



2022 Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce that the Chapel Hill Zen Center Board of Directors for 2022 are: John Paredes, President; Alex Fine, Vice President; Tripp Spivey, Treasurer; Chris Censullo, Secretary; Al-Nisa Berry and Craig Adamski, Members-at-Large, Josho Pat Phelan *ex officio*. We offer deep gratitude to Ken Wilson who served as president, vice president and treasurer in recent years, and to Maura High who also served on the board for many years as member-at-large, and president. Maura will generously continue serving as head of the Maintenance Committee.

Winter Practice Intensive by Zoom

February 13 - March 13. See page 7 for information.

In Person Zazen

The Chapel Hill Zen Center invites those who are fully vaccinated, *which includes having had the booster*, and who can wear a mask while indoors to attend zazen in person. Zazen is offered on Thursday nights at 7:00 and 7:40pm; and on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 6:00 and 6:50 am. In order to socially distance, seating is available in chairs and on every other zabuton. So far, we have been opening the windows part-way, so dress warmly!

Zoom Zazen

The CHZC continues to offer zazen via Zoom on Monday and Friday afternoons from 1:00-1:40; 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

Dharma Talks

Josho Pat Phelan on Sunday mornings at 10:30, January 16, February 20, and March 20, planning to be **in-person** at the CHZC.

Zenki Kathleen Batson **by Zoom** on Sunday morning, February 27, at 10:30, after Zoom zazen.

Sangha News

We are happy to welcome back Zenki Kathleen Batson from the 90-day Practice Period at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center.

Tozan Tom Hardison

Tozan Tom Hardison passed away on Monday night, December 6. Tozan hosted the Chapel Hill Zen Group in his home for several years in the late 1980's. Around 1990, he moved to the San Francisco Zen Center where he practiced at the City Center and Green Gulch Farm, before moving to Japan where he was ordained as a Zen priest, made a serious study of Tea Ceremony, and played classical piano concerts. After practicing in Japan for about seven years, he returned to found Seido-an, a Zen center outside of Boone, NC. Tozan was generous with the CHZC over the years, bringing back an inkin from Japan for us, donating the large picture of Master Dogen, now on the gaitan wall, the Butsuden altar in the library, and many ritual items that make our center more complete for ceremonies.

With many deep bows and wishes for complete liberation.

All-day Sittings

In-person sittings *are planned* for Sundays, January 16, February 20, and March 20, from 6:00am-5:00pm, at the Chapel Hill Zen Center. This will be for people who are fully vaccinated, *including a booster*, and who can wear a mask indoors. Orientation will be at 7:30pm on Saturday night, and we ask that everyone attend Orientation. The day will include zazen, a Dharma Talk, *dokusan* and a work period, as well as breakfast and lunch. The a suggested donation is \$15 for members, and \$25 for others; however, if you are inclined to offer more, that would be very helpful in maintaining Zen Center. *Oryoki* sets are available for use by those who do not have their own, and a \$5 donation would be appreciated.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Jan & Feb, 2022

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 2

Please sign up at least 3 days in advance at info@chzc.org, and if this is your first All-day sitting, please speak with Josho ahead of time. For more information on the oryoki meal form see: <https://kannondo.org/getting-started/oryoki/>

Five Minute Talks

The Facebook page for Soto Zen Buddhism North America has a number of “Five Minute Talks” by Soto Zen Teachers from all over America. See: <https://www.facebook.com/SotoZenBuddhismNorthAmerica>. Look under the “Videos” section to find them.

Study Group

The Study Group meets on Tuesday Evenings, from 6:45 PM - 8 PM. We will continue reading and discussing *The Light that Shines Through Infinity* by Dainin Katagiri through February 1.

From February 15-March 8, we will read Katagiri Roshi’s teaching on the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts, found on pages 67-95, of *Returning to Silence*. The Zoom link is 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. *Study Groups are open to everyone, and there is no charge.*

A Moment of Eco-Dharma

Revise your preconceptions and understand plants and trees as mind – Dogen

One of the Japanese words for Zen monastery is *sorin*. It contains the character for “forest” or “woods.” Japanese religious history is steeped in reverence for trees and the natural world. This extends from ancient animism, in which spirits live in the Kodama tree (Kodama meaning “a tree’s soul and its echo”), to Shintoists who planted pine trees near shrines to invite a god’s soul. Tendai monks before Master Dogen asserted that the tree was a sentient being capable of becoming Buddhas by themselves. But to Dogen, trees, and indeed all beings, living and nonliving, not only have Buddha nature (to potentially become Buddhas in the future), but are Buddha nature. Beings exist non-dually with and in Buddha nature. What are trees to you?

