



### Noriko Murata

*Myogetsu Keishin - Radiant Moon,  
Joyful Heart*

September 13, 1940 – July 27, 2020

Keishin Noriko Murata passed away early in the morning of Monday, July 27, from complications of multiple myeloma. A Cremation Service and Time of Remembrance was held with her husband, Katsuhiko, their two sons, daughters-in-law, and two of their three grandchildren. Katsuhiko and Noriko began sitting with the Zen Center in May of 2009, and came to early morning zazen on Mondays for six years, and received the precepts in the *Zaike Tokudo* in May of 2013. We send our warm-hearted condolences to the family, while remembering Noriko's quiet, joyful way.

With a deep bow,

*Joshō*



*In mountain light,  
singing joy is bird-nature.  
Pool shadows empty,  
the hearts of people.  
All sounds here fall to silence.  
All that remains:  
the bell-stone's tone.*

— Chang Chien

### Sangha News

Steve Pickett, who has been the gardener for the front entry garden since 2017, is stepping down. We are very grateful to him for his care of the garden which brings so much beauty to those coming to zazen.

### Zoom Zazen

The CHZC is offering zazen via Zoom on Monday and Friday afternoons from 1:00-1:40; Monday-Friday mornings from 6:00-7:20; and Sunday morning from 9:00-10:20. The link can be found on the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>

### Zen Center Remains Closed

In order to make the best decisions for the health and safety of the sangha, we have not set a date when the Zen Center will reopen, or what activities will resume first. Please check the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website for updates at: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>.

If you haven't already, you are encouraged to sign up for the CHZC Announcement listerv where opportunities, including Zoom Study Groups and Dharma Talks on YouTube are posted.

To sign up, please type "Subscribe" in the subject line of a message *from your email account* and send to CHZCannounce-subscribe @yahoogroups.com.

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## Outdoor Zazen

The Zen Center is now offering outdoor zazen, on Wednesday morning, from 7 to 8 AM. It is fine to uncross your legs and change positions at any time. You may sit in the “back yard” area, on the deck, or in the wooded area. Please bring your own cushions and a large garbage bag to place them on. You may also use extra pieces of tarp at the zendo and there will be outdoor chairs available as well. Most importantly, **please maintain at least 6 feet distance all around you from others**, and please wear a mask while on ZC grounds except during zazen.

If it is raining, there will be no zazen. We are treating this as an experiment to see how it goes. The regular Zoom zazen will continue on Wednesday mornings as well.

## Study Groups

A new Monday evening Study Group will begin on September 7, and will be held from 5:30-6:30. Because we are starting later, **please log on before 5:30**, so we can begin promptly at 5:30. We will read and discuss Thich Nhat Hanh’s book, *Transformation at the Base* which has been reprinted in paperback with the title, *Understanding Our Mind*, about consciousness and how it works. It is available new and used at Abebooks.com. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge.

Tuesday Evenings, 6:45 PM - 8 PM. A Study Group on the *Lankavatara Sutra*, translated by Red Pine, with numerous footnotes. Please contact [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org) for handouts.

Thursday Evenings, 6:45 PM - 8 PM. This Study Group is reading and discussing, from a Buddhist point of view, the book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo. If you would like to join this study group, please contact Zenki at [chzc.zenki@gmail.com](mailto:chzc.zenki@gmail.com).

**All the Study Groups are open to everyone, and there is no charge.**

## Zoom Study Group Instructions

The CHZC uses one Zoom link for all of the Study Groups, which can be found on the CHZC website, Event Calendar section: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>.

## Shelter-in-Place Chanting Service

A recording of service is available on the Event Calendar: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>. Please use this chanting service as you like to support your own practice at home. The Zen Center priests will be chanting this service in their homes on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings. If you would like someone remembered during the Well-being Dedication, please send their name to [chzczenki@gmail.com](mailto:chzczenki@gmail.com). The complete Chant Book is now available on the ZC’s website in the Reading List section: <http://chzc.org/chzc-sutra-book-2020-spring.pdf>.

## Dokusan and Practice Instruction

If you would like to have Dokusan, or talk about your practice, Jakuko Mo Ferrell, Zenki Kathleen Batson and Josho Pat Phelan are available to meet by phone or by Zoom. You can contact us at: [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org).

