



**Ehei Dogen Zenji, 1200-1253**, founder of Soto Zen in Japan.

This large print was donated to the Chapel Hill Zen Center by Tozan Tom Hardison, an early member of the group. Tozan was ordained in Japan where he practiced before returning to North Carolina.

Over the years, Tozan has donated many things to the Zen Center -- the black lacquer *Butsuden* altar in the library, the *mokuġyo*, *han*, clappers, *kotsu*, and more, all of which has made the Temple function so well. We offer many bows and much gratitude for these countless gifts.

*Joshō*

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## Memorial Day Holiday

On Monday, May 31, **there will be no Zazen or Study Group**

## Silent Illumination

A Zoom Talk by Guo Gu

Monday, May 24, at 7:30 P.M.

Guo Gu, a disciple of Chan Master Sheng-yen, will give a Dharma Talk on Silent Illumination, the Chinese predecessor of *shikan taza* or “nothing but, just sitting,” and then take questions. The evening will begin with a period of zazen at 7:00. **Everyone is welcome.** The Zoom link used for study groups will be used for this program which can be found on the CHZC Event Calendar: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>, about half-way down.

Guo Gu began meditating in Taiwan when he was four, and he met Chan Master Sheng-yen when he was twelve. Guo Gu received monk ordination in 1991, and was given permission to teach by Chan Master Sheng-yen in 1995. Five years later, he gave up monk’s robes to begin doctoral work in Buddhist Studies. He now leads the Tallahassee Chan Center and teaches at Florida State University. To learn more about Guo Gu and his teaching see: [www.guogulaoshi.com](http://www.guogulaoshi.com). Guo Gu’s books are the recently published *Silent Illumination*; *The Essence of Chan*; and *Passing Through the Gateless Barrier*.

## Questioning Our Assumptions About the World

“Once upon a time in ancient India, about 500 BCE, Shakyamuni Buddha lived and taught. And one of his main teachings, a very central teaching of foundational Buddhism, is the teaching of no independent, separate self. You’ve probably heard about this teaching, ‘*anatman*’: there are all these phenomena and experiences, like a body and a mind, feelings, and so on – and none of these conditioned, impermanent experiences are myself or yourself. Also, there’s no singular, permanent, independent, separate self that is the owner of our experience. There’s no self like that, that possesses a body and mind, or is the controller, the manager of the body and mind. That’s one of the Buddha’s amazing, central

teachings – that there’s no self like that.

“And why did the Buddha propose and emphasize this teaching? Because, it is said (and it seems to be true) that this belief, this usually unconscious view – that I am an individual, separate, independent self that’s managing this body and mind, and owns this body and mind – is the root of all discontent. This is a big proposition, and it’s something we can explore for the rest of our lives, because this teaching is so central to Buddhadharma. We can check it out for ourselves. At times when we’re not content – this is often called suffering, but I like to say ‘discontent’ just because it’s a less loaded word – we can check and see: is there some sense, some feeling that there’s a ‘me’ here, that has a body and mind. We might feel ‘this body and mind is not the way I’d like it to be right now’ and therefore we’re not content. This is one way of talking about the view and feeling that I am a separate self. All our problems seem to revolve around this view. And the Buddha’s main point of all his 84,000 teachings is just to help free us from discontent. And as we become more free from discontent, we’re able to help others become free from discontent. And we’re less wrapped up and concerned about our separate self so we’re naturally more available to others. It’s a good deal for everyone.”

— Kokyo Henkel, from the workshop *Questioning Our Assumptions About the World: Vasubandhu’s Twenty Verses on Mere Cognition*

## Sangha Net

The Sangha Net is a network of volunteers who can offer short-term assistance to those in the sangha in need of help due to transitions in one’s life such as illness, disability, or death of a loved one. Examples of tasks can include shopping, arranging for meals, or transportation. During the pandemic, we will assist in ways that can allow for mutual safety.

If you would like to volunteer or if you need assistance, please contact Kris Garvin at [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com), Senmyo Jeff Sherman at [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com), or Carol Klein at [carollyklein53@gmail.com](mailto:carollyklein53@gmail.com).

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## Dharma Talks

Jakuko Mo Ferrell, Zenki Kathleen Batson and Josho Pat Phelan have YouTube Dharma Talks posted on the Talks on Zen Practice page of the CHZC website: <http://chzc.org/talklist.htm>

Josho will give a Zoom Dharma Talk on Sunday, May 16, and June 13, at 10:30, following zazen – just stay on the same link.

Zenki will give a Zoom Dharma Talk on Sunday, June 27.

