



*Photo: John Paredes*

### **Garden Renovation Complete**

We are very pleased to announce that in mid-June the Front Garden Renovation was completed. If you haven't visited recently, we encourage you to come and see the garden which was both designed and installed by Stefan Bloodworth, a curator at Duke Gardens. The garden now has a stone-lined flowing stream, and a larger and deeper pond in which the two large koi seem very happy, swimming both on the surface and unseen on the bottom of the pond. We would like to thank you for your support of and enthusiasm for this project. Many hands helped bring this project to fruition – through financial support, by relocating the concrete bench to the back garden, moving stones, watering, by sanding and oiling the new deck railing, and in other ways. We invite additional contributions to complete the fund raising for this project.

*The Garden Renovation Committee: Choro Carla Antonaccio, Steve Pickett, and Josho*

# Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — July & Aug, 2017

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 2

## Showing Up for Racial Justice:

*A workshop about the way in which racism operates in our society*

Sunday, August 27, 12:00-2:00

Lunch provided at 11:15

The Chapel Hill Zen Center Board of Directors, and I, invite you to join us for a two-hour guided discussion and workshop about the ways in which racism operates in our society and how we can work against it. Members of the Triangle Showing Up for Racial Justice (TSURJ) will discuss how people in power have historically, and at the present, used racism to divide and conquer us, the power of multi-racial coalitions who have worked and are working together in spite of these efforts, and the role that each of us can play in the current movement against racism.

Lunch will be provided after Temple Cleaning, around 11:15. Our hope is to finish eating and clean up so that the workshop can begin at noon. If you would like to attend lunch and/or the workshop, please sign up on the clipboard in the entryway or write [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org) so we know how many people to plan for. TSURJ facilitators are offering this workshop for no charge, but a donation basket will be out.

For more information about TSURJ, see: [facebook.com/trianglesurj](https://facebook.com/trianglesurj)

With palms together,

Josh

## Dharma Talks

On Sunday mornings, July 16, and August 20, Josh Pat Phelan will give a public Dharma Talk, at 10:30.

## All-day Sitting

All-day sittings are scheduled for Sundays, July 16, August 20, September 17, and October 15, 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 a 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 lecture, *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 Josh Sensei if this is your first all-day sitting.*** For more information on the oryoki meal form see: <http://www.kannondo.org/oroyoki>

## Aging Gracefully, Befriending Death:

### Sunday July 2

This is an informal discussion group that gives us the opportunity to 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 July 2, following the regular morning schedule, around 11:15 after temple cleaning. Please contact Kris Garvin at [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com), or Jeff Sherman at [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com), if you have questions, would like more information, or if you would like to be included in email notifications.

Everyone is welcome, regardless of age.

# Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — July & Aug, 2017

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 3

## 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 will resume in the Fall. To sign up, or simply for more information, please contact Maura High, the program coordinator, at [maurahigh@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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: 919-265-7600 or [ZenandRecovery@gmail.com](mailto:ZenandRecovery@gmail.com).

## 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](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com) or Jeff Sherman at [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com).

## Chinese Calligraphy and Brush Painting

Jinxu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from 2:15-3:45, on July 9 and 23, August 6 and 13. Chinese Brush Painting is from 2:15-4:15. Fees are \$20 for calligraphy and \$25 for brush painting. Please contact Jinxu at (919) 484-7524 or [Jxznc@aol.com](mailto:Jxznc@aol.com) to register or for more information. Jinxu is also available to teach children's classes.

## Looking Ahead

On Saturday evening, October 28, we are planning to hold the *Sejiki* Ceremony.

December 1-8, we are planning to have Rohatsu, our 7-day December Sesshin.

## Richmond Zen Group

Josho Sensei will visit the Richmond Zen Group on Wednesday evening, July 12 at 7:00. She will be available for individual meetings and will give a Dharma Talk.

