



Saying Goodbye to Gosshi Nyugen, Elizabeth Moore

Elizabeth Moore, *Gosshi Nyugen* - Unmoving Resolve, Entering the Source, our dear friend and Dharma sister, passed from this world on June 14, in Charlotte, after living with Parkinson's Disease for 22 years.

For about six months in 1980, Nyugen practiced Zen as a monastic at Shasta Abbey in Northern California, but returned to Roanoke, VA, to help her mother who was in bad health.

Subsequently, Nyugen decided to follow psychologist C.G. Jung's advice to seek a spiritual discipline within your own culture and joined the Episcopalian Order of St. Francis as a novitiate or sister. She lived in community for ten years in San Francisco and New York, before deciding not to take full vows.

At this point, Liz came back to Floyd, VA, where, in 1993 or 1994, she returned to Zen practice with the Stone Mountain Zen Group in Roanoke, led by Jacques and Marianne Miller. There she met James Welsh and Alan Bassett who also visited the CHZC regularly.

Nyugen began visiting the Chapel Hill Zen Center in 1996 and moved to Chapel Hill in 1997 to participate more fully. From 2001 to 2008 she lived as a resident in the zendo apartment. For many years during this time, she got up every morning, opened the gate, unlocked the doors and turned on the lights for 6:00 A.M. zazen. Nyugen was ordained as a Zen Buddhist priest in September, 2003. Her commitment to practice and her intention to be upright was a shining example that has inspired many of us.

Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha! "Gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone beyond, awakening. Oh, what a release!"

Nyugen, may you continue your path, flowing with everything, unencumbered.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — July & August, 2018

<http://www.chzc.org>

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When you refrain from unwholesome action, the power of practice is immediately actualized. This is actualized on the scale of the entire earth, the entire universe, all time, and all dharmas. This is the scale of refrain from.

When you arouse your entire mind and let it practice, and when you arouse your entire body and let it practice, eight or nine out of ten are accomplished before questioning, and refrain from unwholesome action is actualized after knowing.

When you move mountains, rivers, and earth, as well as the sun, the moon, and stars to practice, they in return move you to practice. This is not the open eye of just one time, but the vital eye of all times. Because it is all the open eye, the vital eye of all times, you move all buddhas and all ancestors to practice, to listen to the teaching, and to realize the fruit.

— Eihei Dogen, *Shoaku Makusa* or
“Refraining from Unwholesome Action”

Silent Half Day Sitting

On **Saturday, July 28**, a Silent Half-day Sitting will be held from 6:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. with the option for participants to begin at 4:00am, if they so choose. This will be similar to an All-day Sitting, but there will be no chanting, no service, no floor bows, and no work period, only zazen, kinhin, and breakfast which will be silent and buffet style. Oryoki will not be used. Orientation begins at 7:30 Friday night with further details and job assignments. Sign up ahead of time.

Aging Gracefully, Befriending Death

Sunday, July 8 at 11:15 A.M.

This is an informal discussion group that gives the opportunity to share readings, information, and explore conversations among ourselves on these topics. The group will meet next on Sunday, July 8 around 11:15 A.M. after temple cleaning. Please contact Kris Garvin at krisgarvin@gmail.com, or Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com, if you have questions, would like more information. Everyone is welcome, regardless of age.

All-day Sittings

There will be no an all-day sitting in July, but there will be a half-day sitting on Saturday, July 28. The next All-day Sittings are planned for Sundays, August 19, Sept. 16, and October 14, 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 Josho Sensei if this is your first All-day sitting.*** For more information on the oryoki meal form see: <http://www.kannondo.org/oroyoki>

Dharma Talks

Josho Pat Phelan will give public Dharma Talks on Sunday, July 15, August 19, and September 16.

Choro Carla Antonaccio will give a public Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, July 29, at 10:30. Everyone is welcome.

