



Holiday Schedule

On Sunday, September 5, the Zen Center will have morning Zoom zazen, as usual at 9:00 and 9:50 AM. On **Monday, September 6, there will be no in-person zazen or study group meeting.** However, Zoom zazen will be held as usual, at 6:00 and 6:50 am.

Half-day Sittings by Zoom

Sunday mornings, September 5, and October 10

There will be Zoom Half-day Sittings from 6:00 AM until 12:15 PM. The schedule will be similar to that used for the morning of in-person All-day Sittings and will include a public Dharma Talk at 10:30. For information and to sign up, write info@chzc.org.

Dharma Talks

Sunday morning, September 5, and October 10, 10:30 - a Zoom talk by Josho Pat Phelan.

Sunday morning, September 19, 10:30, a Zoom talk by Daigaku Rumme, founder of Confluence Zen Center in the St. Louis area. Daigaku Roshi was ordained by Sekkei Harada Roshi in 1978 whom he practiced under for more than twenty-seven years, at Hosshin-ji. Daigaku Roshi is the translator of *A Blueprint of Enlightenment: A Contemporary Commentary on Dogen Zenji's Gakudo Yojinshu "Guidelines for Studying the Way"* by Gien Inoue; translator of *Essence of Zen* and co-translator of *Unfathomable Depths*, both by Harada Roshi.

Sunday morning, October 24, 10:30, a Zoom talk by Kuden Paul Boyle. After practicing at the CHZC for many years, Kuden moved to London, Ontario, where he leads the Forest City Zen Group.

Sunday morning, September 26, 10:30, a Zoom talk by Koun Franz.

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>

Keizan's Zazen by Zoom

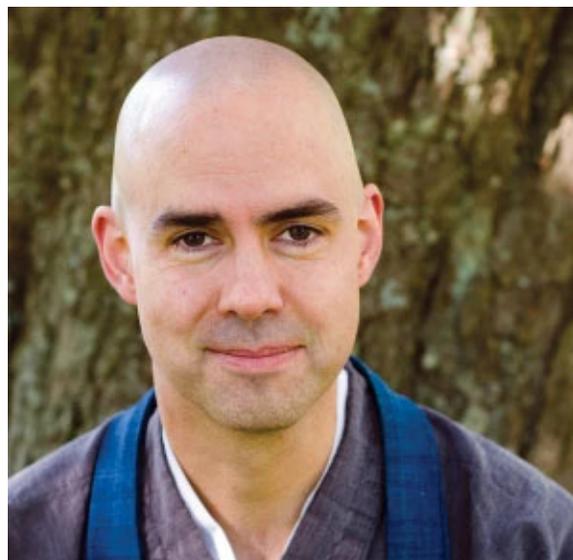
Saturday, September 25, 9:00-4:00

Koun Franz will give talks on Keizan Jokin's *Zazen Yojinki* or *Notes on What to be Aware of in Zazen*. Master Keizan Jokin (1268-1325) is considered co-founder, along with Master Eihei Dogen, of Soto Zen in Japan. Although Master Dogen is well-known to many practitioners of Soto Zen in the West, Master Keizan is relatively unknown.

Please join us for this Workshop where Koun Sensei will give talks and discuss this text, with time for questions. We will begin and end the workshop with a period of zazen.

The Chapel Hill Zen Center is offering this program by donation, with a suggested donation of \$50. To sign up and for questions, please contact Josho at info@chzc.org.

Koun Franz spent a good deal of his adult life in Japan. He was ordained in 2001, then trained at *Zuioji* and *Shogoji* monasteries. From 2006 to 2010, he served as resident priest of the Anchorage Zen Community in Alaska. Koun is married and has two children. He leads practice in Nova Scotia, Canada, at Thousand Harbours Zen.