## Working with the Precepts

Josho Pat Phelan

I would like to continue talking about the nature of precepts and vows. According to the Chinese Buddhist Master Sheng-yen, a common saying in Mahayana Buddhism is, "Having vows to break is the bodhisattva path. Not having vows to break is a non-Buddhist path." I have also heard that it is better to take the precepts and break them than not to take them at all, which I think has a similar meaning to Master Sheng's statement. Of course, the point isn't to break the precepts but to receive them and use them as a way to strengthen our practice. Between the two points of arousing the aspiration to receive the precepts and mature our practice, and the actual fulfillment of that aspiration, we can use the precepts to support and clarify our practice. Practicing with the precepts is like learning any new skill, we begin slowly, consciously trying over and over, like learning to play the piano, until it becomes

## Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — July & Aug, 2017

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 4

an intention or a direction in our life, that is so integrated that we no longer need to think about it in such a conscious way.

One aspect of working with the precepts is becoming sensitive to our conscience, which for me is like having an internal barometer that registers when the pressure becomes heavier – it's almost as if there is a physical component to it. When an impulse to do or say something comes up and I feel a kind of heaviness of “don't do it,” sometimes I pull back and stop, and sometimes I don't. But having this kind of conscience, even when our actions don't reflect it, gives us the chance to be aware of our impulses before acting on them and it keeps us in touch with the state of mind and other consequences that result from following through on our impulses. It helps us see more clearly that we are in charge, that we can choose our actions, including the states of mind that we engage and develop.

Using what I refer to as a barometer is like having a conscience without guilt. If we are going to stay in the present moment, there isn't enough space or time to get involved in feeling guilty. Recognizing that we are off the mark or that we've made a mistake is important and it indicates that we are connected with what we are doing, but the self-rejection that comes with guilt is not useful in practice. In fact, guilt tends to make what we did that we regret seem more permanent than it is, making the “me” who did it more solid; and for some of us, guilt magnifies our regrettable actions, thereby making them larger, or a larger part of our identity than they were initially. So, dwelling on these past actions makes them bigger. Guilt keeps us fastened to the past, diminishing the present. Instead, we want to recognize our actions for what they are, but without dwelling on them. By letting go or emptying ourselves, moment after moment, we are free to meet the present. This is a way to reinforce our intention to practice, rather than dwelling on our lapses which strengthen self-criticism and self-rejection, both of which are a hindrance to practice.

One of the fundamental teachings in Buddhism is the law of causation or the law of karma. The word karma means volitional or intentional action and it is enacted through our body, speech and thought. The law of causation is that wholesome actions sooner or later come to fruition as wholesome results or effects, and that unwholesome actions come to fruition as unwholesome results; which is basically what you sow, so shall you reap. This law is like the law of gravity – in that it is completely impersonal, like the fact that if we plant an acorn, an oak tree will sprout and nothing else; and if we plant a lot of acorns, a lot of oak trees will sprout. The effects of our actions may be experienced in the next instant, hours or years later, or beyond this life. Our present situation is the result of our past actions; but in each moment the intention with which we act, speak, and the emotions and mental states we engage, help determine what our future circumstances will be.

The Western idea of good and evil doesn't really apply here. Buddhism teaches that either we act out of insight to the truth of cause and effect, or we act out of ignorance to this truth. Once we realize the relationship between cause and effect, and the interconnectedness of all things, we act out of insight or wisdom. From the perspective of Zen, we don't need to try to change our behavior as much as we need to bring our attention to our actions and the effects they have on ourselves and others. When we really understand or really realize the unwholesome effects of our unwholesome actions, we will stop doing them. So our real effort with the precepts is in the realm of mindfulness or staying connected to our intention.

During sesshin, or during a precepts ceremony, or maybe some other time, you may have had the experience of feeling so clear and settled, so unambivalently committed to practice, that it's crystal clear that waking up is the single most important thing, and you want to do everything you can to maintain this commitment to practice. Or you may have had such a keen sense of the suffering that results from the “me versus you” orientation which is the basis for our picky,

## Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — July & Aug, 2017

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 5

comparative, judgmental, criticizing mind that you want to abandon it, forever, in order to align yourself with Buddha's perspective, to view everyone as a struggling Buddha-to-be.

