



### August Sesshin

A 3-day sesshin, or meditation intensive, will be held August 23–26, led by Zenki Batson. See page 7 for more information and to register.

### Dharma Talks

Dharma Talks will be given at 10:30 AM, on Sunday mornings, July 14 by Josho Pat Phelan, and August 24, 25 and 26 by Zenki Kathleen Batson.

### All-Day Sittings

All-day sittings are planned for Sundays, July 14, and September 22, 6 AM until 5 PM. Orientation will be on **Saturday night at 7:30 PM**, and includes instruction in the meal form. The day will include zazen, a Dharma Talk, *Dokusan* and a work period, as well as breakfast and lunch. ***It is alright to sit half of the day, but please sign up in advance, and please speak to Josho or Zenki if this is your first all-day sitting.*** The 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 the Zen Center. *Oryoki* sets are available for use by those who do not have their own, and a \$5 donation is appreciated. **Please sign up by the Wednesday before** at [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org). Masks are available at the Zen Center if you would like to wear one. For more information on the *oryoki* meal form see: [www.kannondo.org/getting-started/oryoki/](http://www.kannondo.org/getting-started/oryoki/)

### You Have to Say Something

#### A Poetry Workshop with Maura High

July 27, 9 AM to noon

This will be a place-based poetry workshop and will focus on careful observation of the natural world and our responses to it. We'll look at work by such poets as Jane Hirshfield, Camille Dungy, John Clare, Gary Snyder, and Kimiko Han, and do some free writing in response to our observations and some prompts.

Participants may sign up by contacting Maura at [maurahigh@gmail.com](mailto:maurahigh@gmail.com), or sign up at the Zen Center. Readings will be emailed to registered participants before the meeting. Tea, coffee and snacks will be offered.

### Study Groups via Zoom

#### Yogacara Study Group

Monday nights, 5:30–6:30 PM

The Monday evening Study Group will continue studying the Yogacara text, the *Samdhinirmocana Sutra*, translated by John Powers, titled *The Wisdom of Buddha*, and Reb Anderson's book, *The Third Turning of the Wheel*. Please see the Event Calendar listing if you need a link to a PDF of the sutra.

#### Precepts Study Group

Wednesday nights, 7–8 PM

This group is led by Jakuko Mo Ferrell and will meet on Wednesday evenings, **except for the second Wednesday of each month: July 10, and August 14**. We are reading *Waking Up to What You Do: A Zen Practice for Meeting Every Situation with Intelligence and Compassion* by Diane Eshin Rizzetto along with supplemental materials. Copies are for sale at the Zen Center. For questions and updates, contact Jakuko Mo Ferrell at [MoSitWear@gmail.com](mailto:MoSitWear@gmail.com).

#### Master Dogen's Zazen Meditation Handbook

Thursday nights, 7–8 PM

On July 11, we will return to read and discuss *Master Dogen's Zazen Meditation Handbook, A Translation of Eihei Dogen's Bendo-wa: a Discourse on the Practice of Zazen*, written by Eihei Dogen with Kosho Uchiyama's commentary, beginning on page 95. Copies are for sale at the Zen Center.

Everyone is welcome and there is no charge. **All Study Groups use the same Zoom link, see: [www.chzc.org/events.htm#study](http://www.chzc.org/events.htm#study)**

# Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter – July & Aug 2024

## Holiday Closures

The Zen Center will be closed on Labor Day, **Monday, September 2.**

## Baikaryu Eisanka

Saturday, August 17, 10 AM to noon

You are invited to join the second session of *Baikaryu Eisanka*, the practice of singing Japanese Soto Zen Buddhist hymns with bell accompaniment. No experience necessary! Please contact Chris at [ccensullo@yahoo.com](mailto:ccensullo@yahoo.com) or Zenki at [chzc.zenki@gmail.com](mailto:chzc.zenki@gmail.com), or sign up at the bulletin board if you are interested in attending. For more information about *Baikaryu Eisanka*, see: [www.sotozen.com/eng/practice/baikaryu/](http://www.sotozen.com/eng/practice/baikaryu/)