Shukke Tokudo — Priest Ordination

On Saturday, September 29, at 1:00, Korin Eden Kevin Heffernan, of the Richmond Zen Group, and Nedo Senmyo Jeffrey Sherman, will receive the precepts in the ceremony of *Shukke Tokudo* or Leaving Home and Accomplishing the way. Everyone is invited to support Kevin and Jeff in receiving the precepts as priests, and renew your own vows. It is helpful if you can arrive before 1:00 to be ready for the ceremony to begin on time. A reception will follow.

Eco-Dharma Discussion Group

Sunday, July 22 at 11:15

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 at lulu@rubblebuss.com.

Children's Program

The Zen Center's Children's program is on break until September. The program offers children a variety of activities, including meditation, story, craft, song, and movement, as well as participation in Zen Center events and celebrations throughout the year. In each meeting, the children have the space and time to practice living mindfully and learn about Buddhist teachings and contexts while giving their parents an opportunity to meditate in the concurrent adult program. The Children's Program meets twice a month, on Sunday mornings. For more information, please contact Maura High, the program coordinator, at maurahigh@gmail.com

People of Color Sitting Group

Wednesday nights from 6:00–7:30

The POC Sitting Group begins with zazen at 6:00, followed by the option to stay for group discussion and community building. Both those new to meditation, or experienced, are warmly welcome to join us or drop in as you like. For more information, contact Conal or Kriti at pocsittinggroup@gmail.com. As usual, instruction in zazen and an orientation are offered to the public on Sunday morning at 9:00, and on Tuesday night at 7:00.

Recovery Meeting

The Recovery Meeting meets on Tuesday nights from 7:30-8:30. 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 or Jeff Sherman at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com.

Richmond Zen Group

Joshō Sensei will visit the Richmond Zen Group on Wednesday evening, August 22, to sit zazen and give a Dharma Talk, beginning at 7:00.

Looking Ahead

Sejiki Ceremony—The Feeding and Nourishing of Hungry Ghosts, Saturday evening, October, 27

Reverend Daigaku Rummé will give a Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, November 25, at 10:30. Daigaku was ordained a Soto monk by Harada Sekkei Roshi in 1978, and trained for more than twenty-seven years under Harada Roshi at Hosshinji Monastery in Fukui, Japan.

Rohatsu Sesshin – November 30–December 7, led by Joshō

Spring Sesshin – March 1–6, a *Genzo-e* sesshin led by Shohaku Okumura

Chinese Calligraphy and Brush Painting

Jinxiu Zhao will teach Chinese Calligraphy on Sunday afternoons from **2:15-3:45**, on July 8 and 22, and August 12 and 26. Chinese Brush Painting is from **2:15-4:15**. Fees are \$30 per class, or \$110 for 4 classes. Please contact Jinxiu at (919) 484-7524 or Jxznc@aol.com to register or for more information. Jinxiu is also available to teach children's classes.

Volunteers Needed

A group of Zen Center volunteers prepares and serves lunch at the Inter-faith Council Community Kitchen on the fourth Saturday of each month from 10 AM to 1 PM. More volunteers are needed, including a core group of committed people, so we can continue our presence. The IFC Community Kitchen is the only soup kitchen in Orange County and is located on the corner of Rosemary and Columbia Streets in Chapel Hill. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Shawn at (919) 619-2243 or chzencooks@gmail.com.

CHZC Blog

The Chapel Hill Zen Center now has a blog with photographs from recent ceremonies and events. See: www.chapelhillzen.wordpress.com.

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@yahoogroups.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.

Spirituality and the Dharma

by Kuden Paul Boyle
Forest City Zen Group, London, Ontario

I would like to talk about my sense of spirituality in general, how it developed, and how it fits into the Dharma. In my experience, when someone finds out I practise Zen, they often start talking about what "spiritual" beliefs they have. I assume they are trying to find some common ground with me. More often than not, however, when these people talk about "spirituality" they are really talking about their metaphysical beliefs. For example, someone may believe in a deity, or angels, or other spiritual helpers. Such beliefs can encompass believing that certain inanimate objects (e.g. crystals) have various powers. Others might believe that performing certain rituals will have specific intended effects.