## Half-day Sittings

Sunday mornings, May 16, and June 13

There will be a Zoom Half-day Sitting from 6:00 A.M. until 12:15 P.M. The schedule will be similar to that used for the morning of in-person All-day Sittings and will include a Dharma Talk at 10:30. For information and to sign up write [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org).

## Children's Program

This program, like the Zen Center's other programs, has suspended in-person meetings at the Zen Center for the time being. But there are many ways we can still come together virtually.

Toward the end of April, we celebrate the birth of Buddha. This year, when we still can't meet in person, we have perhaps all the more reason to celebrate—the birth of Buddha is all about the possibility and promise of new growth and discovery. In the past, we brought flowers to the Zen Center so the children could decorate a “flower house” for the flower ceremony. You could make one at home, and create a little flower ceremony of your own, too.

The flower house is a structure, the inside of which one sets up a small altar. The Zen Center uses a mesh crate that one can weave flowers into, but any kind of structure is fine, and just a vase of flowers can be used. On the altar, one places a small figurine of a child—any child, or, if you have one, a statue of the child Buddha, standing. (The legend goes that Sakyamuni Buddha was able to stand, and walk, shortly after birth.) The flower ceremony consists of offering

incense and ladling sweet water over the statue. All the things you need to light an incense stick from a lit candle, and the ladle and bowl of sweet water (tea is often the liquid of choice), are set in front of the altar.

Other activities that go well with this celebration are going through baby pictures (family ones, or ones culled from calendars and magazines) and making a collage or copies of them, a great opportunity to share thoughts and memories. The story of Buddha's birth is another activity—it can be found online or you can email me at [maurahigh@gmail.com](mailto:maurahigh@gmail.com) and I will send it to you. The children's book, *Prince Siddhartha*, is a great resource for this. You can ask your children what they think of the magical elements of the story, and what the story says to them. Join us in wishing all buddhas, young and old, a happy birthday.

## 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 Zoom link can be found on the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website at <http://chzc.org/events.htm>

*Iris blossoms  
conversations about them are  
one joy of the journey*

—Basho

## A Moment of Eco-Dharma

The CHZC Eco-Dharma group is offering the following opportunities to “converse about iris blossoms,” to which all are invited:

**Saturday, May 29 at 11:00 A.M.**

Coffee and conversation - Watch the film *Kiss the Ground* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/81321999>) on your own and then grab coffee and join a conversation about the movie via Zoom.

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**Saturday, June 19, from 6:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.**

## **Outdoor Half-day Sitting**

Choose a spot in the backyard of the Zen Center grounds for zazen and kinhin in the beautiful outdoors. There will be no service, and participants are welcome to arrive and leave when they like.

Please contact Chris at [ccensullo@yahoo.com](mailto:ccensullo@yahoo.com) or Zenki at [chzc.zenki@gmail.com](mailto:chzc.zenki@gmail.com), if you would like to attend either of these events, or to get on the CHZC Eco-Dharma mailing list.

## **Study Groups**

**Monday evenings**, 5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. We are reading and discussing Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *Transformation at the Base* which has been reprinted as *Understanding Our Mind*.

**Tuesday Evenings**, 6:45 P.M. – 8 P.M. A *Lankavatara Sutra* study group, reading two translations by Red Pine and D. T. Suzuki. Please contact [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org) for handouts.

**Thursday Evenings**, 6:45 P.M. – 8 P.M. *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out* by Insight Meditation teacher, Ruth King. 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. Please log on 5–10 minutes before the study group begins** so we can start on time. There is one Zoom link to access all the Study Groups, which is on the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>.

## **Bodhisattva Ceremony**

The Bodhisattva Ceremony, a renewal of vows and precepts, is a pre-Buddhist ceremony with its roots in ancient India. The Bodhisattva Ceremony will be held on Sundays, May 23, and June 20, at 10:30, following zazen. For more information about the history and meaning of this service, see page 6.

## **Living with Impermanence**

This informal discussion group meets 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.

## **Organizing Against Racism**

The local organization Organizing Against Racism is holding virtual workshops with REI, Racial Equity Institute, instructors. See: <https://www.oaralliance.org/> For the workshop schedules see: <https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/new-events>

Over several years, some of us have taken this two-day workshop and have found it very informative and beneficial.

The Chapel Hill Zen Center has a scholarship fund to help those who would like to take this workshop and other workshops on race who can't afford the full fee. For more information or to request a partial scholarship, please contact Ken Wilson at [wilso003@duke.edu](mailto:wilso003@duke.edu). Donations to this fund are also welcome!