## New to the Library

### ***Lotus Girl: My Life at the Crossroads of Buddhism and America* by Helen Tworikov**

The subtitle of Tworikov's memoir is apt: she has lived her life at that crossroads ever since, at the age of 20, she saw the famous photograph of a Vietnamese monk self-immolating in protest of the way Buddhist monks were being treated in Vietnam. She was amazed at the thought of someone sitting there calmly as he burned to death. She traveled first to India, then Vietnam, and finally to Japan, trying to understand these cultures and their connection to Buddhism. For a time she practiced in the Tibetan tradition, with the Tibetan exiles that she met in India. Later she practiced with Maezumi Roshi in L.A., and wrote an important book about Zen practice, *Zen in America*, with profiles of five American-born priests who were then practicing Zen. In later life she's moved back to Tibetan practice, and studied with Mingyur Rinpoche, helping him with his books.

In the meantime she met virtually everyone in American Buddhism. She didn't set out to do that; her paths just crossed with those of other people. In the early nineties she and Rick Fields got the idea for a magazine about Buddhism;

he eventually pulled out of the project, but she became the founding editor of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* for many years, and actually formed the vision for the magazine and gave it its high standards.

Tworikov composes her memoir in short, beautifully written vignettes, which are much richer than I can convey in this short review. If Buddhism in America interests you, as it does me, you'll want to read *Lotus Girl*.

— David Guy

## Library Acquisitions

*Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* by Zenkei Shibayama; *Hakuin's Song of Zazen* commentary by Mumon Yamada.

## Looking Ahead

### Lama Rod Owens

November 2 & 3 at Eno River Unitarian Church

Lama Rod will lead a one-day retreat open to all on Saturday, November 2, at Eno River Unitarian Church in Durham. He will lead a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) one-day retreat at Avila Center in Durham on Sunday November 3. Housing will be available at Avila for all out-of-town guests at a cost of \$60–70 per night.

“Lama Rod was ... thinking intentionally about the election and imagined this retreat as a space to spiritually prepare for that political moment.” Having just returned from his Eco-Dharma retreat in Colorado, I can say that the work Lama Rod is doing is more powerful than ever, especially around connecting with the land, working with ancestors, and being very clear about how to respond to all that is happening right now.

For more information, contact Karen Ziegler at: [ziegl001@gmail.com](mailto:ziegl001@gmail.com).

## December Sesshin

We are planning to have a 7-day sesshin December 6–13.

## Chapel Hill Zen Center Newsletter – July & Aug 2024

### Peer Group by Zoom

Wednesday, July 10 and August 14, 6–7 PM

Please join us in sharing your thoughts, challenges, and successes with other sangha members. For more information, please contact Al-Nisa Berry at [alnisa.berry@gmail.com](mailto:alnisa.berry@gmail.com) or Maura High at [maurahigh@gmail.com](mailto:maurahigh@gmail.com). For the Zoom link, see: [ww.chzc.org/events.htm#peer](http://ww.chzc.org/events.htm#peer).

### Living with Impermanence

Meets by Zoom about once a month. Please contact Carol at [carollyklein53@gmail.com](mailto:carollyklein53@gmail.com) or Kris at [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com) for more information. Everyone is welcome.

### Sangha Net

The Sangha Net is a network of volunteers who offer short-term assistance to those in the sangha in need of help due to transitions in life such as illness, disability, or death of a loved one. Examples of tasks include shopping, arranging for meals, or transportation. If you need assistance, please contact Kris at [krisgarvin@gmail.com](mailto:krisgarvin@gmail.com), Senmyo at [jeffsherman3333@gmail.com](mailto:jeffsherman3333@gmail.com), or Carol Klein at [carollyklein53@gmail.com](mailto:carollyklein53@gmail.com).

