



Zen Center Will Be Closed

The Zen Center will be **closed on Thursday evening, July 4, and all day on Friday, July 5.**

At the end of the 90-day Practice Period, the Zen Center will be **closed Monday through Saturday, July 15-20.**

Sangha News

Carter and Madelyn Smith moved to Fredericksburg, VA, in early May, to live near family. Carter turned 93 in February and Madelyn turned 98 last November.

Around 1977, when living in Southern California, Carter began practicing Zen with Sasaki Roshi. After retiring, they returned to live Durham where Carter grew up and he began practicing with the Chapel Hill Zen Center, early in 1995. Carter was a conscientious sangha member, and served as head Doorwatch for many years. He was also very helpful as a CHZC Board member, utilizing his engineering skills to advise on repairs needed to the building. Carter was especially helpful during the renovation project in 2008, when we added the current entry room, routinely meeting with workers on this project, and other projects, that included the building finally getting a dry crawl space.

In addition, Carter visited the Butner Federal Prison Medical Center once or twice a month to lead and support zazen from 2003 until 2017.

Carter is a dedicated practitioner who brought a calm and friendly presence to our sangha, and we will miss him.

On behalf of the Sangha, a deep bow to you, Carter, for your example,

—*Joshō*

Dharma Talks

Joshō Pat Phelan will give public Dharma Talks on Sunday mornings, July 28, August 25, and September 22, at 10:30.

Choro Carla Antonaccio will give a public Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, August 18, at 10:30.

All-day Sittings

All-day sittings are scheduled for Sundays, July 28, August 25, and September 22, from 6:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. The sitting will begin with orientation on **Saturday night at 7:30**, and will include instruction on the meal form and one period of zazen. The regular Sunday schedule, with zazen at 9:00 and 9:50 and **Dharma Talk at 10:30**, will be open to everyone. The day will include zazen, a 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 Joshō Sensei if this is your first all-day sitting.*** For more information on the oryoki meal form see: <https://kannondo.org/getting-started/oryoki/>

CHZC Facebook Page

The Chapel Hill Zen Center is on Facebook! Please follow or like our official Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ChapelHillZenCenter/> for announcements and invitations to events and special programs at the center. We also invite you to join our affiliated group, Chapel Hill Zen Center Members and Friends at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CHZCGroup/> to share news, articles, and other resources, ask questions, and interact with sangha members in a more informal way. Everyone is welcome to join.

Aging Gracefully, Befriending Death

Sunday, July 21, at 11:15

This is an informal discussion group that provides the opportunity to share readings, information, and explore conversations among ourselves on these topics. Please contact Carol Klein at wmichael@nc.rr.com, Kris Garvin at krisgarvin@gmail.com, or Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com, if you have questions or would like more information. Everyone is welcome, regardless of age.

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Eco-Dharma Discussion Group

September 8

In this group we informally explore Buddhist teachings on the natural world, caring for the natural world as an expression of bodhisattva vow, and our own responses to current environmental issues. If you are interested, please contact Zenki Kathleen Batson at lulu@rumbleduss.com.

Looking Ahead

Chimyo Atkinson will visit and give a public Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, October 27, at 10:30. Chimyo received Dharma transmission under Rev. Teijo Munnich in 2015, in the lineage of Katagiri Roshi. She received her monastic training in Japan and the US. Chimyo currently serves as Head of Practice at Great Tree Zen Women's Temple in Alexander, North Carolina.

Rohatsu Sesshin is planned for December 6-13.

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony is planned for Sunday, December 15.

People of Color Sitting Group

People of color, both new to meditation or experienced, are warmly welcome to join us every Wednesday evening at 6 P.M. The POC Meditation Group begins with one period of *zazen*, with an option to stay for group discussion and community building from 6:45 to 7:30 P.M., as we read from *Dharma, Color and Culture*, ed. by Hilda Gutiérrez Baldoquín. Participants are welcome to join us or drop in as they like. For more information, contact Conal, Kriti or John at poesittinggroup@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.

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, Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com, or Carol Klein at wmichael@nc.rr.com.

Children's Program

The Zen Center's Children's program offers children four years and older a place in the Zen Center sangha through a variety of activities, including meditation, story, craft, song, and movement, as well as participation in Zen Center events and celebrations throughout the year. In each meeting, the children have the space and time to practice living mindfully and to learn about Buddhist teachings and contexts while giving their parents an opportunity to meditate in the concurrent adult program. **The Children's Program breaks for the summer and will continue after Labor Day.** For more information, please contact Maura High, the program coordinator, at maurahigh@gmail.com.