## **People of Color Sitting Group**

The POC Sitting Group is postponed until further notice. When we were meeting in-person, we began with zazen, for those new to meditation or experienced, from 6 to 6:40 PM, with an option to stay for group discussion and community. For more information, contact Conal or John at [pocsittinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:pocsittinggroup@gmail.com).

## **Recent Acquisitions for the Member's Library**

*Power in the Helping Professions*, Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig; *Morning Dewdrops of the Mind*, Shodo Harada Roshi; *Readings of Dogen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, Steven Heine; *Engaging Japanese Philosophy: A Short History*, Thomas P. Kasulis; *The Inner Work of Racial Justice*, Rhonda V. Magee; *Sex in the Forbidden*

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Zone, Peter Rutter, M.D.; *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*, Mark Siderits; *The Question of King Ajatasattu: Fractured Narratives of the Samannaphala Sutta*, Mu Soeng; *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of Zen Mind Beginner's Mind*, Shunryu Suzuki.

## Genjokoan Talks

Part 4, which ends this series of talks

by Sojun Roshi, Mel Weitsman

*Reprinted by permission from the Berkeley ZC Newsletter, April, 2006*

*Here is the place and here the way unfolds. The boundary of realization is not distinct, for the realization comes forth simultaneously with the mastery of Buddha Dharma. Do not suppose that what you realize becomes your knowledge and is grasped by your consciousness. Although actualized immediately, the inconceivable may not be apparent. Its appearance is beyond your knowledge.*

Even though we don't know everything and don't even realize what we do know, our practice is complete when we sit with a pure and non-discriminating mind. We may not even know the complete meaning of our practice. Dogen then gives an example, *Zen master Baoche of Mount Mayu was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, "Master, the nature of wind is permanent, and there is no place it does not reach. Why then do you fan yourself?"* "Wind" here means Buddha nature. What the monk is saying is that if Buddha nature is all-pervasive and there is no place where it is not, why are you fanning yourself? It is a good question. This was Dogen's question when, as a young monk, he went to China. Dogen said to himself, "If everyone has Buddha nature, if Buddha nature pervades the universe, why do we have to practice?" Why do we have to exert effort to manifest it? So, he went to China with this question. Baoche replied, "Although you understand that the nature of wind is permanent, you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere.' 'What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?' the monk asked again. The master just kept fanning

himself. The monk bowed deeply." What is the nature of "permanence?" The master's fanning means that even though Buddha nature pervades the universe, in order to experience it we have to activate enlightenment or realization through practice.

Even though the nature of everything is Buddha, and Buddha nature is the essence of all existence, in order to realize it, we have to be a vessel for it. For example, although you have a car parked in front of your house, it is not completely functional as a car until you turn the key in the ignition and step on the gas. Dogen's understanding is that practice and realization are not two. Practice is not apart from enlightenment, and enlightenment is not separate from practice. That is why he says some may realize it and some may not. Even though realization is intrinsic, it isn't necessarily experienced as realization. But if you practice, realization is there.

Then he continues, "The monk bowed deeply. The actualization of the BuddhaDharma, the vital path of its correct transmission is like this. If you say that you do not need to fan yourself because the nature of wind is permanent, and you're going to have wind without fanning, you will understand neither permanence, nor the nature of wind." In other words, you won't understand Buddha nature, and you will also not understand your own activity, even though we think we understand our activity.

"The nature of wind is permanent. Because of that, the wind of the Buddha's house brings forth the gold of the earth, and makes fragrant the cream of the long river." There are many important points here, but I think the main point is how to bring life to life in each moment, and in this way, to extend zazen into our daily life by finding our dharma position on every moment within what Suzuki Roshi called Big Mind. It means no self-centered activity. Just basically not to be selfish. That is very simple. As soon as we revert to self-centered activity we lose our way and our place. But as long as we continue this non-self-centered activity and simply practice for the sake of practice, the way and the place will open up wherever we are. There is no special

thing that we have to do, but everything we do has a special quality. Sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, just ordinary activity becomes the Way. @Copyright 2020, Sojun Mel Weitsman

## The Bodhisattva Ceremony

The CHZC website now has a recording of this ceremony posted on the Event Calendar: <http://chzc.org/events.htm>. Although in Chapel Hill, our version is a little different, I would like to share a description of the ceremony by an old friend, Nonin Chowaney, as it was done at the Nebraska Zen Center.

— Josho

## Ryaku Fusatsu: The Bodhisattva Ceremony

by Nonin Chowaney, of Nebraska Zen Center, Heartland Temple, now retired

At Nebraska Zen Center/Heartland Temple, we perform an ancient chanting and bowing ceremony called *Ryaku Fusatsu* (Jap.) once a month. We also refer to this ceremony as our Precept Ceremony, for in it we re-affirm our commitments to live according to the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, our Ethical Guidelines for everyday life. I'd like to explain what this ceremony is and how we perform it here.