The Eco-Dharma Group is looking for volunteers to help plant 65 trees on the Zen Center’s 5206 Highway 86 property in February. Trees are expected to arrive between Feb. 2-4, with planting taking place that same week. To help with preparatory work such as digging holes, planting, or continuing care after planting, please contact ccensullo@yahoo.com or chzc.zenki@gmail.com. All are welcome to join!

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 John at john@jollyoso.com. Donations to this fund are also 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.

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.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Jan & Feb, 2022

<http://www.chzc.org>

PAGE 3

Living with Impermanence

Living with Impermanence is an informal discussion group that shares how we experience impermanence in our lives including life changes, illness, aging and death. We usually begin with participants sharing what they are currently thinking of or dealing with. Discussions then usually emerge spontaneously to raised concerns. Silence is frequently a response after someone shares and we trust in that silence. On occasion we've set an agenda in advance to study a topic of interest. For more information, contact Carol at carollyklein53@gmail.com, Kris at krisgarvin@gmail.com, or Senmyo at jeffsherman3333@gmail.com.

Black, Indigenous & People of Color Sitting Group

Meetings postponed until further notice. We were beginning our meetings 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.

Adverse Weather Policy

The general rule about coming to the Zen Center is, if driving may be risky, don't do it. For example, when it is snowing or sleeting, or if snow or sleet are predicted to occur before or during zazen, you can assume that the zendo will be closed. This is particularly true for 6 AM zazen. The highway where the zendo is located is often not as well traveled or as well treated for snow as other highways in the area, and the temperature in the county is often a couple of degrees colder than in more populated areas.

Library Acquisitions

Cultivating Inner Peace by Paul Fleishman; *Living Buddhist Masters* by Jack Kornfield; *The Book of Form and Emptiness* by Ruth Ozeki; *Boundless Vows, Endless Practice* by the Sanshin Zen Community; *The Central Conception of Buddhism* by Th. Stcherbatsky; *Wake Up: How to Practice Zen Buddhism* by Bonnie Myotai Treace.

Polishing a Tile

by Josho Pat Phelan

In the "Fukanzazengi" or Universal Guidelines for the Practice of Zazen, Master Dogen wrote, "*Have no designs on becoming a buddha.*" This refers to a story that Master Dogen also used and elaborated on in his text, "Zazenshin," between Master Huai-rang who was a disciple of the 6th Ancestor, Hui-neng, and Huai-rang's disciple Ma-tsu or Baso.

The story begins with Ma-tsu, who had been practicing in Master Huai-rang's community for some time, meditating very seriously and intensely, when one day Huai-rang came to Ma-tsu's hermitage while he was sitting zazen, and asked him, "What do you seek by doing zazen?" Ma-tsu replied, "I'm seeking to become a buddha [or I'm trying to wake up]." (Why else would he be meditating all day?)

So Huai-rang picked up a tile that had fallen off the roof and began rubbing it, which was meant to imitate Ma-tsu's activity of cultivating his practice. The Chinese character that is translated as polish also means effort and in a Buddhist context, it refers to practice. After awhile, Ma-tsu asked, "Master, what are you doing?" Huai-rang replied, "I'm polishing this tile to make it into a mirror." The mirror represents enlightenment, or the still, reflective quality of mind that reflects things just as they are when the mind is no longer distorted by delusion.

Ma-tsu then asked, "How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?" Master Huai-rang came back immediately with, "How can you make a Buddha by sitting in meditation?" Ma-tsu asked, "Then, what shall I do?" [That is, if I don't meditate, how do I practice and awaken?] Huai-rang's next response seems to be a *non sequitur*, he said, "When you are driving a cart, if the cart doesn't go, should you beat the cart or beat the ox?" Ma-tsu didn't reply so Huai-rang continued, "Are you practicing sitting meditation, or are you practicing sitting Buddhahood?"

If you are practicing sitting meditation, meditation is not sitting or lying down. If you are

practicing sitting Buddhahood, 'Buddha' is not a fixed form.... If you keep the Buddha seated, this is killing the Buddha, if you cling to the form of sitting, you're not reaching its principle." At this point, Ma-tsu had realization and continued practicing with Huai-rang for ten more years, continuing to deepen his practice.

The common understanding of this story was that crossing your legs and sitting still, taking the posture of a buddha, doesn't make you into a buddha any more than polishing a tile will make it into a mirror. A buddha, or awakened mind has no fixed form and clinging to a form is a hindrance to liberation. Enlightenment is waking up to vast, limitless reality, not just holding still. It isn't developed gradually over time by refining zazen practice, nor is our practice limited to what happens when we cross our legs. If you leave your practice behind when you stand up after zazen, you are dividing your experience into practice by meditating and non-practice by doing your everyday life.