For me, my spirituality doesn't involve metaphysics. Rather, it is more about what I do than what I believe. I see spirituality in terms of relationships, and these relationships are framed by

posing various questions to myself. The questions that I use are: 1) What is my relationship with myself?, 2) What is my relationship with other people and other beings?, 3) What is my relationship with the environment and the world around me? It's not so important to come up with answers as to hold open the questions. This is a moment by moment practice. It's about self-awareness and what I do to show up for my life. Am I feeling hateful, or open hearted in the moment? Do I feel an impulse to act on that emotional state?

I find these questions useful because for me, personally, they help me orient toward certain elements of the Eight-fold Path, like Right View, Right Intention, and Right Action. At the same time, these questions are general enough to clarify to non-Buddhists how I see spirituality, and that spirituality is not necessarily coupled to metaphysical beliefs or faith in supernatural beings. The way that my spirituality evolved seems similar to what are called the Five Characteristics of Dharma, which I will talk about a little later. First, however, I would like to talk about how my sense of spirituality developed.

Oddly enough, the original inspiration for this talk was the sutta called *On Angulimala* (MN 86). My favourite part of the sutta is where Angulimala, a notorious bandit and serial killer, is running to try to catch up to the Buddha in order to kill him. The Buddha is just walking along at his normal pace, but no matter what Angulimala does, he can't catch up to the Buddha. Finally, the Buddha turns toward Angulimala and tells him to stop, and Angulimala stops. After that Angulimala becomes a monk and an arhat. In another sutta we can learn what Angulimala's motivation was: It turns out Angulimala became a serial killer because he was misled by a spiritual teacher earlier in his life.

If we read Angulimala's story as metaphor, it offers an accessible lesson regarding what makes a wholesome versus unwholesome spiritual path. To make it relevant to our lives, we can interpret the first Clear Mind Precept, A disciple of Buddha does not kill as being broader than referring to simply taking biological life. It can include killing

someone's goodwill, their capacity for empathy and compassion, their enthusiasm, their open-heartedness, their curiosity. Unwholesome spiritual paths can do this to people. I witnessed this in my own childhood when one of my parents became involved in fundamentalist Christianity. That became an example of what to avoid in my spiritual search.

The other point I want to bring up is Angulimala's running. He couldn't catch the Buddha no matter what he tried doing. His warped spiritual practice couldn't touch the Buddha, or reality as it is. I see this as another metaphor for less than productive spiritual practices. There are some people who are always running from one path to the next, or they are running after the latest spiritual toys. The sutta is telling us that chasing after something doesn't help. We must stop. To paraphrase Jack Kornfield, it is better to dig one deep well rather than many shallow wells. Stopping allows us to dig deeply.

People don't pursue destructive or unwholesome spiritual paths because they are born inherently evil or flawed. They go down unwholesome paths because they are misguided either by their reasoning process or by influence of another. When I was at Tassajara, San Francisco Zen Center's monastery, I recall Paul Haller saying during a Dharma Talk something like, no matter what kind of screwed up, dysfunctional choices we've made at any given time, those choices always represent our best effort to say 'yes' to life. I would like to think that this is true for both myself and Angulimala. Because of our backgrounds and ignorance, much of the time, these dysfunctional choices turn out to be not so great. Many times we just repeat the same pattern because we don't know how to do it any other way, and we just hope for a different result. In any case, I liked what Paul Haller said because it gave me a way to see my own and other people's searching and struggles with compassionate eyes.

In my own story, I grew up in a pretty dysfunctional, chaotic household. One of my "solutions" to escape living with my family was to excel academically. I bided my time until I was able to leave home to go to university. After my first year

of undergraduate, I stayed on campus to take extra classes. Every summer, I was able to find something to do which allowed me to avoid going home. One summer it was doing undergraduate research for my adviser. The next summer it was a summer undergraduate research fellowship. I did well academically and received a lot of positive reinforcement from my peers and mentors. Still, there was the angst and the hollowness inside.

After I graduated, I figured, academic achievement worked pretty well for me. So, let's continue this course of action, and go to graduate school! I did pretty well during graduate school too. During this time I was reading about Taoism, Zen, and some Western philosophy. I found these topics interesting, but it was all in my head. I couldn't plug it into the reality of my life. I found that despite my concern and best efforts, my life was beginning to fall apart.