### Talk on Self-Nature

by Josho Pat Phelan

Today I would like to explore the term “self-nature” which is used in one version of the precepts. We chant the precepts during the monthly Bodhisattva Ceremony, and we receive the precepts in the ceremony when formally becoming a Lay Buddhist and in the ceremony, Leaving Home and Accomplishing the Way when people are ordained as a priest. Soto Zen also uses the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts in its wedding and funeral services. These 16 precepts are the Three Refuges, the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Grave or Clear Mind Precepts.

There is also a version of the Ten Precepts called the Bodhidharma One-Mind Precepts. As it turns out, they aren’t included in Bodhidharma’s written teachings and they appeared sometime after

Bodhidharma lived, and no one knows where they really came from. The One-Mind Precepts are expressed from a non-dual perspective, and they begin, “Self-nature is subtle and profound ...” There are several Chinese characters that can be translated as “subtle” and “profound,” and some of these characters also have the meaning of mysterious, dark, inconceivable and wondrous. Okumura Roshi translates this phrase as, “Self Nature is wondrous and imperceptible.

After having used the Bodhidharma One-Mind precepts in ceremonies since 1996, at some point I realized that I didn’t really know what “self-nature” was. But as it turns out, Suzuki Roshi talked about “self-nature” in *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* saying, “The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transiency, or change. That everything changes is the basic truth for each existence....all the teaching of Buddhism is condensed within it...This teaching [of impermanence] is also understood as the teaching of *selflessness*.” He continued, “Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of all existence.” “There is no special, separate self-nature for each existence.”

I’ve often thought that the only thing that Buddhism teaches that’s permanent...is impermanence. And where Suzuki Roshi said, “the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself,” reminds me that in Master Dogen’s text *Buddha Nature*, or *Bussho*, he wrote that Buddha-nature is impermanence, which, I think, helps distinguish the idea of a self from the idea of Buddha nature.

So, we might think of Buddha-nature, as the awakened aspect of consciousness — or the deep *experience* of everything in the universe as change with nothing having an unchanging, permanent structure or essence. This is very much like the Buddhist teaching of emptiness which is sometimes defined as dependent co-origination

— that everything is dependent on other or outside causes and conditions for coming into being and existing, that nothing stands apart or separate from everything else. I think it is easy to misunderstand the terms “Buddha-nature” and “self-nature” to mean something more real than our body, or character, or volition, our history and continuity, or however you might think of a self.

These terms, “Buddha-nature” and “self-nature,” that were translated from Chinese or Japanese and then into English don’t refer to something inherently existent or substantial. Buddha-nature is not a thing any more than change and impermanence are things, or any more than impermanence and change exist as an absolute, independent and autonomous. Rather, impermanent, changing, and empty are characteristics of how everything exists. The way that Suzuki Roshi takes the word that’s translated as “self-nature,” and shifts the way we might understand it in English, to mean impermanence, change, and selflessness, has been really helpful to me. Impermanent and selfless are ways of characterizing reality. So, instead of saying, “Self-nature is subtle and profound,” or “wondrous and imperceptible,” or “mysterious and inconceivable,” we could say “Reality is mysterious and inconceivable, subtle and profound..., etc.”

In Master Dogen’s teaching, the *Jijuyu Zammai*, or *The Samadhi of Self Enjoyment*, this term is described by Kaz Tanahashi as “realizing and utilizing the joy of samadhi.” While in Uchiyama Roshi’s commentary, Shohaku Okumura and Taigen Leighton translated this term as the “Samadhi of Self Receiving,” and the “Samadhi of the Self Accepting its Function.” So, as strange as it may seem, talking about the meaning of *Jijuyu Zammai*, involves a lot of use of the word “self.” I suspect that the meaning of the word “self” has a much different significance in Japan where the common welfare or welfare of the community is stressed over the welfare and preferences of the

individual, compared to the US where the individual is given more importance and agency than that of the community.

Okumura and Leighton emphasize that this is not the self that takes an object. They write, “There is nothing other than or outside of this self. The enjoyment, fulfillment, or satisfaction is the *samadhi* of the self of which there is no other.” So, again, these usages of “self” really means selflessness, referring to the non-dual experience of no self and no other, no subject and no object, and this is an all inclusive experience since at that point in time, nothing exists outside it.