## More Sewing Needed to Make Masks

Several of us have been sewing face masks since the quarantine began and have donated about 500 to local organizations. Recently we joined forces with a local network called Mighty Mask Brigade who distribute about 500 masks a week to local organizations including NC Farm Workers, Meals On Wheels, and East Durham Outreach. If you would like to join us with the sewing or have cotton fabric or sheets to donate please contact us at: [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com) or [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com).

If you need masks for yourself or friends, we are happy to supply you.

## Voting Information

It is time to make plans for the 2020 elections. Make sure you are registered to vote at your current address. You can now request a mail in/absentee ballot, plan to do early voting October

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15-30, or vote at your assigned polling place on November 3. The nonpartisan organization, *You Can Vote*, has an excellent website: [youcanvote.org](http://youcanvote.org), with resources about how to register, voting options, and sample ballots. They are recommending early voting as the best method to ensure that your vote is counted. Please contact Carol at 919-259-5995 to research any questions you may have.

## Children's Program

Given the restrictions on gatherings due to the coronavirus, we do not plan to have any meetings at the Zen Center for a while. Normally we meet twice a month on Sunday mornings. We do have the resources for assisting families virtually: an e-library of stories, craft ideas, and activities that relate to our mission. Through our online members' group, we can share questions, tips, and comments with one another. Please contact Maura High at [maurahigh@gmail.com](mailto:maurahigh@gmail.com), 919-265-7045, if you'd like to check out any of these resources. For more information, see the section on the Children's Program at <http://www.chzc.org/>.

## Dharma Talks

There are now several private YouTube videos of Dharma Talks by Josho, Zenki and Jakuko. They are available at the top of the Event Calendar and on the Talks on Zen Practice section of the CHZC website: <http://chzc.org>. Talks are posted once or twice a month.

## Eco-Dharma

The EcoDharma Discussion Group explores Buddhist teachings of the natural world, caring for the Earth as an expression of the Bodhisattva Vow, and our responses to current environmental issues. Several members of the group are now participating in a 9-part online Ecosattva training class offered through One Earth Sangha. The next Eco-Dharma Discussion Group general meeting will be scheduled once it is deemed safe to return to the Zen Center in some capacity. May the Sangha take this opportunity to develop new thought patterns and behaviors to live more sustainably and harmoniously with all life on the

planet. For more information, please contact Zenki: [chzc.zenki@gmail.com](mailto:chzc.zenki@gmail.com) or Chris: [ccensullo@yahoo.com](mailto:ccensullo@yahoo.com).

## Living with Impermanence

This informal discussion group is now meeting on Zoom about once a month, providing the opportunity to explore conversations on aging, death and dying, as well as impermanence in general. Please contact Carol Klein at [carollyklein53@gmail.com](mailto:carollyklein53@gmail.com), Kris Garvin at [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com), or Senmyo Sherman at [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com), if you would like more information. Everyone is welcome.

## Sangha Net

During this time when our lives are being impacted in so many ways by the Coronavirus, the Sangha Net wants to remind you that we are here! Since the Sangha Net was formed, it has functioned to offer short-term help to members of the Zen Center community who are experiencing transitions due to illness or disability with simple tasks such as shopping, transportation and meals. Now as the pandemic presents new challenges, we need to be concerned about the risk of infection for both the provider and receiver of assistance. We will continually assess what tasks can be safely done, and Health professionals in the sangha will advise us as needed.

If you **need help**, please email us at [sangha.network.chzc@gmail.com](mailto:sangha.network.chzc@gmail.com), or you may call any of us: Alex 336-302-3251; Carol 919-967-9391; Kris 831 359-3894; Senmyo: 831-325-4220. Please include your phone number. If you would like **to volunteer**, please let us know at [sangha.network.chzc@gmail.com](mailto:sangha.network.chzc@gmail.com)

May we be able to support each other,  
Alex, Carol, Kris and Senmyo

## Cherry Pie

A Dharma Talk by Jakuko Mo Ferrell

For most of this year, the Thursday study group was studying and practicing with the precepts. We last read some Dharma talks by Suzuki Roshi, and they were great talks. The study group included 13 people in two groups, one from our sangha and one from the Richmond Zen sangha who are sewing a *rakusu* in preparation for receiving the precepts. I've been studying and helping prepare these students for Lay Ordination this year. Early in March everyone's lives were interrupted. We had to close the zendo due to the Corona virus and put sewing on hold. We all became home bound. But through Zoom, we continued precept study together until the June Practice Intensive began.