Once, as a member of the Zen Center, I tried to act on someone's behalf to help them get something they felt was important; and it didn't work out the way I expected. I felt like my word had been compromised, and I went through the process of feeling hurt and angry, and experienced humiliation, and shame. And I started having imaginary mental conversations with the person trying to show them that they were wrong, and then I noticed that these mental conversations included snide comments. It is so easy to slip into putting others down when we feel like we've been wronged or treated unjustly. I find that the feelings of self-justification and self-righteousness, the feeling that I want the other person to see how they are wrong and I am right, are all aimed at protecting myself, my self-image and character. At the same time, it's important to feel our feelings and emotional responses and to try to understand what is underneath them – what is initiating this response, but that clarification is our responsibility. Whereas, the reasons and justifications we come up with are traps that strengthen our sense of self. When I notice snide comments in my mind, it is a clear signal that I am engaged in an unwholesome state, one that perpetuates suffering. We all cling to our point of view, we all want to be right, but clinging creates suffering. ***So we have to decide, do I want to be right, or do I want to wake up to how I create my suffering?*** Sharon Salzberg said that "Comprehending karma is really taking spiritual and moral responsibility for ourselves."

In the book, *Practicing Peace*, Pema Chodron refers to the Tibetan word *shengpa* for the process of getting triggered that activates an automatic, angry and defensive reaction. She refers to this biting the hook. And I have the image of a hook that goes in easily, but is difficult and painful to remove. So, when we bite the hook and get caught, what can we do about it?

In Tibetan Buddhism, there is a four-fold practice for working with our misdeeds and for purifying

or changing the cycle of unwholesome karmic patterns. In her book *Start Where You Are*, Pema Chodron refers to unwholesome patterns as neurotic actions. She describes them as, "...in limitless, timeless space – with which we could connect at any time – we continually have tunnel vision and lock ourselves into a room and put bolts on the door... putting on dark glasses, putting in ear plugs, and covering ourselves with armor" She says that in "confessing our neurotic action... we learn to see honestly what we do and develop a yearning to take off those dark glasses, take out those earplugs, [and] take off that armor." She said, "It's...another method for letting go of holding back, for opening up rather than closing down."

The four-fold process begins with recognizing and acknowledging what we have done that has caused harm, either to ourselves or to others, now or sometime in the past. For this, again, mindfulness is essential. If we aren't aware of feeling some heaviness or doubt about what we have done, if we aren't aware of our harmful actions, there is no way to work with them. So, first we need to be aware that we have done something off the mark and look at it clearly and thoroughly. By acknowledging actions rooted in ignorance for what they are, we know unwholesome action as unwholesome, delusions as delusions, and neurosis as neurosis. The first step in undoing guilt is disclosure, no longer hiding our misdeeds through ignorance, carelessness, by being too busy, or intentionally. Hiding or being in denial about what we have done nourishes guilt. In early Buddhist practice, disclosure was done by confessing to fellow monks or nuns in the sangha. Disclosure can also be done to a spiritual guide or inwardly to the awakened aspect of our own mind. In Mahayana Buddhism, particularly in Zen, disclosure is often done inwardly. **You** look at what you are doing, and recognize it for what it is. You have the power and ability to forgive yourself and to resolve not to repeat it.

After realizing that we have caused harm, the second step is feeling regret. As regret strengthens, it becomes contrition, feeling truly sorry for the misery we have intentionally caused and

feeling that under the same circumstances we would not do it again. The third step is doing remedial or virtuous activity. We might think of this as wholesome activity that waters the seed of our innate wisdom – it's doing something that changes our direction away from unwholesome patterns and reinforces wholesome patterns.

The most common way this is practiced is by taking refuge in the Three Treasures. I think what taking refuge really is, is reconnecting with our own openness of heart, with spaciousness, returning to our unconditioned nature, so we aren't so tangled up in our habit energy and reactivity. Reconnecting in this way helps strengthen our commitment to living an awakened life. The fourth step is making a commitment to break the cycle, resolving not repeat the action. This commitment or resolution is a vow. Once we see, clearly and intimately, how our neurotic patterns work and the harm they create, it is much easier to refrain from repeating the cycle.

