyond our small, limited self to include all others, living life with the curiosity of a child. *Zen Dust: The History of the Koan and Koan Study in Rinzai Zen*, by Isshu Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki. This is the first full reprint since the original edition published in 1966, and it is a text for those seeking to delve into the unique spiritual training that koan study entails. The online catalogue can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/chzclibrary>

Chinese Brush Painting

Jinxiu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from 1:10-2:40, on November 15 and 22, and December 13 and 20. Chinese Brush Painting is from 1:10-3:10. 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.

Prison Outreach

Members of the CHZC volunteer in NC state prisons and at the federal prison in Butner. We can always use more volunteers, and having volunteers present is usually a requirement for inmates to meet for religious services or to sit zazen. We are looking for people who have been sitting zazen at the ZC for at least a year. Orientation is required by each institution. If you are interested, please contact Josho at (919) 967-0861 or info@chzc.org

Looking Ahead

Taigen Dan Leighton is planning to lead a day of teaching on “Soto Zen and Dongshan’s Practice of Suchness,” on **Saturday, March 27, 2016**. His book, *Just This is It, Dongshan and the Practice of Suchness*, on the teachings of the early Soto Zen ancestor, Dongshan or Tozan Ryokai, will be used.

Shohaku Okumura Roshi is planning to lead a *Genzo-e Sesshin* here next year, **August 5-10, 2016**.

Buddha’s Enlightenment

Talk by Josho Pat Phelan

In the collection of Suzuki Roshi talks in the book *not always so*, he talked about Buddha nature in a way that is not so common and maybe even provocative. He said, “Sometimes we say Buddha

nature. Sometimes we say enlightenment or bodhi, Buddha or attainment. We call Buddha nature not only by these names, but sometimes we call it ‘evil desires.’ We may say evil desires, but for Buddha, that is Buddha nature. Whatever you call it, that is another name of one reality. Even though you call it a mountain or a river, that is just another name of the one reality. When we realize this, we are not fooled by words like ‘nature,’ ‘result,’ or ‘Buddhahood.’ ‘Evil desires’ is another name for Buddha nature. When we practice zazen, where would evil desires come from? In zazen there is no place for evil desires. Still we may believe that evil desires should be eliminated. Why is that? You want to eliminate your evil desires in order to reveal your Buddha nature, but where will you throw them away? When we think that evil desires are something we can throw away, that is heretical. Evil desires is just a name we use, but there is no such thing that we can separate out and throw away.”

This holistic view of reality is emphasized in Mahayana Buddhism, and particularly in Zen which teaches that nirvana is not found outside of samsara. In Buddhism, there is no aspect of our character, no state of mind, that is outside the realm of practice. In Zen, we aim to become conscious of, to practice and awaken with the totality of who we are.

One of the first Japanese Zen teachers to come to America was Sokei-an who did most of his teaching in New York City in the 1930’s and 1940’s. He said, “In Buddhism purposelessness is fundamental.” To settle deeply in zazen, we have to accept the utter purposelessness of zazen. Suzuki Roshi taught practicing with “no gaining mind.” One of the goals in Zen meditation is to let go of our goals and expectations, to let go of any purpose or reason for practicing. This allows us to offer ourselves completely to practice, without the hook of what we’ll get in return for practicing. Whereas, the anticipation of our expectations keeps us off balance and divided. Suzuki Roshi said, “To expect some result from your practice is like trying to hear a bell from outside yourself.”

Usually when we hear a sound, we think of it as coming from outside into us; and when someone

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rings a bell, we think the bell starts a vibration that enters and makes contact with our eardrum which we then perceive as sound. But Suzuki Roshi said, "When Avalokitesvara heard the sound, he made the sound at the same time....He made the sound, not the bell....When we are present, the ringing of the bell and its resounding in us, is immediate. This is the interpenetration of the bell, the ringing and us. At this time, there is no gap.