In *Each Moment is the Universe*, Katagiri Roshi wrote about this exchange. To Master Huai-jiang's statement, "Buddha is not a fixed form or no solid form," Katagiri commented, "Dogen says that 'no solid form' is Buddha.... Your basic nature is no solid form." And Dogen's comment, "no solid form is buddha" characterizes the nature of reality. Katagiri said, "When no solid form appears in your *gassho*...you manifest the form of *gassho* and also something more – emptiness. At that time you cannot avoid Buddha and you manifest ...*gassho* as it really is."

Then Katagiri Roshi said something wonderful, "*If one person manifests the whole universe, one person saves all sentient beings.*" He continued, "If you believe that saving all sentient beings is a ridiculous idea, your life is already rigid.... there is no space to be flexible, no space to manifest the unknown world through the form of your zazen...." "We have to manifest the unknown world simultaneously with the known world," which is another way of talking about the simultaneity of Difference and Unity, or diversity or differentiation and oneness.

To the phrase, "If you keep the Buddha seated, this is killing the Buddha, if you cling to the form of sitting, you're not reaching its principle," Katagiri Roshi said that the phrase, "killing the Buddha," was a favorite of Zen masters in China, but he said that this doesn't mean to really kill something. "It means total actualization and manifestation with no gap, no space to let something extra get in." He said, "If you sit zazen, you are melted into zazen." When I hear this, it reminds me of the way we make candles by taking the trimmings from many candles and melting them together to make a new candle so that the individual left-overs disappear into one candle. So, "If you sit zazen, you are melted into zazen," and the activity of zazen and you become one. Try to see if you can melt yourself into zazen, so there's no difference between you and zazen, no "you" trying to do zazen, there's just the experience of zazen, of openness, instant by instant, until *you* and your mental world return.

At the end of this exchange, Master Huai-rang said, "if you cling to the form of sitting or zazen posture, you're not reaching its principle." Katagiri Roshi commented that people think that not clinging to the form of sitting "means that you don't need to be concerned about the form or posture of zazen, because you cannot attain enlightenment that way. But this is a misunderstanding." Dogen meant that "we have to abandon our usual understanding of the zazen posture and touch the heart of zazen." Katagiri continued, "the zazen posture is really painful, creating lots of stiffness, just like climbing a mountain. But you love something that is at the heart of your life. In order to climb the mountain that is called life, you have to carry a form. It bothers you, but you do it anyway. Then you touch the heart of form..."

Katagiri Roshi went on, "Detachment does not mean you should ignore form; it means you have to attach to form through and through. A form may bother you but you need form because you love truth, you love peace, you love life itself." By joining ourselves to a form, or melting ourselves into a form like *gassho*, floor bows, or offering the Buddha tray, it's no longer "me" doing a particu-

lar movement. We actually move as the form, and the form and “me” are one, losing *self*-consciousness.

Returning to polishing the tile, and I know that this is a lot of words, the exchange between Mastser Huai-rang and Ma-tsu criticized systematic or methodical practice which is used in some Buddhist traditions where calming the mind and insight are developed in stages. Instead, this story supports the idea of sudden enlightenment – that enlightenment occurs instantaneously when we experience reality directly. At the beginning of the exchange, Dogen gives an alternate way to word this. According to Dogen, the question, “What do you seek by doing zazen?” is expressed more accurately when it is read as a statement, “Zazen is that seeking which is the Absolute.” which expresses Dogen’s view of the seamless unity of zazen practice and realization.

The foundation of Soto Zen is that we are already Buddha, there is nothing that we need that we don’t already have, and it is actually the Buddha we are that enables us to practice in the first place. For Dogen, practice is a manifestation of ultimate reality—boundless reality—working through us. In his teaching, Dogen tended to use the terms “manifestation,” “actualization,” “authentication,” and “verification” which connote an activity rather than the destination of enlightenment. Shohaku Okumura expressed practice as *allowing zazen to do zazen through me*.

When Ma-tsu was asked, “What do you seek by doing zazen?” Dogen reworded the response, “I seek to become a buddha” to “Seeking is buddha-actualization” and Dogen commented saying, “...zazen is always that ‘buddha-actualization’ which is one with ‘seeking;’ zazen is always that ‘seeking’ which is none other than ‘buddha-actualization’...”

The way the wording is changed equates seeking or practice with buddha-actualization. In this sense, the first period of zazen we sit, the zazen we do after years of practice, and our zazen during a long sesshin are all zazen. Whenever we sit whole-heartedly, we engage our whole being. Whole-hearted zazen is a complete act. Each

time we totally engage in just sitting, we practice absolutely; and absolutely means completely, totally, with an all-inclusive quality. So there is nothing left over or left out of our zazen. Each point in time, our zazen is buddha-actualization; and there is no progress because there is nothing outside that moment of total engagement to compare it to. For Dogen, zazen practice and actualization are united and reaffirmed moment by moment.