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Zoom Zazen

The CHZC continues to offer zazen via Zoom on Monday and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 1:40; Monday-Friday mornings at 6:00 and 6:50; and Sunday morning at 9:00 and 9:50. You are welcome to join both periods of zazen or either one. The Zoom link can be found on the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website at www.chzc.org/events.htm

Study Group

Plum trees in Japan bloom right in midwinter, in a world of complete whiteness. It's very beautiful. Everything is covered with snow when all of a sudden the scarlet flowers bloom....When the plum tree blossoms, the whole world blooms—the whole world is embraced by blooming flowers. Even though the world is covered with snow, it is nothing but flowers. That is spring. Which comes first, spring or blooming flowers?...Reality is that blooming flowers and spring appear simultaneously. — Katagiri Roshi

Tuesday Evenings, beginning September 21, from 6:45 PM - 8 PM. We will read talks by Dainin Katagiri Roshi collected in the book, *The Light that Shines Through Infinity*, beginning on page 66.

There is one Zoom link to access all the Study Groups, which can be found on the Event Calendar section of the CHZC website: www.chzc.org/events.htm. **Please log on 5-10 minutes before the study group begins** so we can start on time. *All the Study Groups are open to everyone, and there is no charge.*

Sejiki Service and Food Drive

Saturday, October 23, at 6:30 pm

The Zen Center will have an abbreviated *Sejiki* service at the Zen Center that will begin with zazen at 6:30, followed by chanting and a dedication that will include the names of those for whom we have done a memorial service this past year. If you would like someone's name included or if you are planning to attend, please let us know at info@chzc.org.

“*Sejiki*” is a Japanese word meaning “feeding the hungry ghosts.” Hungry ghosts are depicted as beings with very large stomachs swollen from malnutrition, who have the tiniest of throats, and who are always hungry. They are symbolic of the state of mind which is never satisfied with who we are or what we have. In the ceremony we call forth hungry ghosts and beings who are stuck in intermediary states, as well the dark, unknown regions of our own psyches, bringing them into the light. We offer them the nourishment of Dharma with the hope of satisfying and releasing them.

In the spirit of Sejiki, we invite you to bring a food offering for the Interfaith Council pantry of non-perishable goods, which will be collected in the entryway.

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 by Zoom, on Sunday, **October 17**, at 10:20, following Zoom zazen.

A Moment of Eco-Dharma

“Just as when a sugar cane seed is placed in moist soil, the nutriment it takes from the soil contributes to its sweetness. Why is that? Because the seed is auspicious. In the same way, when a person has right view, the deeds performed in line with that view are agreeable. Why is that? Because the view is auspicious.”

— Anguttara Nikaya

The Chapel Hill Zen Center Eco-Dharma group informally explores together Buddhist teachings on the natural world, and caring for the natural world as an expression of the Bodhisattva Vow. The Eco-Dharma Group is planning to participate in the planting of new trees at the 5206 property early next year. The trees are scheduled to arrive in February. The group will most likely schedule a meeting prior to the planting to tour the property and plan the project. Please keep this in mind for next year and look out for more announcements as we get closer to the date. Please contact Chris at: ccensullo@yahoo.com to be added to the CHZC Eco-Dharma mailing list.

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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, Senmyo Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com, or Carol Klein at carollyklein53@gmail.com.

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: carollyklein53@gmail.com, Kris Garvin: krisgarvin@gmail.com, or Senmyo Sherman: 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.

Scholarships for Racial Equity Workshops

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. Donations to this fund are also welcome!

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. The Children's Program has many books and materials that can be shared—please just ask. Also, we are constructing a new mailing list; if you'd like to be added to it, please contact me, maurahigh@gmail.com, or leave a message at (919) 265-7045. I will contact you when we are scheduled to resume the Zen Center's in-person program.

2021 Board of Directors

Kenneth Wilson, President; John Paredes, Vice-President; Chris Censullo, Secretary; Tripp Spivey, Treasurer; Maura High and Alex Fine, Members-at-Large; Josho Pat Phelan, *ex officio*.

Members' Library: New Acquisitions

Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism, Harvey B. Aronson; *Open to Desire: The Truth About what the Buddha Taught*, Mark Epstein; *Ordinary Wonder: Zen Life and Practice*, Charlotte Joko Beck, *What to Do When I'm Gone: A Mother's Wisdom to her Daughter*, Suzy Hopkins and Hallie Bateman; *Finding Refuge: Heart Work for Healing Collective Grief*, Michelle Cassandra Johnson; *The Dalai Lama's Cat*, David Michie; *The Art of Listening: A Guide to The Early Teachings of Buddhism*, Sarah Shaw.