Being quarantined at home was not too abrupt a change for me since I sew robes at home. After my husband retired, he had been going to Carrboro three days a week to watch our grandchild. So, we each had our space during the day. But suddenly we were home alone together more than we ever had been, and I began noticing big disagreements seemed to pop up out of nowhere over very insignificant things.

After all this time I'd spent studying the precepts, why couldn't I get through the day without breaking one? It seemed that the precepts around speech were the ones I was breaking the most. Either I wasn't recognizing them at the time or at a deep enough level. And yet, it always seemed obvious just after I had broken one. Of all the precepts, I decided I needed to focus on the precepts involving speech. The three precepts involving speech are, A disciple of Buddha does not speak falsely. A disciple of Buddha does not slander. A disciple of Buddha does not praise self while putting others down. For myself I've added one, A disciple of Buddha speaks thoughtfully, with kindness. I don't want my speech to cause harm.

Speech is so deeply rooted in habit and preconceptions, that I hear words fly out of my mouth before I think about what I want to say. When I hear my words, I notice when my words or the tone of voice is unkind and harmful. I get so

frustrated that I just did it again. What about all that time studying precepts? Where was my vow?

Most of the time, my unkind words are directed to my husband, even though we generally get along very well. We have been married 42 years. The problem is that we have habitual patterns and assumptions ingrained in our interactions. In some ways, being more closely contained in the house since the lockdown began has helped me see them and want to work on my speech for my own state of mind as well as what I am offering to others.

We live out in the country surrounded by woods, beautiful leafy trees and birdsong. I don't have the stress of living in a big city. The setting is beautiful. So I wonder, how can I lose composure and get angry so easily? I do get mentally stressed over finishing my work on time and taking care of everything else in the household and when I am stressed, I carry it into the house.

With both of us being together all day, there are many more opportunities to decide all the little things, like what are we going to have for lunch, for dinner? There is less time for me to go into the house, grab a little lunch and get back to work without having to discuss it. What I continue to notice is how easily there is some miscommunication over these daily routines. Before I realize it, I hear irritation in my voice, just answering a simple question. My husband is hard of hearing, and often I have to repeat myself, then I raise my voice. I can hear some irritation along with the words. It always surprises me. How did I get mad? What just happened?

I'm practicing letting go of my "deadline" mind, trying to get sewing done at a certain time. When I do, it helps me be able to be a little more present when I go into the house. If I slow down, I can actually pay attention to what is being asked of me. I have been trying hard to work on it. I haven't found a quick fix, but I can feel some progress. It's easier to respond rather than react when my mind isn't set on an outcome. I do recognize that underlying all these reactions is wanting things to be "my way," and I'm not very flexible. The more flexible I can be, the more smoothly our interactions go.

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I've been trying to be more aware of speech. Recently Joshō sent us The Five Conditions of Right Speech, which I had forgotten. They were a big help. They are: Do I speak the truth? Do I speak gently? Do my words benefit others? Do I speak out of goodwill? Do I speak at the proper time and place?

Our speech can be profoundly powerful, helpful or hurtful, and misunderstood. In *Welcoming the Unwelcome*, Pema Chodron wrote, "Speaking from the heart brings us closer together. This comes from seeing that our true state is interconnected. Our speech uncovers that interconnectedness, instead of reinforcing the misunderstanding that we are separate. On the other hand, if we look down on someone or feel threatened, our speech will reflect the polarization of our mind. When we speak from our vulnerable good heart, what comes out of our mouth is more likely to be healing than divisive."

When I can slow down, I feel more connected and can be more open and present when I'm talking and listening. I become much more able to respond than react. I find that taking a moment or two before answering can really help. Pema said, "Speaking from the heart doesn't just come to us automatically. It's actually a skill that we need to work on. We need to keep refining our capacity to speak skillfully, year after year, for our entire lives. This process requires trial and error. We have to make many mistakes and be willing to learn from them. Look at the whole process as an experiment. Try to come from a place of shared humanity, experiment by saying something. In that way, we can gradually learn what works and what doesn't. Learning to speak from the heart is a long journey."

As I suspected, retraining our speech takes time and presence. The good news is that we can do this work forever, growing old together, learning so see ourselves more clearly as we see others. I'm becoming more aware that when I'm feeling pressured by a deadline, I need to settle my mind, so my words are more likely to be thoughtful and kind.

