

Zen Heart Sangha

Issue 30

Winter 2018 Newsletter

Special Upcoming Events

2019 Meditation Schedule

- Jan. 29 First Monday of 2019
Feb. 2 First Saturday of 2019
Feb. 16 Special Guest
Shinshu Roberts (Home
Zendo, 10am-12pm)
Feb. 18 NO MEETING
(President's Day)
Mar. 18 Annual Sangha meeting
May 27 NO MEETING
(Memorial Day)
Jun. 17 Bodhisattva Ceremony
Aug. 19 Bodhisattva Ceremony
Sep. 2 NO MEETING (Labor Day)
Oct. 28 Segaki (Hungry Ghosts)
Ceremony
Nov. 11 NO MEETING
(Veteran's Day)
Dec. 6 EHP Volunteer Day
Dec. 16 Last evening of 2019—
Celebration

Retreats

- Apr. 12-14 Buddha's Birthday
Retreat at Jikoji
Oct. 4-6 Fall Retreat, Jikoji
Dec. 6-7 Rohatsu Retreat
(Home Zendo)

Dharma School

- Mar. 30 Aug. 31
Jun. 22 Oct. 26
Jul. 19 Nov. 23

Dharma Study Group

- Feb. 9 Aug. 10
Mar. 9 Oct. 12
May 11 Nov. 9
Jun. 8

Tea Ceremony Lessons

- Jan. 18 Jun. 14
Feb. 15 Aug. 16
Mar. 15 Oct. 18
May 17 Nov. 15

Zen Heart Sangha--25 Years Later

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.
— John Lennon

It started in the smallest way—an offhand comment by my teacher suggesting I might start my own weekly sitting group as a way to have a little more responsibility for others' practice. Neither of us had any idea that this small beginning would turn into a sangha in its own right, or that it would be celebrating its existence 25 years later.

I confess, the whole thing was unplanned. There was no long-term vision in my head—we didn't even have a name for a year after we first started sitting at Mt. Alverno in Redwood City. (However, I do recall how the name came about: sitting with a group of you, I said it had to contain the word 'Zen', others said it had to have the word 'heart', and because we weren't a center we used the word 'sangha'—hence, Zen Heart Sangha was born.)

Where have those 25 years gone? To paraphrase John Lennon, we were all busy making other plans—taking care of children and parents, working hard at various jobs, sometimes going on vacations—all while inventing a Zen practice that was sustainable and suited to our needs. At first we met once a week for zazen, lecture, and tea. (I still remember moving furniture in and out at Mt. Alverno in order to create a 'zendo', and the tiny storage cupboard.) Eventually we created a Saturday program at my house in my studio for those who wanted more practice. (Do you remember the ancient brown carpet, ceiling tiles, and the bar in the corner? Yes, a bar in the zendo!)

When Mt. Alverno was sold, we found a new refuge at Peninsula School where I worked. The gym gave us a larger space, storage, better geographical accessibility, a ready-made population of interested school people, and emptiness (not the Buddhist kind, but the 'not needing to move furniture' kind!). We could offer more—Bodhisattva and Segaki ceremonies, a private dokusan room, and an 'almost dedicated' quiet space.

Then came the flood at my house in 2005 and the ruin of the home zendo. With the unstinting support of the sangha and the agreement to design the kind of zendo we'd always wanted, we completely rebuilt the room (sans bar) with a high ceiling, bamboo flooring, storage, and windows on three sides to let in the light. Nine months later we celebrated our devotion and hard work with an official 'Eye Opening Ceremony' with over 50 people crowding our small zendo...and we have been meeting there ever since.

Who knows where the time goes? It goes into daily practice with our sangha, friends, families, workmates, and the larger community. It goes into ordinations and transmissions, dharma school, retreats, and potluck breakfasts. It goes into sharing the daily joys and sorrows of our lives, and standing up for what is right...a well-spent 25 years, I think.

With deep gratitude and the wish for many more years,
Misha Shungen