On the other hand, when we compare things – people, ideas, the past to the present, and so on, we stand apart from them and look at them like looking into a department store window. Likewise, when we try to measure our progress in practice, we stand outside practice in order to see how it measures up to our idea of what we want it to be. Trying to step outside ourselves to consider our experience objectively involves judgement and discrimination. When we make our experience into an object, we end up objectifying ourselves, compounding our feelings of separation.

Suzuki Roshi continued saying, "To expect something from outside, to try to achieve something, is to try to hear the bell from the outside only. If you don't have the faintest idea of gaining, the sound will arise from you. When the bell is sounding, you are sound. Stop your gaining idea and keep alert and ready to accept—ready to respond to the slightest sound which will come." When we stop looking outside ourselves for satisfaction, wisdom, recognition or whatever it is that we want, then whatever we meet, we can meet as Buddha instead of something based on a self-referential scale that determines how it will benefit us.

Before Shakyamuni Buddha was enlightened, he was a prince known as Siddhartha. According to legend, Siddhartha began his spiritual journey by leaving a life of luxury and indulgence and entering the forest as a renunciant in search of Truth. He first practiced meditative absorption in which he experienced blissful states of deep concentration, oblivious to his body. But when his meditation ended and he returned to ordinary activity, he found that his life and state of mind hadn't changed much. So, he decided to abandon this type of meditation, and then spent about six years practicing extreme asceticism, in hopes that weak-

ening his body would strengthen his spirit. At the point where he had almost died from fasting, he decided that these practices were not leading to the Truth he was looking for, so he began eating and caring for his body, regarding it as worthy of his awareness and spiritual practice. He decided to try a different kind of meditation. Without trying to weaken or escape from his body or his surroundings, he brought his attention to the body and mind he had. One day as he prepared to meditate, he vowed not to get up until he found the truth that would end suffering. It is said that when Mara heard this, Mara was terrified because he knew that if Buddha or Siddhartha ended suffering this would be Mara's end. Mara is the personification of the negative aspects of consciousness that disturb us such as, greed, lethargy, anger, repulsion, confusion, doubt, jealousy, comparative thinking and so on, in other words, our evil desires, desires or emotions that are based on separation and generated by a concern for "me." Actually, I don't like using the word evil, and I think that it doesn't have the same kind of connotation in Asia that it does in the West. I prefer the word unwholesome, meaning an action that has a self-referential motivation.

So Mara assembled his forces in an attempt to distract Siddhartha from his vow. First, he called up visions of fear and aversion in the form of demons and warriors who shot arrows and spears toward Siddhartha. According to the legend, when the arrows approached Siddhartha, they were deflected, as if he were being protected by an invisible shield. But Siddhartha's mind remained steadfast. Next Mara tried to call forth desire and passion by creating fantasies of seductive dancing girls and beautiful music. In the midst of these visions and memories, Siddhartha's state of mind remained calm and clear. Mara's next attempt to distract Siddhartha was through self-doubt. He challenged Siddhartha with thoughts like, "So, you think that you are a great meditator. You think at age thirty-five you can find the truth when holy men who have devoted their whole lives to searching for the truth have failed. What makes you think you are worthy of enlightenment?" And again, Siddhartha's state of mind remained calm and undisturbed. Mara's last challenge was to

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demand that Siddhartha provide a reference or witness to vouch that he was worthy of enlightenment. Siddhartha touched the earth, and the earth itself, which had witnessed Siddhartha's compassionate acts throughout many lifetimes, quaked and trembled in affirmation. Finally, Mara realized that he was truly defeated and faded away like a bad dream.

In the story when Siddhartha realized that he had been mis-applying his effort by ignoring his physical presence and denying his body through ascetic practices, he began to realize the interdependence of his body and mind. This resulted in integrating his physical presence and his spiritual endeavor which allowed him to awaken to the Truth of reality *at* every level of his being and *with* every level of his being. But as long as he denied his physicality, his insight was incomplete. I think the importance of Buddha touching the earth is that practice, truth, and awakening cannot be achieved separate from our physical existence; and the Earth or this world is the optimal place to enter Buddhist practice and to awaken.