Chinese Calligraphy and Brush Painting

Jinxiu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from 2:15 to 3:45 PM, and Brush Painting from 2:15 to 4:15 PM on July 7 and 21, August 11 and 18. **On Sunday, June 30, class will be from 3:00 to 5:00 PM.** Fees are \$30 per class, or \$110 for 4 classes. Please contact Jinxiu at (919) 484-7524 or jxzc@aol.com to register or for more information. Jinxiu is also available to teach children's classes.

Member's Library

The World Could Be Otherwise: Imagination and the Bodhisattva Path by Zoketsu Norman Fischer; *The Most Important Point, Zen Teachings of Edward Espe Brown* by Edward Brown; and *Freedom from Anger: Understanding it, Overcoming it, and Finding Joy* by the Venerable Alubomulle Somanasara.

Comments on the Repentance Verse

Kuden Paul Boyle, Forest City Zen Group

We all start our spiritual journey with the aspiration to somehow live our lives differently from how we have been living them. For many people some personal crisis may be the catalyst for arousing this aspiration. While the specifics differ from person to person, it comes down to something like, “there has to be something better” or “I have to live my life differently.” For some people, the aspiration to sit zazen is the start of the journey. For others, it may be entering psychotherapy or a 12-step program, or some other personal growth effort. No matter how it began, the people in this room have all found sitting zazen appealing and have decided to have Zen practice as a part their personal spiritual journey.

So we start sitting zazen. Maybe a little bit at first, but then as our capacity to sit increases, we often begin to participate in all day sittings and then 5 or 7-day sesshins. As our practice matures we become more aware of our mind’s internal dynamics and habituated patterns. We learn what kind of thoughts or imagery are seductive and distracting us. We become aware of our own mental barriers or hindrances in our practice. We develop a desire to live our lives both on and off the cushion with a greater

sense of congruence. We may begin to see the sense of refraining from activities which undermine our intention and resolve to practise. It’s also about this time that someone’s practice shifts from being strictly a means of personal development to something broader – a practice which is oriented toward the well-being of all beings.

For many practitioners, this leads to a desire to receive the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. This is the process I have noticed in myself and I have seen this same process happen in others. Wanting to receive the precepts is a natural development in one’s Zen practice. For me, wanting to receive the precepts is an expression of *bodhicitta* which is the arousing of the “aspiration to enlightenment” and the intention to reach complete, perfect enlightenment (*anuttara samyak sambodhi*) in order to liberate all beings.

In Soto Zen, receiving the precepts is a part of both the lay ordination and priest ordination ceremonies as well as weddings, and funerals. The ceremony of receiving the precepts has several distinct parts. The ceremony begins with repentance which is then followed by receiving the sixteen bodhisattva precepts. In this talk, I would like to say a few words about the repentance verse used in the precept receiving ceremony.



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The verse reads:

*All my ancient twisted karma
From beginningless greed, hate and delusion
Born through body, speech, and mind
I now fully atone.*

I've always liked reciting this verse. I feel a sense of relief when I say it. It feels like opening up and letting go. Although this verse is short, I find it full of meaning and depth. According to Kazuaki Tanahashi, the Japanese word for "repent" is *hotsuro* and literally means "begin to reveal". In this sense, repentance means we are no longer hiding our secrets. We show ourselves. This reminds me of an old 12-Step saying, "We are only as sick as our secrets". By owning and revealing our afflictions, we step toward purity and freedom.

In our discussion of the verse, let's start with the word, "All". This "all" literally means everything which has affected us. This is not just the stuff we have done, but the stuff that was done "to us" or "for us". This "all" includes not only our own personal deeds, but how the actions and attitudes of our family of origin and our ancestors echo through our lives. It also includes the culture in which we grew up and currently live. However, this is not some abstract "all" that we need to take on intellectually. This "all" is a felt experience.

Here is an example of how experiences can transcend lifetimes and becomes part of someone's "all": When I lived in Raleigh, I belonged to a health club where there were "wet" facilities containing a sauna, a whirlpool and a steam room. There was one time I was going into a steam room with a Jewish friend of mine. As a child she noticed that many of her aunts and uncles had numbers tattooed on their arms from their time in Nazi concentration camps. Of course, her family explained the significance of these numbers. We were enjoying the steam room until a fresh burst of steam began to fill the room. My friend had an adverse bodily reaction to the sound and sight of the steam filling the room in conjunction with the type of tiles which were on the walls. These factors triggered some trans-

mitted memories in her of people being gassed, and she had to leave the steam bath. This is an example of the type of "all" I am talking about. People being gassed to death didn't happen to her, and she wasn't even born when it happened. Nevertheless, it was part of her "all".