*Ryaku Fusatsu* is indeed ancient. Its roots go back to Pre-Buddhist India, to ancient Vedic lunar sacrifices performed on the nights of the new and full moon. By Shakyamuni Buddha's time 2600 years ago, these sacrifices were no longer performed, but the new and full moon occurrences were still observed by Hindus as holy days of purification and fasting, days when the Gods came to dwell in the house. They became known as *Upavastha* (from the Sanskrit *upa*, near and *vas*, dwell).

Legend has it that Shakyamuni Buddha's followers also gathered on those days, perhaps because they didn't want to be left out. They would sit down and meditate together. Later, lay disciples in whose homes the monks and nuns would sometimes gather – wanted some teaching, so the monks began to recite the 227 rules of the *Patimokkha* discipline, the rules governing ev-

eryday conduct for monks and nuns (257 for nuns). This recitation developed into a confession and repentance ceremony, during which the monks and nuns would speak up if they had violated any of the rules and vow to do better in the future.

This ceremony is still performed today, at the same time and in the ancient way, by Theravadin monks and is called *Uposatha* in the Pali language, a variation of the old *Upavastha*, the, "near-dwelling" of the Gods on the ancient Hindu holy days. In Mahayana Buddhism, the spirit of the ceremony is preserved, but the 227 rules are not recited, because Mahayana sects have abandoned them. Instead of the confession being made to other monks, it is made directly to Buddha.

The ceremony was transmitted, with lots of changes and developments, from India through China to Japan and now has been transmitted to America as *Ryaku Fusatsu*, or the Bodhisattva Ceremony, as it is known in Soto Zen Buddhism.

"*Ryaku*" means, "abbreviated," or "simple." This distinguishes the ceremony from a "full *fusatsu*," a complicated, elaborate event still performed in Japan once or twice a year in some large temples. It takes two to three hours to complete. The simple ceremony we do here takes about forty-five minutes. "*Fusatsu*" means, "to continue good practice," or, "to stop unwholesome action (*karma*)." The name conveys the spirit of repentance and confession present in the Theravadin *Uposatha* Ceremony. *Ryaku Fusatsu* today, as performed in Soto Zen temples, includes the reading/transmission of Buddha's precepts, lots of bowing, and some of the elaborate, beautiful chanting common to Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan but rarely heard in America.

The ceremony has a series of parts. It begins with an incense offering to all Buddhas throughout space and time. We then chant the Formless Repentance, *All my past and harmful karma, Born from beginningless greed hate and delusion, through body, speech, and mind, I now fully avow.* After our repentance, we invoke the presence of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and An-

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cestors and call up their wisdom and compassion by chanting the names of a series of representatives, Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva, Zen Master Dogen, and others. Then, we chant the Four Bodhisattva Vows: *Beings are numberless; I vow to free them, Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them, Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them, Buddha's way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it.*

After the Four Vows, the *Ino* (chanting leader) receives Wisdom Water from the *Doshi* (service leader) and purifies the room by sprinkling it around the perimeter. Then, the *Doshi*, acting as Preceptor, reads Zen Master Dogen's "Essay On Receiving and Conferring the Precepts." In the middle of this reading at Heartland Temple, we have instituted the practice of taking the Precepts together. The *Doshi* reads each precept and asks the sangha if they will "receive and maintain this precept." The sangha replies, "Yes, I will" after each one.

*Ryaku Fusatsu* ends with the *Doshi* reciting an *Eko* (merit transfer), which reads, *On this full moon night, we offer the merit of the Bodhisattva's way throughout every world system to the unconditioned nature of all being.* The Sangha then chants the closing verse, *All Buddhas, throughout space and time; all honored one, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas [great beings]; wisdom beyond wisdom, maha prajna paramita [great perfect wisdom].*

*Ryaku Fusatsu* offers us an opportunity to acknowledge all past action (karma), to receive the precepts, and to rededicate ourselves to the practice of the Bodhisattva's Way. We perform this ceremony at Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple every month, as close to the evening of the full moon as possible to conform to the ancient tradition.

From: [http://www.prairiewindzen.org/ryaku\\_fusatsu.html](http://www.prairiewindzen.org/ryaku_fusatsu.html)



*Demon Chanting*, Japan, Edo Period  
Freer Art Gallery, Washington DC

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# Chapel Hill Zen Center



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## Zoom 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

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

**Joshō 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.