Intention and Control in Practice

by Josho Pat Phelan

I would like to begin with a passage from a poem by the Kentucky poet and farmer, Wendell Berry.

*And there are ways
the deer walk in darkness
that are clear.
It is not by will
I know this,
but by willingness,
by being here.*

The practice of zazen or Zen meditation involves finding a balance between our will to practice and

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our willingness to allow practice to happen. We need both the will or determination to practice as well as the willingness to give up our expectations of what we want practice to be. Discipline is necessary to get ourselves onto the cushion day after day, especially in the beginning, and once there to maintain an upright position. Self discipline and effort and energy are one side of practice—the side we consciously work on. But we need to balance our conscious effort by letting go of our hopes, our expectations and goals, so that once we are on the cushion, we can open to our wider, less conscious areas, our deeper intention. We can't consciously direct our practice or realization the way we might direct our study for a driver's licence exam. Part of the intention we bring to zazen is to open, to let go and disengage from our habitual patterns, especially our mental patterns.

One of our habitual patterns may be to try control things or control ourselves. This pattern may be so deep and fundamental, that we may not even be aware of it. Zen Master Dogen addressed this in his text, *Only Buddha and Buddha*, where he quoted this dialogue:

Long ago, a monk asked, "*When hundreds, thousands, or myriads of objects come all at once, what should be done?*" Objects refer both to things we are attracted to, that pull us along, as well as things we want to avoid – so, the things in the external world, including the demands and responsibilities that come with taking care of our lives, our jobs and home life, as well as objects of mind, our plans, ideas, thoughts, memories, emotional states, etc.

So, "*When hundreds, thousands, or myriads of objects come all at once, what should be done?*" The Master replied, "*Don't try to control them.*"

Dogen commented, "What he means is that in whatever way objects come, do not try to change them. Whatever comes is the buddha-dharma, not objects at all." And then Dogen said, "Do not understand the master's reply as merely a brilliant admonition, but realize that it is the truth. Even if you try to control what comes, it cannot be controlled."

Most of the time, in most of our experience, don't we want to change it, somehow, in some way? Isn't there something that could be added, taken away, or changed to make whatever is happening within or without a little better? Most of us don't need to sit zazen for long before we begin to realize how little control we have over our attention and habitual thinking. Fortunately, our practice isn't to try to control our thinking in zazen, but to be awake with the present experience of our body, breath and mind—to simply be aware.

As young children we are taught to control ourselves, to control our temper, our desires and appetites, our bowels and so forth. For the most part we succeed. And perhaps finding some security in this, we try to control more and more parts of our lives, trying to avoid pain and create pleasure. But the fact is we're not in control. We don't know when we will get sick, have an accident, die, or when those we love will. At this time, this is in our face, probably more than any other time in our lives. This lack of control, probably more than anything else, motivates us to try to be in control. So we try to control anything we can, how we comb our hair and dress, how we present ourselves to others, and the impression others have of us. So, how do we practice giving up control or this false sense of control?

At the same time, we need to control ourselves to some extent in order to have the discipline to practice, in order to get up in the morning and sit zazen, in order to sit still and invite our wandering mind back over and over. The points that are emphasized most in our posture are an upright back and sitting in a position that supports stillness, and both of these promote physical and mental stability. From this stability, we can begin to let go of control. But if we let go of control prematurely, or if letting go isn't balanced with some intention and stability, we might fall over, or wander aimlessly in our fantasies, or fall asleep. On the other hand, if we are too controlled or disciplined, our practice can become narrow and brittle.

So, our effort to be present needs to be balanced with our trust in practice. Again, if we try too hard

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to be alert, we can become tense and “on guard”—our consciousness will be directed by our thinking mind. When this happens, a rigidity sets in, and our field of practice narrows to what we think we can control. In the midst of the rigor of sitting upright and staying present, we need to find a way to allow a relaxed quality and a sense of ease in our body and mind. Although the back is upright, try to let your spine support you so that your muscles can relax, allowing a sense of ease and opening. When we are actually engaged in *zazen*, our will and willingness are finely tuned, our effort and ease are integrated. This is what is meant by effortless effort. The 20th century Chinese master, Sheng-yen said that one of the most important things in practicing meditation is to be relaxed.