Like Angulimala, I was running. I was trying to find and catch something which would bring me peace and contentment. No matter what I tried, I couldn't find "that thing" which would quiet the self-doubt and self-loathing. Eventually, the strategy of running by excelling had to stop. Toward the end of my Ph.D. studies, I did stop, or at least, began to stop. I learned, in a visceral way, the reality of the First Noble Truth – the reality of suffering. Once I was able to touch my own suffering, I could see how spiritual practice plugged into the reality of my life. For me, stopping entailed going to 12 Step groups to learn about and take responsibility for my own dysfunctional thought and behaviour patterns, and going to individual and group therapy. It also included taking up a meditation practice which led to a deepening involvement in Zen.

One of the things which I found quite valuable about 12 Step work was its immediacy and concreteness. In these groups members are encouraged to find a "higher power" which works for them. Like most people in this position, I did a little "shopping around," but one of the criterion I used was that I didn't want to have to adopt elaborate metaphysical views. If possible, I wanted it to be something concrete which I could expe-

rience directly. After several years of recovery work, when I started studying the Buddhadharmā, this was one of the things which stood out for me – the concreteness and practicality of the Dharma. In general, I think the Buddhadharmā is like this because the Buddha emphasized causality. In the *Nikāyas*, from the Pali Canon, we can find passages which outline five characteristics of the Dharma which emphasize the immediacy and concreteness of the teaching. I see a lot of similarity with what is emphasized in Zen practice. More recently I've begun to see these Five Characteristics of Dharma as the “five characteristics of spiritual practice.”

The five characteristics of the Dharma:

Sandhitthiko: the principle of the concrete “here and now” in actual reality.

Akaliko: the principle of immediacy. Sometimes this gets translated as “timeless,” but immediacy captures the essential meaning.

Ehipasiko: the principle of invites investigation, the principle of “come and see.”

Opanayiko (Apanayiko): the principle of applicability. Deserves application within one's own mind. The principle of leading inward.

Paccattam Veditab Vinmūhi: the principle that the teachings are experienced directly by the wise.

When these five characteristics show up in the *Nikāyas*, someone is asking the Buddha, “Hey, how is your teaching directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, and to be personally experienced by the wise?” The Buddha then explains a teaching. Inevitably, the answer revolves around some experience of self-awareness. For example, having seen a form with the eye, one experiences the form and craving for the form. Our awareness of what is going on with us is concrete and immediate. We can be curious about how we can practise with this in the moment. We can apply the Dharmic teachings to our awareness and experience these teachings directly.

I'll talk a little more about each of these five characteristics. I don't think the order is arbitrary. The way I see it is that the characteristics

are listed in the order in which we engage them in practice.

Sandhitthiko: This is the principle of concrete practice, here and now in actual reality. This principle is deeply embedded in Zen. Many koans like Joshu's “Cypress Tree” or Tozan's “Three Pounds of Flax” embody the principle of here and now. One of the things which initially drew me to Soto Zen was the approach that everyday activity can be enlightened activity. Every mundane action and task can be a moment of creating practice. In Soto Zen we try to do every activity wholeheartedly. It is concrete and happens in the moment. This is why work practice is so important in Zen. We work with our experience through our activity. Suppose you are given a job during work period you don't like. In that moment being aware of your aversion is your concrete, here and now practice.

Akaliko: This is the principle of immediacy. Again, this principle is deeply embedded in Zen. Many of you can probably recall the story which Dogen tells in the *Tenzo Kyokun* regarding his encounter with an elderly *tenzo* (head of kitchen practice). He asked the *tenzo* why don't you wait to dry the mushrooms when the sun isn't so hot? The *tenzo* answered, “What time should I wait for?” Zen is full of this sort of immediacy. Now is a great time to do Zen practice! There is no other time to practise. Don't wait until you think you are prepared, the present moment is already here and ripe for practice.