When we grow up, we inherit certain views, issues, and problems from our family origin, our place, our culture. If it is some negative trait, we initially blame our family of origin, our culture, the place where we live for the difficulties we have in our lives. However, we can only really grow when we realize that these problems, which we didn't ask for, are, nevertheless, now ours to deal with.

What we are dealing with is spelled out in the next part of the line: "my ancient twisted karma". According to Shohaku Okumura Roshi, the original Japanese uses the phrase, "bad karma". He notes that several English translations avoid the word "bad", and, instead use "unwholesome", "twisted", or "harmful". Personally, I like "twisted". Thich Nhat Hanh talks about defilements as being "knots" or energy blocks, and I think "twisted" invokes a similar image. Twists in a hose cause kinks to form which impede the smooth flow of water through the hose. In the same way, twisted karma inhibits our ability to flow smoothly with life as it is.

"Karma" means "intentional action". Here is an example of unintentional and intentional action. Suppose someone is walking on a sidewalk and unknowingly steps on and kill an insect. There wouldn't be karma accumulated from that result because the action was completely unintentional. The act of killing never entered into that person's consciousness. Now suppose, someone is walking on a sidewalk, sees an insect, and goes out of their way to step on and kill the insect. That action does accumulate karma because there was an intention behind the action. In both cases, the external result is the same: the insect is dead. However, the internal result is different for the person in each of those two cases. If someone consistently and intentionally crushes insects, the karma accumulates and the action becomes a habit or a tendency.

Maybe another way of putting it would be to say, our karma, in the context of the repentance verse, is our propensity to engage habitually to act, speak, or think in certain ways. I take the phrase “ancient twisted karma” to mean all of our actions (of body, speech, and mind) in which the unwholesome intention is conditioned by our past experiences. Intentional actions create results which inform the mind. In Buddhism, these results are called *phala* or “fruit”, as in the fruits of our actions. In Yogacara Buddhism, the results of these intentional actions are called *bija* or “seeds” which are deposited in our storehouse consciousness. No matter which Buddhist lens we use, the results of our karmic activity makes an impression and conditions our mind which then affects our subsequent perceptions, choices, and actions.

One of the important points in practising with zazen and the precepts is that we can feel what it feels like when we encounter one of these knots or twisted pieces of karma. This can be an actual concrete experience. It’s not abstract or theoretical. It might feel like a barrier that makes some course of action or some thought inconceivable to us. Alternatively, it may feel like an inevitability or a fate which we cannot resist even though intellectually, we may know that our course of action will probably have negative or harmful consequences for ourselves and/or others. If we encounter a twisted piece of karma with mindfulness, we can shine some awareness onto it and begin to get to know it. We get to know the limits and contours of our karmically informed reality.

The phrase “ancient twisted karma” like the “all” discussed above is not limited to our personal actions, but, in my opinion, includes the intentional actions of others which have affected us. These karmic effects transcend time and place. We are affected by our ancestors’ karma, by our culture’s karma. Whatever has affected us, is now ours to deal with. Hence, the verse says, “*my* ancient twisted karma”.

The second line reads, “From beginningless greed, hate, and delusion”. As many of you may

know, “greed, hate, and delusion” are referred to as the “three poisonous minds” or simply the “three poisons” (*trivisa*). They are considered the “primary afflictions”. They are called poisons because of the harm they cause to people who take them up into their mind. The three poisons play an important role in our suffering. This role is highlighted in the Buddhist iconography of the *bhavachakra*, or the “wheel of becoming” which depicts our samsaric existence. In the wheel of becoming, the three poisons are the hub of the wheel. This suggests the central role which these unwholesome qualities of mind play in causing us to cycle over and over again in a samsarically (i.e. a reactively) driven life.

The word “beginningless” is important because it highlights the fact that we will never fully understand all the history behind our suffering. There is a temptation to think, “I would get a handle on my suffering if I could just understand where it all began and how it came about”. The repentance verse is telling us that this is an impossible endeavour. As I pointed out previously, our twisted karma isn’t just from our actions, but the effects of actions taken before we were even born. For all intents and purposes there is no beginning to our suffering. No matter where it came from, it is now ours to deal with. There is a certain humility which comes along with the all inclusive acceptance.

The next line is “Born through body, speech, and mind” which explains how our karma has been generated – through intentional acts of body (meaning physical activity or behaviour we do with our body), through speech, and through our thinking and other intentional mental processes. In fact, in general, any human activity is an activity of body, speech, or mind. So, this includes everything, which is just reinforcing the notion of “all” from the first line.