Two ways that we tend to judge and reject our *zazen* is that either we think too much or drift away into dreaming or sleep, and we may think that is wrong. But actually the stability of our body and mind goes beyond these two opposites where the thinking mind is either too active or asleep.

I've found that if a person stays with *zazen* practice long enough, sooner or later, they will fall asleep during *zazen*. In the beginning, I take it to be a good sign, in the sense that they are beginning to trust the process and let their guard down. When a person never falls asleep in *zazen*, they may be directing their practice too much. At some point we should be stable enough in our posture and grounded in our presence so that we can begin to let go of control and trust this practice. And an advantage of falling asleep in *zazen* is that we can bring some level of consciousness to it which helps us bring awareness to other transitions in our state of mind. This way, we get a wider range of consciousness to experience and to practice with. Of course, sleep can also be a way of tuning out and avoiding what is going on. So, I'm not advocating sleeping in *zazen*, but when you do, like everything else—look for ways to practice with it.

Our intention can help us not get lost when we are in less conscious states or falling asleep in *zazen*. Intention can be both the intention that

brings us to practice this moment as well as the original inspiration that brought us to practice in the first place. The usual meaning of intention is the state of mind with which we act. In Buddhist teaching Right Intention is the absence of all emotional obstructions, the state of consciousness that's free from the limiting considerations of self-interest.

Sometimes the first inspiration to practice is called *bodhicitta*—it might be the first time the thought arises of the possibility that enlightenment or the unconditioned exists, that we could be completely awake or completely free. We tend to develop *bodhicitta* by degrees: first we have the idea that we could be awake—that we could live without becoming so enmeshed in our own point of view and habitual activity. Then sometime later we may decide that this idea is important enough that we will act on it by practicing. As we practice, we begin to experience our connectedness with all beings and realize that our liberation cannot be separate from another's. Suzuki Roshi used the phrase, “our inner-most desire” or “our inmost request” to refer to the fundamental desire to return to Original Mind – the mind before we overlay it with our desires and fears and histories.

As we practice sometimes a vow forms of itself. We carry this vow from *zazen* into our daily lives by dedicating what we are doing to the fulfillment of our vow. The vow becomes our intention—the mind with which we act. Intention is how we bring practice to whatever we're doing. In Zen practice we emphasize the intention or the motive with which we act, rather than whether the results of our efforts are successful or not. Sometimes when we act with wholesome intentions, the outcome isn't so good. There is no way we can control how our actions will be received. Although we should not disregard the effects of our actions—we need to take responsibility for them—it doesn't help to get stuck in remorse. To work with your intention, try to find where its located in your body and learn to call it up. Throughout the day, try to stay with your intention, your most *authentic* intention, and make your state of mind your priority instead of what

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you are trying to get done. This way, whatever activity you are doing provides a form for working with your state of mind. Try to ground yourself in your intention, letting go of concern for the results.

Like everything else we do regularly, we can take our zazen practice for granted and do it on autopilot. So, how do we keep it from becoming just another conditioned activity? At the beginning of zazen, I suggest trying to recall what originally prompted you to begin practice and rededicate your original intention. If you find that you are falling asleep or day-dreaming pretty regularly in zazen, remind yourself that you would be much cozier in bed instead of sitting upright, supporting your back. You can investigate, “why am I here?” I mean, why am I here sitting zazen as well as, why am I here at all? We should have a sense of why we’re here in zazen, even if we can’t put it into words.

In his book, *You Have to Say Something*, Katagiri Roshi is quoted saying, “To live in vow is to take care of the little details of life – like getting up in the morning. When it is time to get up, just get up.... Getting up is only a tiny activity. It is not unusual.” He said, “everyone does it. Although there is nothing outstanding about it, the goldenness of the earth is found in just such activities in everyday life.” So, he said, “When it is time to get up, just get up.” Suzuki Roshi also emphasized this as practice, so much so that I think of it as the essence of Zen practice. Without hesitating, equivocating or deliberating, when the alarm goes off, when the bell rings, or when you hear the *han*, just do it. Step into the realm of the present, into the realm of your deeper intention.

