



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER  
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

May 15, 2015

Dear Sangha,

### **Buddha's Birthday Is Just Around the Corner**

Although the Buddha's Birthday weekend is designed with children in mind, it's one of the biggest festival weekends of the year for adults, too, with a mixture of zazen, ceremonies, food, and fun for everyone. (Beginners are especially welcome!)

#### *Temple Night*

This year's celebrations begin with Temple Night and Jukai on Friday, May 22. 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. (Bonus iconography note! You may notice that, like the Buddha figure on our zendo altar, one of the figures at Temple Night has a swastika on his chest. For thousands of years before Adolf Hitler modified it into the Nazi's hooked-cross symbol, it was a traditional symbol of well-being in many Indo-European countries, including India. To this day, a swastika banner is hung outside many vegetarian restaurants in Taiwan to indicate that they are "Buddha restaurants.")

#### *Saturday and Sunday*

On Saturday 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. Sunday morning at Arnold Park will be devoted to the Buddha Bazaar, starting at 10 am.

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 21, 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.

### **Ralph Chapin Memorial Work Retreat**

Our first-ever Work Retreat was held in 2001, and we've come together every year since then as the Retreat Center became a reality. In recent years, there's been less to work on in the building, and more of our attention has gone to the grounds and plantings. 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. The retreat starts with a sitting at 7 pm on Tuesday, June 23, and finishes with lunch on Saturday, June 27. 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](mailto: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 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.

### **Sanghapalooza!**

The third annual RZC Sanghapalooza! will commence Friday evening, June 12, and conclude on Sunday, June 14. The weekend will be filled with a wide variety of activities, including lectures and workshops on jazz history, non-violent communication, African elephants, and great movie moments; yoga, jam sessions, a guided nature walk through Chapin Mill, games both indoor and out, and a pancake breakfast. All this, plus great company and great food, all seasoned with some zazen! The complete schedule and registration form are available at <http://www.rzc.org/program-events/sanghapalooza/>. The deadline to submit a registration form along with a \$50 fee (to cover meal expenses) is June 5. Kids register for free.

### **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 23, at 4:30. The Trustee Nominating Committee has nominated Tom Kowal, who has served one three-year term and is eligible to run again, and Dave Kernan to run this year. 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 16 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.

### **2015 Annual Picnic**

Our annual picnic is scheduled for Saturday, July 18. If we're rained out, we'll move it to Sunday the 19th.

### **Founder's Day**

As we've done for the past couple of years, we'll hold our annual Founder's Day remembrance of Roshi Philip Kapleau on the weekend that precedes his birthday. This year, that means Sunday, August 16. (This is a change from the August 23 date published in the last quarterly mailing.)

### **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 20, 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 January 2016; 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.

#### 2015

May 30-June 6	7-day		deadline: past (but you can apply late)
July 25-August 1	7-day		deadline: July 2
September 11-13	2-day	(Wayman Kubicka)	deadline: September 3
Oct 3-Oct 10	7-day		deadline: September 10
November 7-14	7-day		deadline: October 15
December 8-12	4-day		deadline: November 19

#### 2016

January 9-16	7-day		deadline: December 17
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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