The *Jijuyu Zammai* is part of a longer text called *Bendowa* or *Wholehearted Practice of the Way*, which was one of Dogen’s early teachings written in 1231, when he was thirty-one. In Uchiyama Roshi’s commentary on *Bendowa*, he talked about the Bodhidharma One-Mind Precepts saying, “Self nature is what I call the reality of life. Since the reality of life cannot be grasped by words, it is said to be wondrous and imperceptible. Within this world, in whatever situation, *everything* is the reality of life. The reality of life cannot be killed by any means. The precept of not killing means that since all beings are in the reality of life, we cannot kill anything. When you don’t awaken to the reality and [you] kill some creature it is a violation of this precept.”

Katagiri Roshi also talked about existence as change, similar to the way that Suzuki Roshi did. Katagiri said, “Existence is nothing but motion and change. Motion and change penetrate the entire universe. They are the life of trees, the life of winter. They are your life, too. So if you examine your life, you find the whole universe.... Your life manifests as the activity of the Whole. The total activity of the Whole manifests as you.” Katagiri Roshi said, “the question you must ask is: using this body and mind, how can I participate in the life of the world after throwing everything away?” I would say that “throwing everything away” refers to our ideas, conceptualizations and

expectations about...everything. Another way to think of this is letting go — letting our ideas and expectations fall away, and simply returning to fundamental, unadorned being.

In April, we celebrated Buddha's Birthday and the legend of Buddha's birth that's found in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, which is just after the baby Buddha was born, he took seven steps and pointed up with a finger of one hand and down with a finger on the other and said, "Below heaven and above earth, I alone am the world honored one." I think this statement puzzles most of us. It doesn't sound like Buddhism, much less like Shakyamuni Buddha. The first time I met Daitso Tom Wright, who practiced with Uchiyama Roshi in Japan, I brought this up and he said this is *not* a good translation and it's unfortunate that it's used so much in English. He said that the term translated as "I" is *jiko* in Japanese and it refers to life force itself. So we could say, "Below heaven and above earth, life force itself is most honored, or the living energy we share with everything is most important." In other words, honor life.

I would like to talk more about this term *jiko*, especially as it is used by Uchiyama Roshi in his books, *Opening the Hand of Thought* and *Wholehearted Practice*. I was fortunate to attend sesshin in Pennsylvania at Mt. Equity Zendo where Dai-En Bennage was the teacher. She invited Doyu Takamine, another disciple of Uchiyama Roshi, to lead sesshin, and Daitso translated. For the rest of this talk, I would like to refer to notes I made from Takamine Roshi's lectures in which he talked about the term *jiko*, in hopes that this will give a fuller sense of what this word, which is translated as "self," in English, means in Soto Zen Practice.

In contemporary Japan, the word *jiko* is used in a way that is similar to the way we use the word "self," meaning our normal, psychological self. In Master Dogen's 13th century text, *Bendowa*, *jiko* was translated both as self and as universal

self. I think the term, universal self sounds like it might refer to a larger "self" or maybe something like God. But Dogen's usage of *jiko*, according to Takamine Roshi, is more like "life force," and he said that *jiko* is the "life that fills the universe. The food I eat has been given by the whole universe. The air that I breathe is the breath of the whole universe." Takamine Roshi said that "we are always living out the life that fills the universe." He also described *jiko* as the "causes of life-death or universal self." Sojun Roshi used the terms "birth and death" to mean "life" so that life and death do not stand in opposition to each other, but birth and death are included in the meaning of life. "Although it is the universal self, it is also 'I [or my personal self life-force]." Takamine continued, "As we practice, we begin to understand that 'I' am not just *this* body and this mind. The parameters are wider. *Jiko* refers both to the universal self and to the individual. *Jiko* is the life that fills the universe, and it can be individual, or it can be everyone."