When we bring our intention or vow into our activity, we don’t need to be doing anything special in order to be practicing. Suzuki Roshi said, “The points we emphasize are not the stage we attain, but the strong confidence we have in our original nature and the *sincerity* of our practice.” He said, “We should practice with the same sincerity as Buddha.”

There was a discussion once where we were talking about taking refuge and the difference

between taking refuge in Buddha and taking refuge in ice cream. In my first year at the San Francisco Zen Center, I decided, as a kind of experiment, to look for the limit of my desire for ice cream, to look for the boundary where I came to the point that I was satisfied. So, I began eating and after awhile, my lips and tongue began getting numb, and San Francisco is usually chilly anyway—but I still liked and wanted more ice cream. I considered this experiment a failure. It didn’t work then or now—I still want more. So, I found that trying to satisfy my desires is usually a hopeless task.

Zen practice doesn’t emphasize stopping taking refuge in ice cream or conditioned activity, in order to be able take refuge in Buddha, or the unconditioned. Instead it emphasizes looking clearly at the causes and conditions that lead us to take refuge in ice cream and looking at the effects of this on ourselves and others. *Seeing clearly* what prompts us to take refuge in ice cream is how we take refuge in Buddha. Clearly observing what we are already doing is how we loosen the knot of our habit energy, whereas fighting our impulses tends to tighten the knot.

Our experience is not repeatable. This moment will never come back and can never be recreated. Yet, our practice is to sit zazen and repeat the same activity over and over. We should try to sit with the same strength of purpose, the same enjoyment, as if this period of zazen were the only zazen we will ever sit, maybe as if we were on our way to the guillotine. This is the *only* zazen we can sit right now. We can’t be more awake in the zazen we sat yesterday, and we can’t settle our body and mind now for tomorrow’s zazen. This moment is the only moment we are alive in. This breath is the only breath we breathe.

The first Buddhist ordination I went to was a priest ordination. During the ceremony, it was as if the walls of the room disappeared and we were in boundless space doing something that had a timeless, ancient quality. I was so taken by the ceremony that I kept a copy of the text and on my days off, I would read through the whole ceremony, doing the bows, saying all the statements, the repentance verse, the precepts, and

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so on. I did this for a couple of months, and it helped me clarify my ambivalence. This is one way to work on the precepts, by practicing taken them.

The actor Peter Coyote once said, "It is finally only intention that we can train to be as constant as our breathing, and only our intentions that will finally stand nakedly revealed by our lives." I don't know which is more accurate, to say that practice is the intention to develop our vow, or that practice is the vow to develop our intention. But we need to decide if what we are doing is important enough to bring our full being to it. Because this will make the difference between whether our activity, our time, whether we, ourselves, are asleep or awake, dead or alive.

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Haiku by Richard Wright

from *Haiku*,
The Last Poems of an American Icon

The spring lingers on
In the scent of a damp log
Rotting in the sun

The harbor at dawn:
The scent of oranges
On gusts of March wind

Upon a pine tree,
A snail slides out of its shell
To witness the spring

Not even the sun
Can make oak tree leaves as green
As the starlight does

The crow flew so fast
That he left his lonely caw
Behind in the fields

As though for always,
Each petal lit by the sun ---
Apple Blossoms!

The road is empty,
The one leading into hills
In autumn twilight

Just enough of light
In this lofty autumn sky
To turn the lake black

A December wind
Swept the sky clean of clouds
And froze the lake still.

A cracking tree limb
Intensifies the starlight
Upon blue-white snow.

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>

Chapel Hill Zen Center



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Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 967-0861

Zoom Schedule

Sunday Morning *Monday to Friday*

9:00 zazen	6:00 A.M. zazen
9:40 kinhin	6:50 A.M. zazen
9:50 zazen	
10:20 service	

Monday & Friday

1:00 P.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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

My mind is like the Autumn moon
Clear and bright in a pool of jade.
Nothing can compare —
What more can I say?

— Han Shan, translated by Red Pine

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.