To help my state of mind, I've been scheduling more time to finish sewing robes so I don't feel

I have to rush. I am the one setting my schedule. The work will get done, even if I'm not in a rush. How can I enjoy my state of mind if I'm feeling stressed? If I don't feel joy or kindness, how can I offer it to others? I don't really want to live with a self that is mad and irritated. During the workday, I am taking little breaks, a walk in the garden to see how the vegetables and flowers are growing, feeding and greeting my fish, noticing something in the house that needs a little cleaning or care. It gives me a wider view and a break from trying to control everything.

Many days it feels like I only make a little progress staying centered so I'm not overtaken over by habits. I'll vow over and over to always speak kindly. I even coach myself. When I leave my sewing studio to go into the house, I remind myself how to behave. Sometimes I do remember, but I've been confounded at how quickly and easily I forget, react, and behave the way I just told myself not to. How does real change arise? I realized I can't experience the moment if I'm trying to control my mind. If you are stuck in your mind with your thoughts telling you how this moment should be, you will miss the actual moment unfolding, and likely be disappointed in how it turned out.

While I was struggling to be more aware, and trying to improve my words. I was also searching for a topic for this talk. One night, I read a Dharma talk by Charlotte Joko Beck called "For a more Harmonious Life." Just reading the title was encouraging! Joko Beck said, "We're all here doing Zen practice. The question is 'What are we doing?'" This wonderful life that we're right in the middle of – which is ourself – is complete and perfect from the very beginning. And all we have to do is just realize that. Most of you have heard this many times before, yet we continue to sit and struggle. Why?"

She said, "The reason is that we determine personally to be the center of all this...and we're not. We are in it, but we're not the center. So, one way of looking at our practice is to make this multiplicity of little selves that we entertain into a unity." I thought of all the aspects of myself that

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I am trying to control, and the question of how to do it. There's the self that wants to speak kindly, one that wants to be smart and admired, one that wants to get work done. All these selves compete and try to control the situation. Why can't I do it?

Joko said, "Shift your life from asking 'why' to 'how.' 'Why' is the multiplicity of little questions we have centered around this little self, like 'why are we here?' Or 'why is my life this way?' Or 'why is this happening to me?' In other words, 'why isn't it the way I want it?'" "Shifting to 'how' is simply asking the question, 'how can I make this life, right now, more harmonious?' What can I do in this present moment I'm stuck in?' Not why is this happening to me, but 'How can I create more harmony?'" The way she turned the question really helped me. I'd been trying to figure out the why. I wasn't clear how to shift from why to how. Then she offered a wonderful image that clarified my mind.

Joko said, "Why, is the personal confusion we all have. Each one of us is like a pie, split into all sorts of little selves. Each slice wants to be something different. There's our greed, our anger, our need to be important, our resentment, our wanting this or that—wanting to be enlightened even, our wanting success of whatever sort. All of these are for each one of us a little pie that we're split into....At different times we're caught in one piece of that pie or another."

This image was a real 'ah ha' moment for me. What popped into my mind is my favorite treat, the cherry pie from Weaver Street Market. It is so delicious and the crust is so tender! The image was vivid in my mind. Maybe the vividness was from quarantine, but I could see and almost taste that pie. But seriously, somehow this image did perfectly describe my frustration. Oh, I realized, it's all the darn pieces of the whole pie. I can't get all the pieces to behave or to work together harmoniously. Why can't I? It feels like herding cats. Or trying to take five dogs on leash for a walk all headed in different directions. But as Joko Beck said, "'Why' is the wrong question, so I need to move to 'how.'"

Joko Beck said the first step is to realize you are caught. Next you must really experience it. Feel the annoyance, anger, resentment, greed, etc. She said, "This experience is always bodily; it has nothing to do with getting lost in thoughts in your mind! It's when this problem that we're caught in, seemingly from external factors, begins to settle into the body, that the transformation begins. It's not the thoughts! It's the settling into that direct bodily experience. This is the process of awareness."

Pema Chodron said a similar thing in *Welcoming the Unwelcome*, "When we get hooked—when we get really angry, resentful, fearful, or selfish—we start to go a little unconscious. We lose our awareness of what we're doing with our body, speech and mind. In this state it's all too easy to let ourselves spiral downward." It's important not to blame others for making us mad or angry, but to feel our feelings, and practice releasing them. Of course, this takes practice. It reminded me of Suzuki Roshi pointing to his head and saying, "Move from here (your head) into here (your body)." Our body will always tell us how we are really feeling. That is the starting point for transformation. This is why when my thoughts are on an imagined outcome for finish line, I am out of touch with the present.