He said, "All of us are life force. As life force, it takes time for us to become fully that life force." He said, "In [Japanese] temples there has always been a tradition of having gardens." And "Gardens are a good teacher. Through this garden we begin to understand that life force takes time. If you give to the earth, the earth will give back." He said, "The earth is our true intention." "In Dogen's *Instructions for the Pure Community*, or the monastic community, he advised the gardener to go out into the garden and dirt." Dogen said, "Put your spirit into it, and in time the earth will give you its fruit. Take your time and be patient. Put your intention and energy into it."

According to Takamine, "Uchiyama Roshi said that even if we have money, we still need air, water, sun, the earth, etc. and...they are given to us. We often take for granted the things that are given to us. How we grow as adults is to realize all these things are given to us, and so we give by cooking, cleaning, painting, etc." He said, "So,

give what you have been given.”

On December 8, Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated in Japan. The Zen version of Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment is that after doing extreme ascetic practices for several years, Shakyamuni had nearly died from starvation when he decided that he was no closer to finding the truth that would end suffering. So, he decided to follow the middle way between asceticism and indulging his senses. At this time, he was on the brink of starvation, when a local girl offered him milk and rice. After eating and beginning to feel stronger, he decided to meditate, and he was determined not to move until he discovered the truth that would end suffering. After sitting all night, as morning approached, when Shakyamuni saw Venus or the morning star, he awakened to the enlightened nature of all things. He said, "I was, I am, and I will be enlightened simultaneously with the whole universe and all beings. Everything — mountains, rivers, grass, and trees — all attained enlightenment." In my opinion, you could add onto this, "in my own mind." Since everything is already deeply connected and interconnected or empty of a permanent, unchanging essence, Shakyamuni awakened to this in his own mind or being.

Takamine Roshi said, "As Shakyamuni sat, he sat within himself. Within that, he realized what he really was, which is the whole universe. Shakyamuni sitting under the Bodhi Tree realized that he was interconnected with all things." "Mountains, rivers, grass and trees' refers to everything." Takamine said that Shakyamuni Buddha realized, "The whole universe, everything, everyone is Buddha, is enlightened with me. My enlightenment is the enlightenment of all things. My life force is the same life force that flows through all things. This was Buddha's awakening." Then Takamine shifted and said, "Don't understand the precepts as commandments which are something that comes from outside ourselves. Our life is connected to all things, to kill some-

one is to kill oneself. If all life is connected, there can't be stealing." He said, "The precepts need to be understood through connectedness or else it becomes a duality." "When you see the connection, internally, you can't go to war, etc. Precepts are internal."

Takamine Roshi said that "Uchiyama Roshi taught that the life force that functions through us, whether we feel reverence for it or we don't, whether we see it or not, that life force we must pay reverence to. And whether we feel it or not, understand it or not, it is most precious. This is how we move more deeply into life. When you see the connection, internally, you can't go to war. Precepts are internal. Just sitting with the life that you have as an individual, aiming to be one with the life of the universe, that is sitting into the depth of life."

Takamine said, "In the 2,500 years that have passed since Buddha lived, many sanghas have developed. And no matter how *deep the teaching*, if there is no sangha [or community of practitioners], it isn't generated, [the teaching] doesn't function. So, the sangha is a living function of the teaching."

Takamine Roshi also talked about the meaning of the word, "*Butsu-en*," which he translated as Buddha-connection. He said, "We are constantly being pulled and protected by the legacy of the Buddha. Everyone's *Butsu-en* [or Buddha-connection] is different." Takamine said that he was born in a temple, while we were born in the US with different backgrounds. "Each person has his own Buddha-connection that brought him here to practice. But, don't assume that he [Takamine] was lucky to be born in a temple. What is crucial," he said, "is *if you have your antenna up*. If not [i.e., if you don't have your antenna up], you won't catch the 'air waves.' For a lot of people that *Butsu-en* or Buddha-connection, or antenna, go up when we are suffering, in grief, or when we are struggling."