When you know ahead of time that you will be in a difficult situation or a situation where you have deep karmic patterns, perhaps with your family over the holidays, you can try to bring the focused presence and non-reactive awareness of *zazen* to the situation, as a way to be present to prevent blindly reacting. In our deeply habituated relationships, this takes continuous effort and awareness.

Although we can't undo the past, Jeffrey Hopkins says that we can alleviate the force of our past actions through disclosure and contrition. Again, this four-fold process of working with unwhole-

some action is: recognizing the harmful nature of what we have done, feeling regret, doing a practice that reinforces wholesome actions and supports wholesome states of mind, and resolving not to do it again. The more self respect and confidence we have in our own inherent wholeness or wholesomeness, the better this practice will work. Our resolution not to repeat regrettable actions, helps us stay focused on the present rather than getting mired down in guilt and dwelling in the past.

According to the *Diamond Sutra*, "Enlightenment is the totality of all wholesome dharmas." Notice that it doesn't say, "Enlightenment is the result of all wholesome dharmas," because enlightenment is unconditioned, it isn't the result of anything. Wholesome activity is both a support for enlightenment as well as an expression of enlightened mind. Wholesome actions are those which When we understand the nature of cause and effect, we realize that harming anything is the same as harming ourselves, actually it does harm ourselves.

James Baldwin said that "It is a terrible, an inexorable law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own." I think this gets to the heart of our interconnectedness. In Zen practice, the ultimate function of the precepts is the realization of nonduality – the realization that we really are not separate, that we are all part of the same seamless reality, that there is no way we can harm anything without harming ourselves just as there is no way we can benefit something without that benefit extending to all of us.



I think this is what Katagiri Roshi meant when he said, “Buddhist precepts are not moral or ethical imperatives ... given by someone that people must follow. They are the ground of Buddha’s world, through which we can manifest ourselves as buddhas. We are already enlightened and the precepts are already enlightened words. Each word is Buddha’s mind...” He said, “If we take the precepts as Buddha’s mind, Buddha’s teaching, we can each behave as a buddha. But if we take them in the moral sense we become moral people.” When we put together a list of precepts or rules that we then try to conform to, we have two things, the precepts and us. In Zen our challenge is to find how to practice in such a way that the precepts and our lives are one seamless expression.

Part of the difficulty many of us find in taking the precepts is the conflict between desires – between what we want to do or think would be fun – and our deeper intention. I think immaturity is when we flip-flop between these two, going from one extreme to another. For example, one year, imposing too much self discipline, maybe sitting 5 or 10 sesshins, being very serious, and the next year going to the other extreme of ignoring practice and living based on indulging our desires. Maturity in practice is when our desires and our deepest intention come into alignment.

Working with the precepts involves being aware of our myriad intentions throughout the day, and hopefully these many small intentions, over time, will support our deep intention to wake up – including waking up to the wonder and immensity of our life right here, to this inconceivable life we have been given.

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## Board Members

The Chapel Hill Zen Center Board Members are President, Maura High; Vice President, Ken Wilson; Secretary, John Paredes; Treasurer, Mike McKillip; Members-at-Large, Shawn Johnson and Steve Pickett.

## Announcement Listserv

You are invited to join an e-mail listserv available via Yahoo for announcements about upcoming activities at the CHZC. If you wish to become a member of this listserv, please type “Subscribe” in the subject line and send an email to [CHZCannounce-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:CHZCannounce-subscribe@yahoo.com). You can also go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CHZCannounce/> and click the box “Join Now.” You may be requested to supply some information or to create a Yahoo “identity.” Please note the options for making your e-mail address public or for receiving marketing or other messages not directly from the listserv. It is your choice whether or not to receive other messages. Joining this list will not increase the amount of spam you receive. If you have any questions, please contact the list moderator, Lance at [lashdown@yahoo.com](mailto:lashdown@yahoo.com).

# 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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*“I’m not sitting only for me, or you, or the Minnesota  
Zen Center. I’m sitting for all sentient beings, all over  
the world, forever.”*

*— Dainin Katagiri Roshi*

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.