When my daughter was five, I read her the story of Buddha's enlightenment. When I finished reading, she left the room but returned a few minutes later saying, "Boy, I sure am glad that Buddha defeated Mara." I could see an expression of relief on her face as if the witches and ghosts, shadows and monsters, all over the world had just been defeated. So, I had to tell her that this wasn't exactly the case, that Mara was the unhappy, disturbing thoughts inside each of us. While Buddha defeated his Mara and showed us how, each of us has to defeat Mara for ourselves.

But a few days later, I realized that this wasn't quite accurate either. Siddhartha or Buddha did not defeat Mara. Siddhartha sat upright with awareness, his eyes were open to his visions of desire, his ears heard the thunder of the demons and warriors, and he clearly observed his own self-doubt. Without following his desires or pushing away his fears or succumbing to his doubt, he sat fully aware, fully awake. When Mara found he could no longer disturb Siddhartha's state of mind, Mara *felt* defeated and withdrew, and with a heavy, heavy heart he faded away. Our effort in

practice is not to try to conquer our desires and fears, our effort is to awaken to them, to be aware of our mental and emotional states without trying to pursue them, squelch them, or control them. When we simply observe them, they lose their power and they burn themselves out, coming to rest on their own.

In Buddhism we practice with depression, desire, jealousy, resentment, anger, and other states of mind, by not expressing them and not repressing them. Without trying to change what you're feeling in any way, try to be wholly and completely present with it. Try to really feel it—the emotional quality, the physical sensation and its location in your body. We practice by simply staying present with our mental and emotional experience without clinging, without trying to push it away, without trying to change it, and without trying to distract ourselves by changing the subject. Even when you experience a mental state you want to keep, like concentration and clarity during zazen, I think you will find that it changes and sooner than you want. So, when your state of mind begins to change, let it change—there is no need to hold on to it, but at the same time, don't force it away. Just try to be present with its passing away and with whatever comes next.

Again, to practice with depression, fear, anger, self-rejection or any other states that we may put into this category of "evil desires," bring your undivided attention to them, your unwavering attention, your kind, caring attention. Really get to know your internal experience in detail. Because mindful attention is a wholesome dharma, a wholesome state or activity of mind, when we bring attention to an unwholesome state like anger, something different begins to happen. When we try to avoid, or repress, or control our emotional experience, it tends to come back in a more dramatic form trying to get our attention, like a two year old throwing a tantrum. But I don't think that these emotional states are the primary condition. They are our reaction to something else—the way we deal with something more basic. We need to be available for and open to the primary condition. It's like having a fever which is a symptom of an underlying condition, such as an

infection. Often our emotional states are expressions of our reactions to a primary condition; and if we are avoiding the emotional experience, we won't get beneath it to the primary state. We will be pushed around by it without really knowing what's pushing us.

Going back to Buddha's enlightenment—after Mara was defeated, Buddha continued sitting and with great clarity, he saw what has come to be known as the Four Noble Truths. He saw that life is sometimes painful and filled with suffering but even when it's not, existence is marked or colored by dissatisfaction or unrest. This is due to the impermanence of all phenomenon—including everything we can call a self—our body, mind, memory, sensations, perceptions, feelings, will, even our awareness and consciousness are impermanent and subject to change.