When Huai-rang was polishing the tile and Ma-tsu asked, “What are you doing?” Dogen commented, “Polishing a tile has been present in the Absolute,” indicating that the activity of Absolute reality is “tile polishing” or practice, and “tile polishing never ceases,” so there is no end to our practice. According to Dogen, practice is how we express and embody the Absolute or the non-dual, interdependent nature of reality. Dogen went on to say, that “tile polishing” or practice is not “mirror-making,” because the practice of zazen is not a method for producing enlightenment.

For Dogen, practice is total and complete. When there is complete engagement, there is no anticipation of enlightenment. If we do zazen now, thinking about a future enlightenment, we aren’t doing zazen. We are thinking about the future. In this practice, there isn’t room for anything else, no room for future, no room for enlightenment, Buddha, or insight. There is only room for one activity: total engagement in immobile sitting, instant after instant; and total, non-dual engagement is itself realization. Again, there is no room for the two activities of total engagement and realization. Total engagement is realization. This total engagement is to throw our whole body and mind into our present activity without looking outside the present for a result or for anything to compare our experience to. Our practice, our very presence, is unique and non-repeatable, and each moment of being is complete just as it is.

Dogen taught that practice is how we manifest or express *thusness* or reality, not how we transform ourselves from a human being into a buddha.

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Jan & Feb, 2022

<http://www.chze.org>

PAGE 6

Likewise, the tile does not become the mirror because the tile already *is* the mirror. If you are practicing zazen in order to get something, a wonderful quality or state of mind, that you think you don't already have, that is delusion. By reaching out for it, you are reaching away from your own inherent completeness.

All we have to do is sit upright totally engaging in immobile sitting, engaging with our most fundamental, unembellished being. Try to melt yourself into zazen so there is no zazen, no you, there is only this ... just this.

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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>

Evening Landscape, Clearing Snow

*Walking-stick in hand, [I] watch snow clear.
Ten thousand clouds and streams banked up,
woodcutters return to their simple homes,
and soon a cold sun sets among risky peaks.
A wildfire burns among ridgeline grasses.
Scraps of mist rise, born of rock and pine.
[On] the road bad to a mountain monastery,
[] hear it struck: the bell of evening skies!*

— T'ao Ch'ien (365-427)

The language in this sentence magically conjures the self as a presence, but it is an utterly empty presence....When the bell calls out, we are not only there in the pregnant emptiness at the heart of the Cosmos, we are indistinguishable from it.

— David Hinton, *Mountain Home, the Wilderness Poetry of Ancient China*

Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter — Jan & Feb, 2022

Winter Practice Intensive February 13 - March 13

The dimension of self-enlightenment enlightening others is fully replete with the characteristics of realization, and causes the principle of realization to be actualized ceaselessly. Because of this, even if just one person sits zazen for a short time, this zazen is imperceptibly one with each and all myriad things, and completely permeates all time, so that within the limitless universe, throughout past, present and future, it performs the eternal and ceaseless work of guiding beings to enlightenment.

— from the Jijuyu Zammai by Dogen Zenji

I warmly invite you to join this four-week Zoom Practice Intensive, a time of more practice opportunities and sangha exchange. The ongoing Zoom zazen schedule will continue, Monday-Friday mornings 6:00–7:20, Monday and Friday afternoons at 1:00, Sunday mornings at 9:00. During the Practice Intensive there will be a Study Group on Tuesday nights from 6:45-8:00.

On Wednesday there will be one period of zazen at 7:00pm, followed by a Way-seeking Mind Talk at 7:40, using the Zoom link posted on the Richmond Zen website www.richmondzen.org/online-zendo. This will be a joint Practice Intensive for the Richmond Zen and Chapel Hill Zen Center sanghas. Everyone is welcome.

Participants are asked to **commit to the three Sunday morning “Teas”** held on Feb. 13, March 6, and 13, at 10:30 am after zazen. Zenki Kathleen Batson will give a Dharma Talk on Sunday morning, February 27, at 10:30, following Zoom zazen. Please fill out the form below, describing how you would like to participate in the Practice Intensive; i.e., what periods of zazen and on what days that you plan to attend, and if you plan to attend the Tuesday night Study Group, the Way-seeking Mind Talks, and the All-day Sitting, and note your participating in the Sunday Teas. This can be sent by e-mail to info@chzc.org, or mailed to P.O. Box 16302, Chapel Hill, NC 27516.

With palms together,

Josho

Name & Address

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Please describe how you would like to participate in the Practice Intensive below.

Chapel Hill Zen Center



P.O. Box 16302
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 967-0861

Schedule

Sunday Morning Tuesday Evening

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

Monday to Friday

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

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

Josho Pat Phelan, Abbess

Nonprofit Organization
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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.