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Takamine Roshi continued talking more about *jiko*, “Each of us has been living out our own life individually.” He asked, “What does this mean?” And he replied, “Our *zazen* is the true form of *jiko*. *Jiko* in this sense is our all-comprehensive self. Our body and everything around us is our True Self – who we truly are. Encountering one’s self, you have to make your own effort.” He said, “When we see flowers, we can’t help but smile, we see the preciousness of everything we encounter. We begin to feel closer even to difficult people and see that they are like me. It brings us joy to see the preciousness of people. But we need to make effort. Over the long run, it takes less effort — this is learning the Buddha-dharma. When we open our eyes, we see that everything is our teacher. We can learn from everything around us — a cherry tree can be our teacher. It takes effort to wake up, but it also means making effort to be playful.”

I’d like to thank you for listening to all these quotes from Takamine Roshi’s teaching. They were quite moving for me and I hope they’re meaningful for you. I’d like to leave you with the idea of Life or Life Force. Life itself, the Life Force or energy we share with everything, is most important. So, the question is, **“Right now, right here, how do I honor life?” How do I make the most of this precious “life opportunity” that I have right now?**

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### August Sesshin

Led by Zenki K. Batson

August 23–26

Sesshin is an intimate way to practice with ourselves and others. We begin sesshin together, sit *zazen* together, walk together, eat together, and work together. Our practice is supported by the entire universe and each of us is supporting everyone else. We will begin Friday evening at 7 PM with orientation and job assignments. In order to help everyone settle into the schedule,

please arrive on time for orientation on Friday night. Following orientation, we will observe silence. The zendo will be open by 5 PM on Friday. The sesshin day will include *zazen* beginning at 6 AM, *kinhin*, a Dharma talk, work period, and *oryoki* meals. *Dokusan* with Zenki will also be available.

The registration form can be found online at [www.chzc.org/august-sesshin.pdf](http://www.chzc.org/august-sesshin.pdf). Please consider filling out your form before saving it to your computer. Then send by email to [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org) without needing to print.

Fees are \$50 per day for Participating Members, and \$60 per day for others. However if you are able to offer more, it would be very helpful; the additional funds can be considered a tax-exempt donation. There will also be an opportunity to offer a donation to the teacher. **It is our intention that no one be turned away for financial reasons, and scholarships are available.** If you would like to request a scholarship, please contact John at [john@jollyoso.com](mailto:john@jollyoso.com) and let him know how much you are able to contribute. Contributions received for scholarships are very helpful in allowing people to attend sesshin here and at the San Francisco Zen Center. Please return your registration form with a \$50 deposit.

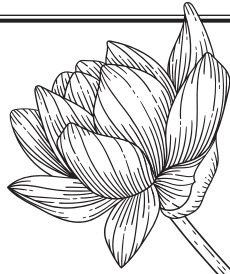
You are welcome to sleep at the Zen Center, and there may be some space available in members’ homes nearby. Please bring a portable bed or pad for the floor, a sleeping bag, pillow, towel and wash cloth, slip-on shoes, work clothes, and layered clothing. Camping on the Zen Center grounds is also available. Opportunities for bathing are limited. Masks are available at the Zen Center if you would like to wear one.

For more information, please contact Zenki at [info@chzc.org](mailto:info@chzc.org).

The Zen Center Emergency Phone is  
**(919) 933-0776**

# Chapel Hill Zen Center

P.O. Box 16302  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516



## SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning	Tuesday Evening
9:00 AM zazen	7:00 PM zazen
9:40 AM kinhin	7:40 PM kinhin
9:50 AM zazen	7:50 PM zazen
10:30 AM service	8:20 PM service

### Monday, Wednesday & Friday

6:00 AM zazen, 6:50 AM zazen

Meetings at 5322 NC Hwy 86, Chapel Hill, NC  
2.5 miles North of I-40 exit 266

**Josho Pat Phelan, Abbess**  
**Zenki Kathleen Batson, Vice Abbess**  
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*Punna* is blessings or merit in Sanskrit.  
The Buddha said, “Don’t belittle what *punna* is, what blessings are,  
what merit is. *Punna* is another word for happiness.  
That brightness in the heart, the quality of blessings –  
these are the basis of happiness and freedom.  
Don’t belittle them or look down on them in a dismissive way.”

— Kobun Chino, *Embracing Mind*



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.