The second Noble Truth is that the origination of dissatisfaction or suffering is clinging. What we cling to is anything we may take to be a self or that we identify with which, due to its impermanence, is ultimately unsatisfactory. As humans, we take our body and mind and it's functions to be me or mine: my eyes, my perceptions, my feelings, my will and ideas, my mind. Since everything in the universe including our body and mind is constantly changing, our attachment to the way we think they should be, the way we want them to be, the way they used to be but no longer are, is a constant source of dissatisfaction. Buddhism categorizes three kinds of clinging or craving. The first is craving for sensuous experience. This doesn't refer just to big desires and passions, it also includes a very fine, subtle state of restlessness or wanting. For example, when things are going really well, when they are about as good as they get, or when they are just the way you wanted them to be, craving can be the subtle state of wanting that lurks under the surface of things—wanting things to be just a little bit different from the way they are or wanting to have just a little more than we have. This craving for sensual experience includes a kind of restlessness that propels us out of our present experience, looking for something better. The second type is craving to maintain the self. The momentum of this is so

strong that it continues even in our sleep, as a kind of twenty-four hour a day self-maintenance. An example of this is if you are traveling and a fire alarm rings, as you wake up, you know who you are. You may not know where you are or which way to turn in the dark, but your self-identity or sense of self-survival is there. The third kind of craving is craving for extinction. An extreme form of this is suicide and a weaker form is the desire to escape from the cycle of birth and death or the suffering of this world. Any kind of craving or grasping, clinging, or attachment automatically creates dissatisfaction or suffering. Aversion is also considered a kind of craving since it is a desire to get away from something.

The third Noble Truth is stopping, or that there is an end to suffering. When clinging or craving stop, dissatisfaction and suffering also stop. The way to end craving is through practicing the middle way, the path that avoids too much pleasure or self indulgence and too much pain or austerity. The middle way is the fourth Noble Truth which describes the Eight-Fold Path.

Each one of the aspects of the Eight-Fold Path has its own set of practices associated with it. I think it can be confusing to think, on one hand, of Suzuki Roshi's teaching of just practicing for the sake of practice and, on the other hand, to think of the path of cultivation where you begin with a set of practices and then move on to a more subtle practices, slowly developing and strengthening your concentration. Zen practice is a little different from this. Zen teaches that this very mind, just this, is Buddha—it's already Buddha, there is no Buddha outside this mind.

Suzuki Roshi said, "All the difficulties you have in zazen should not take place outside your mind. Your efforts should be kept within your mind. In other words you have to accept the difficulty as not being other than what you are."

When Suzuki Roshi said "to accept the difficulty as not being other than what you are," a key word for me is "accept" or "acceptance." Acceptance doesn't mean a passive state where we just lie back and accept whatever happens as our fate or karma. I see acceptance as a dynamic process

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where we first have to see what is there, to be aware of it; and to be aware of “it” means that we have to be aware before “it” arises. So our effort is in staying open and conscious. To do this, we have to let go of the past moment, over and over. To practice is to continually let go. Uchiyama Roshi referred to this as the active participation in loss, moment by moment letting go of the past, so we can be reborn in the present.

So it’s not just that it is OK to be whoever we are—it is OK—but when we are practicing, we also try to be aware of who we are and what is going on right now. When we allow our body and mind to become calm enough to not interfere with whatever arises, then our evil desires will no longer push us around. This is how we become free from our fear and desire. It’s not that they necessarily go away; but we see them for what they are, and through this awareness, they become just another thing to practice with.

Rohatsu Sesshin

Joshō Sensei will lead *Rohatsu* sesshin from Friday night, December 4, through Friday afternoon, December 11. 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 Joshō 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 Robert Haake at jewelednet@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 28, 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 Joshō at (919) 967-0861 or info@chzc.org. The Zen Center emergency phone is 919-933-0776.

Sesshin Guidelines

Follow the schedule completely. If you are unable to do so, please speak to Joshō 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.

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Rohatsu Sesshin Registration Form December 4-11—Applications Due November 27

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

Joshō Pat Phelan, Abbess

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Holiday Schedule

The zendo will be **no zazen on Thanksgiving, November 26 Thursday, or on Friday, November 27**. The Sunday morning program on November 29 will be held as usual. This year the zendo will be **closed Monday through Friday, December 21–25, and December 28 – January 1**, except for the New Year's Eve Program on Thursday night, December 31. The zendo will have its usual programs at 9:00 A.M. on Sunday mornings Dec. 20 and 27.

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.