The last line reads, “I now fully avow”. The dictionary meaning of “avow” means, “to assert, to confess openly”. I take this line to mean, “I, the person I am right now, decides to admit and fully take responsibility for all of my karmic burdens. No matter if it was something I did or

something which was done to me. I include everything and I am willing to work on it all.” For me, this is a very powerful statement.

Many years ago, I heard someone who talked about the process of transformation in terms of what he called the “three A’s”. The three A’s were: Awareness, Acceptance, and Action. According to this model, in order to transform ourselves, we first need to be aware of what needs to change, second, we need to fully accept the behaviour, and only then, can we take the third step of choosing the action of doing things differently. When I was preparing this talk, I thought how the three A’s mirrored Buddhist practice.

In my view, *zazen* corresponds to the awareness step. As we practise *zazen* we may start to notice our own thought and emotional patterns. The repentance verse corresponds to the acceptance step of the three A’s. When we repent we are accepting our karma. When we receive and practise the precepts this corresponds to the action step. We put into action our decision to live our lives with the precepts as a guide. This is one way how I see *zazen* and the precepts fitting together.

In the ceremony of receiving the precepts, after the repentance verse is recited, the preceptor declares that the ordinand (i.e. the person receiving the precepts) has now been purified, and now being purified they are ready to receive the precepts.

Dogen mentions the purifying power of repentance when he wrote in *Keisei-Sanshoku Shobogenzo (The Voices of the River Valley, the Color of the Mountains)*, “the power of repentance will purify and help you. This power will nurture trust (or faith) and effort free from hindrance”.

A little further on in the same text Dogen writes, “With repentance you will certainly receive invisible help from buddha ancestors. Repent to the buddhas with mind and body. The power of repentance melts the roots of unwholesomeness. This is the single colour of true practice, the true heart of trust (faith), the true body of trust (faith)”.

Does this purification mean that we have suddenly become magically pure and all of our burdens lifted? In my opinion, no, it does not. The purifying power of repentance comes from our acceptance which then gives rise to a sense of willingness. Before making repentance, we may be unwilling to accept and take ownership of our afflictive patterns of behaviour, speech, and mind. We may have been ignorant of the cause and effect of these afflictions. On making repentance, we are making a commitment to ourselves to accept all of our ancient twisted karma. We no longer have the excuse of ignorance. After repentance, as we become more aware of our afflictions, we accept them and become willing to practise with them. This is what our Zen ancestors did and this is way of practice they have passed down to us. Our resolve and willingness can be inspired by the examples set by our Zen ancestors and is the “invisible help from buddha ancestors” as Dogen puts it.

The next sentence reads, *Repent to the buddhas with mind and body*. The way I interpret this is as follows: In this context I read “buddhas” as “reality as it is”. The phrase “mind and body” to me means, “both with our intention (mind) and our behaviour (body)”. Putting it together, I read it like this: I reveal and acknowledge to myself the “reality as it is” of my ancient twisted karma which has shaped my life, and I set my intention and make my best effort to act in a way which undermines these twisted and distorted patterns of living.

I love the imagery and feel especially inspired by the next line, *The power of repentance melts the roots of unwholesomeness*. The more aware we become of our previously unconscious patterns, the less power they have over us and the more able we are to work on refraining from them.

Dogen continues, *This is the single colour of true practice*. Ultimately, I think, repentance is about letting go of our attachments. Both in *zazen* and in our practice of the precepts, authentic practice is the practice of letting go. Enlightenment is about losing something rather than gaining something. The liberation from suffering is about

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losing something rather than gaining something. We are able to lose something only after we let it go. This letting go is the essence, or *the single colour* of authentic practice.

In the last couple of phrases, *the true heart of faith, the true body of faith*, I take “heart” to mean spirit and “body” to mean form. So repentance encompasses both the true spirit and form of our practice in Soto Zen. Thank you.

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Email Updates via the CHZC Listserv

You are invited to join an email listserv now 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. You can also go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/CHZCannounce and click the “Join Now” box. You may be requested to supply some information or to create a Yahoo “identity.” Please note the options for making your email 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.

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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“Existence is nothing but motion and change. Motion and change penetrate the entire universe. They are the life of trees, the life of winter. They are your life, too. So if you examine your life, you find the whole universe therein. Your life manifests as the activity of the Whole. The total activity of the Whole manifests as you.

So, the question you must ask is: using this body and mind, how can I participate in the life of the world after throwing everything away?”

—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.