



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

May 13, 2016

Dear Sangha,

Just Two Weeks until Buddha's Birthday

Spring has made it at last to upstate New York, and in just a fortnight, an elephant will be lumbering down Arnold Park. Our annual celebration is a great time to come together and get to know more of the people we sit with – and their wives, husbands, children and friends.

Friday is Temple Night

This year's celebrations begin with Temple Night and Jukai on Friday, May 27. If you have a figure of a Buddha or bodhisattva at home that you'd like to bring in and place on the main altar to steep in the charged atmosphere, please do so.

Saturday is the Big Day

On Saturday, May 28, we have the Baby Buddha Ceremony, an elephant parade and stories from the Sleeping Sage, as well as the rakusu ceremony for members receiving a new rakusu, a vegetarian potluck picnic, Buddha's birthday cupcakes, dokusan for out-of-town members and the Annual Meeting.

Sitting Sunday Morning

With the 50th Anniversary celebrations scheduled for the Fourth of July weekend, we're going to save many of the usual Sunday Buddha Bazaar activities for the huge picnic that weekend at Chapin Mill. And that means we'll be able to have a sitting on the Sunday after Buddha's Birthday at 8:30 am, the usual time.

A full weekend schedule is included with this mailing, and it's also posted on the Center's website [here](#).

To help us plan, please let the Center know by Thursday, May 26, if you are coming from out of town and would like a place to stay. We'll find you a place at the Center, at Chapin Mill, or with local Sangha members. If you are making your own sleeping arrangements but plan to attend the ceremonies, please let us know this as well.

Annual Meeting

The Center's Annual Corporate Meeting will be held during Buddha's Birthday weekend. We'll review the Center's financial and spiritual affairs and count ballots for the annual Trustee election. Those Trustees and Officers who are able to attend will be available to answer questions. All Sangha members are welcome at the meeting, which will be held in the Buddha Hall on Saturday afternoon, May 28, at 4:30. The Trustee Nominating Committee has nominated four candidates (Allen Broadman, Christina Curry, Betsy Friedman, and Jonathan Hagar) to fill the terms of two Trustees who have gone off the board (Tom Kowal, who resigned after joining staff, and Cecily Fuhr, who has served her third and final three-year term). Ballots and a brief biographical note for each of the two candidates have been sent to everyone who was a Center member as of the April 28 record date for the election. Please mail your postcard ballot to the Center or bring it to the meeting; ballots won't be available at the meeting itself. Past elections have been decided by a handful of votes, and one by a coin-flip after a tie.

Ralph Chapin Memorial Work Retreat

Our annual work retreat begins a little earlier in June this year, starting with a sitting at 7 pm on Tuesday, June 14, and finishing with lunch on Saturday, June 18. Our focus this year will be getting the buildings and grounds in shape for the 50th Anniversary, which will take place three weeks later. For those who are new, or who have never taken part, this retreat is a bit like a mash-up of training program and summer camp. Most of our work is done in the mornings, with clean-up and free time in the afternoons. Sittings are scheduled each morning and evening for those who can attend. A lot of us will be staying overnight – there are plenty of rooms, and you can even camp out if you like. Come for as much of the retreat as you'd like and bring family and friends who'd like to help out. There's a wide variety of jobs – indoor and outdoor, skilled and unskilled. Each year when we look back on what we've accomplished, we're impressed and grateful for all that an inspired swarm of Sangha can accomplish.

There are no training fees for the retreat, although donations toward the cost of food are welcome. Let John Pulleyn know if you'll be coming. You can email him at john@rzc.org or call (585) 473-9180. Let us know your times of arrival and departure and, if you'd like to stay overnight, whether you need a place to sleep or you plan to camp. If you're coming with children, let us know their ages. It also helps to know about any skills or limitations you may have. Please bring your own linens and towels.

Fifty Years in Rochester!

As mentioned above and in the many emails to the Sangha, we'll be celebrating our first half-century over the Fourth of July weekend. This is shaping up to be a LARGE gathering, with 350 already signed up for the picnic at Chapin Mill and with the Leo Kottke concert on Saturday evening already full to capacity.

More information is posted on the website, and we're keeping that updated. Sign up soon if you plan to come. It will help us a lot to know how many members and former members to expect. By the same token, if you've signed up but now can't come, let us know so that someone else can take your place.

2016 Annual Picnic

Our annual picnic is scheduled for Saturday, August 20.

Founder's Day

That Saturday, August 20, is also Roshi Kapleau's birthday, and on the following Sunday, August 21, we'll hold our annual Founder's Day remembrance.

Rakusus

The rakusu is an abbreviated form of the traditional Buddha robe (*kesa* in Japanese) and is worn as a reminder of our commitment to the Buddha Way, which we formally enter when we take the sixteen precepts at Jukai. The new life we are undertaking with this step is marked by the Dharma name we receive from our teacher, along with the rakusu. The first time we sit each day, the rakusu is placed on the head (a way of expressing reverence for its meaning), and the following verse is recited:

*Wondrous is the robe of liberation,
A treasure beyond form and emptiness.
Wearing it I will unfold Buddha's teaching,
For the benefit of all sentient beings.*

If you have sewn a rakusu, please return it to the Center by Wednesday, May 25, so that Roshi will have time to inscribe it with a Dharma name that he and you have chosen.

Sesshin Dates

Below are sesshin dates through June 2017; all are led by Roshi at Chapin Mill unless otherwise indicated. You can also find this list (kept current as new dates are set) in the Sesshin section of the website.

2016

July 23-30	7-day		deadline: June 30
September 9-11	2-day	(Eryl Kubicka)	deadline: September 1
October 1-8	7-day		deadline: September 8
November 12-19	7-day		deadline: October 20
December 6-10	4-day		deadline: November 10

2017

January 7-14	7-day		deadline: December 15
April 8-15	7-day		deadline: March 16
June 10-17	7-day		deadline: May 18

If you miss the deadline, it's all right to apply late for any sesshin. If there's room, you may well be accepted.

In the Dharma,



John Pulleyn
For the Center