Joko Beck said, "Sooner or later, working like this, we also become really aware that my pie and your pie aren't much different. Out of this insight there begins to be some compassion for ourselves and for other people. We can have the angriest feelings about somebody, but as we become more aware of the total process, this compassion appears and grows. But the compassion never comes if we're not being aware of what's really going on with us."

We need to practice this self awareness every day, and get in touch with our inner pieces of pie. It also helps me recognize that the same old pieces are on the plate again. I just lost my temper again. Joko said, "Will power in Zen practice is the central resolve which comes out of this multiplicity of ourselves becoming a unity. As we practice the will gets stronger."

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We are in it for the long haul. Not even sitting sesshin fixes everything. But it helps deepen our practice. Actually I think this is good news. In our continuous practice, we just work on what is right in front of us, moment after moment, work with what has just arisen. How did I meet it this time? We learn a little each time. And there is no deadline. Only our death may be “time’s up.” We can do this work with each other as sangha and let our compassion grow. How wonderful to be learning to see, hear, and deepen our knowledge of ourselves and each other.

Joko said, “Will comes out of the willingness to face fear and pain. When we face all the pieces of our pie: our drives, our cruelty, everything inside–out of that comes the will, compassion, and the freedom.”

We have to get to know ourselves more deeply, and feel our feelings. If we don’t dwell on judging our bad behavior; but instead compassionately say, here I go doing such and such again. Why do I do that? Look to see where the habit comes from? It takes a lot of patience, but you don’t have to eat the whole pie at once. We work on each one of the 10,000 dharmas that come up one at a time. And face the pain and fear. She also said, “Will can be very soft, very skillful, very yielding. It doesn’t have to be rigid and forceful. When the will is completely developed we can hold all the parts of ourselves, without suppressing anything.”

She went on, “Another aspect of will is intention. It’s absolutely basic to our practice. There has to be, behind every breath, your intention. It doesn’t matter what your practice is. There are many techniques in Zen training, but the most important thing, is the foundation, your intention—the intention to wake up, the intention to train.”

Our Bodhisattva vow is to save all beings. We practice in order to bring everyone to the other shore. To benefit others, with the knowledge that we are not separate. We do this by learning what’s inside us. What is our deepest wish? For me, I’m trying to put more focus on my speech, either kind words or neutral tone. One thing that has helped me to check my words is to stop trying

to be the “know it all.” If I can be more open-minded, and slow down a bit, I am more likely to actually listen to what is being asked or said. My husband is truly hard of hearing, but I have realized that I am hard of “listening.” Most of our miscommunication comes from not really knowing what the other is saying or asking.

Joko said, “Over the years, our will, our clarity, our compassion will just naturally grow. Then we’ll move from the ‘why’ to ‘how,’ from multiplicity to unity. Our personal experience and the universal experience will merge. It’s not that there’s some will outside of yourself, but a feeling that you and this universe are one. There’s no separation in what you want for yourself, and what you want for everything else. The way to accomplish this experience, and the stages, is to practice continuously through the years. The benefits, for ourselves, and for everyone are more than worth it.”

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*If you would like to support the Chapel Hill Zen Center through a monetary donation, please mail checks to: P.O. Box 16302, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; or make a donation through MoonClerk: <https://app.moonclerk.com/pay/4yi5tx1i14xf>*

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## Board of Directors

The Chapel Hill Zen Center Board of Directors are Kenneth Wilson, President; John Paredes, Vice President; Tripp Spivey, Treasurer; Chris Censullo, Secretary; Maura High and Alex Fine, Members-at-Large; and Josho Pat Phelan, *ex officio*.

# Chapel Hill Zen Center



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## Schedule

### *Sunday Morning      Tuesday Evening*

9:00 zazen	7:00 zazen
9:40 kinhin	7:40 kinhin
9:50 zazen	7:50 zazen
10:30 service	8:20 service

### *Monday to Friday*

<i>Thursday Evening</i>	6:00 A.M. zazen
6:00 P.M. zazen	6:50 A.M. zazen

Meetings at 5322 NC Highway 86  
2.5 miles North of I-40 exit 266

**Josho Pat Phelan, Abbess**

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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.