Ehipasiko: this is the principle of “come and see for yourselves.” This is an invitation to try and experience the Dharma directly. Accepting the first two principles of *sandhitthiko* and *akaliko* outlined above make this easier. There is an element of faith here – that Buddhist teachings are directly relevant and applicable to my life in this moment. When I read a Buddhist teaching, I ask myself, “How is this teaching inviting me to practise?” Sometimes it is concrete, like wholeheartedly chopping vegetables. With other teachings, the investigation is a little more open ended. One example of open ended investigation would be living out the Bodhisattva Vows. Investigating how to liberate all beings isn't some-

thing we can figure out, but we can try and see for ourselves. Sometimes, we might come across a teaching where we have no idea how to apply it. In that case, I think it is OK to set it aside.

Opanayiko: this is the principle of applicability and turning inward. The Buddhadharmas isn't "out there" to try to explain the physical universe. In *Zen Mind Beginner's Mind*, Suzuki Roshi captures the spirit of *opanayiko* with the following quote, "Usually, when someone believes in a particular religion, his attitude becomes more and more a sharp angle pointing away from himself. In our way the point of the angle is always pointing towards ourselves." Suzuki Roshi is bringing up something important. We don't engage spiritually by engaging with external toys or thinking we know something about other people or the universe. And, we certainly don't engage spiritually by judging other people. The teachings are tools with which we can examine our interior life. *Opanayiko* leads inward and toward peace of mind. In a sense, *opanayiko* builds on the three previous characteristics of Dharma. When we see the teachings as concrete and practical, of immediate value, and want to investigate them, this naturally leads to *opanayiko*.

Paccattam Veditab Vinnuhi: this is the principle of direct experience of the wise. OK, so we may not think that we qualify as wise. So, I would like to suggest a rephrasing – the principle of direct experience through practice. This is the basis of faith in Buddhism. In Buddhism, faith is not believing in something which cannot be proven. Faith is a developing confidence in the teachings by verifying them with our own experience.

As I mentioned previously, the order five characteristics of Dharma points out how we can engage in practice. First, we start with the here and now, our actual concrete experience. Second, we see the immediacy of practising the teachings. We don't wait for a "better" time. Third, we accept the invitation of "come and see." How does this teaching invite me to practice? Fourth, we see the applicability of the teaching to our own experience. Finally, as a result of engaging process, we experience directly the result of the

teachings. This is how the five characteristics of Dharma offer guidance about how to practise.

The usefulness of the five characteristics of Dharma extend to a couple of other related areas of practice. First, they can guide us in how we interpret and understand the Dharma. Second, we can cultivate the qualities in our practice.

When interpreting a Dharma teaching, I try to stick to these five characteristics. Is the teaching concrete? Is it immediate? Does it invite doing? How is it applicable to my interior life? If I cannot come up affirmatively to these questions, then I consider four possibilities: 1) the teaching should be interpreted symbolically, 2) the teaching is not right for me, 3) the teaching is not right for me at this time, or 4) the teaching is incorrect. I may not necessarily know which of these alternatives is true.

When a teaching doesn't make sense to me, the first thing I do is to try to interpret symbolically. I did this with the *Angulimala Sutta* when I was talking about that earlier. Another thing to realize about the Dharma is that certain teachings work well for some people and not for others. So, if we don't resonate with a teaching, then it's not really a problem. We persist until we do find a teaching with which we resonate. It could also be that we might not relate to a teaching when we are new to Zen, but over time we see its value. The converse can also be true. Teachings which appealed to us as beginners might not have the same draw after we have been sitting for awhile.

The other point about the five characteristics of the Dharma is that we can cultivate these characteristics in our practice. To put it succinctly: when we practise the Dharma, we become the Dharma. The more thorough our practice the deeper the Dharma seeps into and permeates our body/mind. For example, after taking up the concrete practice of Zen, we may find that we are more rooted in the principles of "here and now," "immediacy," and "turning inward" and so on. We may find we are less drawn to speculative or metaphysical views and practices. We become more stable and rooted in reality as it is.

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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

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.